



Independent Learning Policy

RATIONALE

- Independent Learning is defined as 'any work or activities which students are asked to do outside lesson time'.
- All work of this nature should have a clear purpose.
- The purpose of any Independent Learning may include:
 - to encourage students to develop the skills needed for independent learning to consolidate, reinforce and broaden the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the classroom
 - to enable students to meet the demands of examined courses including coursework where relevant
 - being part of a revision programme in preparation for school and public examinations
 - sustaining the involvement of parents and carers in students' learning and keeping them informed about the work students are doing

PRINCIPLES FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS TO FOLLOW

- Independent Learning tasks should be clearly identified in departments' schemes of work.
- All such tasks should be planned as an integral part of the lesson.
- Any Independent Learning tasks should have a clear purpose rather than used to fill time.
- It is preferable that such tasks are set during rather than at the end of the lesson.
- Independent learning tasks should be written down accurately in planners, with clear deadlines for completion, by all students. All revision tasks should be written in Planners. (It may be necessary to write tasks on the board, especially for students in lower sets. We need to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for this to be carried out.)
- The school provides a range of facilities to support students doing out of lesson work, including Homework Club and the opening of staffed library and ICT facilities before and after school hours for all year groups.
- The school's learning platform, Fronter, should be used by all departments and year teams to support teaching and learning, including independent learning. Fronter can be accessed by students from home.

Each department follows the above rationale and principles in the setting of work related to any work to be completed outside of the classroom. Specific allocations for each department are outlined below.

The department policies for Independent Learning are as follows:

ART

Key Stage 3

Students are usually set one task every 2 weeks lasting about 30 minutes. However, no homework is set when extended learning project is in place.

GCSE or equivalent studies

One year GCSE course (Art & Design) – Twice a week for 1 hour

Two year GCSE course (Art & Design) – Once a week for 1 hour

Digital Photography – Once a week for 1 hour

For BTEC – Once a week for 1 hour

Key Stage 5

AS & A2 - Once a week for 3 hours

BUSINESS STUDIES

Key Stage 3

The faculty does not teach students at Key Stage 3

GCSE or equivalent studies

1. At Key Stage 4 teachers are expected to set 1 hour of homework per week. This may be 2 shorter tasks, or 1 longer one.
2. It is good practice to write homework task on a board or give out on a worksheet.
3. It is also good practice to set homework early enough in the lesson for all students to have time to write the task down and ask questions if need be. Often setting homework at the start of a lesson is a good idea.
4. Students should be prompted to write homework in their planners. The teacher should check that they do so.
5. Where students are engaged on a lengthier project or coursework assignment, the teacher should set interim deadlines for sections of the assignment and provide regular and timely formative feedback (written and oral). This enables the student to learn and improve work through the assignment.
6. Each teacher will set agreed Standard Assessments (SAs) as identified on schemes of work or otherwise discussed, and record marks on departmental spreadsheet.

Key Stage 5

1. In the Sixth form subject teachers are expected to set work on a regular basis, equivalent to about 3 hours per subject per week at AS/BTEC, and 4 hours per subject per week at A2
2. Each teacher will set at least one piece of homework for each group of students that he/she teaches per week.
3. The homework may consist of research, reading, preparation for a presentation or discussion, or written work, as appropriate.
4. Where students are engaged on a lengthier project or coursework assignment, the teacher should set interim deadlines for sections of the assignment and provide regular and timely formative feedback (written and oral). This enables the student to learn and improve work through the assignment.
5. Each teacher will set agreed Standard Assessments (SAs) as identified on schemes of work or otherwise discussed, and record marks on departmental spreadsheet on network.

DRAMA

Key Stage 3

Homework is not set for students at Key Stage 3. While there will be times when students are expected to rehearse in their own time, or learn lines (such as in Year 9).

GCSE or equivalent studies

At Key Stage 4 line learning, research and preparatory work for assessments will form the largest part of student homework for Drama. Each student is also expected to keep a folder containing up-to-date lesson evaluations, preparation notes and research for coursework. For GCSE Drama students essays will be set in preparation for the written component of the examination. Theatre visits notes are written up after such a trip. The practical work often requires the students to rehearse at lunchtime or after school in addition to lesson time. This is part of the preparatory and exploratory mark awarded for each assessment. For BTEC students weekly log books are compiled, and ongoing assessment

briefs are addressed. (See individual exam specifications for further guidance.) Preparatory work carried out by the students is marked approximately every two weeks according to the mark scheme given to the students. Homework is given to support the practical requirements of the lesson and is set as and when is required and deemed 'appropriate' in order to heighten the quality of their learning rather than as a prescriptive necessity.

Key Stage 5

AS and A2 level students are expected to have homework after every lesson. The member of staff involved sets this according to the work in progress. Written work is the priority and students are expected to meet all deadlines. Sanctions are given to those not doing so. Homework should be marked by the member of staff and generally returned to the students within a week. Each piece of work is marked according to AS and A2 level standards.

Again, rehearsals may be expected at lunchtimes and after school but these should not be used as an excuse by students for unfinished work in other areas. Theatre visits are made and notes written up afterwards in the students' own time. These are checked and used for essays throughout the year.

ENGLISH

We acknowledge the value of homework in the teaching of independent learning skills, extending subject knowledge and in involving parents in pupil learning and progress. Often the need to read, research or produce extended pieces of writing mean that home learning gives students time and space to produce more developed pieces of writing than those they have time to complete in lessons.

Key Stage 3

Extended learning opportunities are built into the Key Stage 3 curriculum; they are used to research particular subjects, to complete extended written responses, to prepare for oral assessments, reflect on work already completed and to prepare for formal assessments. Home learning opportunities don't fit into a regular pattern but will be set at the discretion of the class teacher in order to complement the work covered in lessons. Students will always be given a reasonable period of time to complete any work they are asked to do.

Home learning opportunities are embedded in key stage 3 schemes of work but these are under constant review so will be differentiated and altered to suit the learning needs of different classes and individual students.

GCSE or equivalent studies

At Key Stage 4, extended learning will be based around preparation for controlled assessments and exam preparation. Tasks will be tailored to the specific needs to a class and set at times that appropriately support the development of skills or fit in with assessments; this will be based on the professional judgement of individual class teachers. Students will always be given a reasonable amount of time to complete any work they are asked to do.

Extended learning is a vital tool in the preparation for such assessments and will be set in order to prepare for them. Tasks may include reading in preparation for lessons, analysis tasks, and preparation for oral assessment, reflections on work completed or exam style responses under timed conditions. In Year 11, students will be expected to manage their time independently and use revision materials provided to prepare for their final GCSE exams in the weeks immediately before their exam. Revision materials and videos are available to support their learning on the departmental Fronter page.

Key Stage 5

At KS5 homework is set at the discretion of class teachers and will give students an opportunity to produce extended writing, read critical material and complete exam responses in timed conditions. It will be used to prepare for lessons and follow up on the skills covered within them. There is also an expectation for Language and Media students to complete practical work outside the classroom as part of their coursework tasks.

At all key stages, there is at least one formal assessment per learning cycle.

GEOGRAPHY

Key Stage 3

In Year 7 students will be set an hour of homework per week. In Year 8 and 9 students will be set homework every two weeks. Some homework will be research based which uses a variety of resources such as Doodle, newspaper articles and various websites. This will help support learning and prepare students for learning cycle assessments. Some homework will be to write out the definitions of key words and then to learn the spellings and meanings of key words. Some homework set will be to revise work to reinforce learning that has taken place in the classroom.

GCSE or equivalent studies

One year course, four lessons a week

Independent study will be set for two hours per week – this may be divided into half hour slots or one full hour depending on the task, to be completed at home. Students will be required to revise work done in class in preparation for their learning cycle assessments.

(Two year course, two lessons a week)

Independent study will be set for one hour per week – this may be divided into half hour slots or one full hour depending on the task, to be completed at home. Students will be required to revise work done in class in preparation for their learning cycle assessments.

During the controlled assessment, students may be asked to do additional enquiry tasks.

Key Stage 5

AS /A2

Students are expected to supplement their studies with additional reading and study. In addition, they will be set two hours of independent study by both their geography teachers, per week.

HISTORY

Key Stage 3

In Year 7 students will be set an hour of homework per week. In Year 8 and 9 students will be set homework every two weeks. Some homework will be research based and could include the use of external websites as well as Fronter resources and the use of the Challenge button. Some homework will be revising for assessments and tests, some may be learning key words and spellings and some may be additional research to help boost attainment as per the Learning Cycle descriptors.

GCSE or equivalent studies

Other than coursework preparation no extension work of a research nature is envisaged. However, tasks such as past questions and revision tasks will be set throughout the year. Many of these will be peer assessed using exam board mark schemes to cement learning. Work required to be done outside of the lessons will be reviewing and learning of studied topics.

Key Stage 5

Year 12: Follows the same principles as GCSE without the coursework.

Year 13: Extension work is focused on the A2 Historical Enquiry. Students are required to research and present a 3,500 word mini dissertation on an approved historical issue.

HUMANITIES

Key stage 3

Year 7

Students are taught a combined Humanities course. They will complete one Humanities extended learning project. Outside of the ELP, students will be set a maximum of 2 homeworks per learning cycle, and these will usually be research based to encourage independent enquiry.

ICT

Key Stage 3

Year 7 and 8

One homework is set for every two contacts outside the extended learning project window.

Year 9

No Homework. All students are doing 100% controlled assessment and must do all their work under the direct supervision of the teacher, there are no exams. This means homework is inappropriate and unnecessary. There may be the odd occasion where a home task is allowable under the rules of controlled assessment this will be set on an ad-hoc basis.

GCSE or equivalent studies

No Homework.

All students are doing 100% controlled assessment and must do all their work under the direct supervision of the teacher, there are no exams. This means homework is inappropriate and unnecessary. There may be the odd occasion where a home task is allowable under the rules of controlled assessment this will be set on an ad-hoc basis.

Key Stage 5

Year 12 and 13 (advanced courses)

A minimum of 2 hours homework is expected per week. This usually takes the form of continuing course work tasks from lessons and tasks designed to prepare the student for their exams.

MFL

Key Stage 3

Extended Work is an important part of the Languages curriculum and the language learning process. Teachers will generally set homework on a weekly basis if appropriate. Tasks may include the setting of regular vocabulary learning, reading and writing exercises, translating/adapting sentences and on-line activities using Doodle/Linguascope. We expect all students to complete the work set to the best of their ability and to take pride in their extended learning. Pupils will be given adequate time to complete the work. Homework will not be set to be completed during school holidays at KS3.

Key Stage 4

Extended Work is an important part of the Languages curriculum and even more so for examination groups. It is fundamental to the language learning process. Teachers set regular vocabulary learning tasks, reading and writing exercises, translating/ adapting sentences and on-line activities using Doodle/Linguascope. Exam work will be set as appropriate -this will include preparation and learning for the Controlled Assessment tasks at GCSE in Writing and Speaking. We expect all students to complete the work set to the best of their ability and to take pride in their extended learning. Pupils will be given adequate time to complete the work. The tasks may be set to be completed during school holidays at KS4 due to examination demands.

Key Stage 5

Extended Work is an integral part of the Languages curriculum and the language learning process. Teachers set regular learning tasks which may require extended research and use of on-line resources, vocabulary learning, translation work, grammar exercises, essay writing, listening work and past exam paper questions.. We expect all students to complete the work set to the best of their ability and to take pride in their extended learning. Students will be given adequate time to complete the work. Tasks will be set to be completed during school holidays at KS5 due to examination demands.

MATHS

Key Stage 3 & GCSE or equivalent studies

All students will be set a minimum of two formal pieces of written homework per learning cycle. These pieces of work will be teacher marked and assessed with targets set where appropriate. Targets will also be generated from learning cycle assessments which are also teacher assessed. In addition staff will set mini-homeworks as appropriate. These may include, for example, revising for assessments, work to be completed electronically (e.g. mymaths website) or a quick recap sheet. These pieces of work may be teacher marked but equally could be self-marked, peer assessed or electronically marked for instant feedback.

Key Stage 5

Extension work is set for all students in the form of end of chapter assessments. These assessments take approximately two hours and will be set by an individual teacher every three to four weeks. With a group having two teachers, a student will be expected to complete one end of chapter assessment roughly every other week. The assessments are formally marked and levelled, with suggestions for

areas of improvement. In addition staff will set mini-homework as appropriate. These may consist, for example, of exercises from the text book, research work or revision for module assessments.

MUSIC

Key Stage 3

As music is a largely practical subject a range of extension activities are used to develop classroom learning. These tasks are set for students as appropriate.

GCSE or equivalent studies

Students are set at least one hour composing homework and a listening/research homework per week.

Key Stage 5

Students are set one homework associated with every module of the courses

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Key Stage 3

There is no formal homework set with in Key Stage 3. Students maybe set occasional tasks, which will consolidate their knowledge or develop their leadership skills for example: *design a warm up for hockey or research the rules for basketball*

GCSE or equivalent studies

Students will be set homework once a week, which should last approximately 1 hour a week. This will be to consolidate knowledge from the lessons through relevant tasks or practise questions. Written coursework will replace this homework for a short time from January until after February half term

Key Stage 5

Each of the three unit areas will set one piece of homework each week which should last for approximately one hour. In addition to this, students will be expected to spend additional time at home to prepare for their coursework assessment (a verbal analysis done in February.)

PSHCEE

Key Stage 3 & 4

There is no regular homework set for this subject in Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4. However, students will be asked to complete homework at various points throughout the year i.e. research tasks to prepare for lessons and assessments. Due to the personal nature of PSHCEE, students are encouraged to access additional information as and when they need it. Consequently, students will be regularly directed to sources of information that support the learning undertaken in lessons. Students can then carry out further learning at their own discretion.

N.B. In Year 10, during learning cycle 3, students may have aspects of their coursework to complete at home depending on computer access.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY

We acknowledge the value of homework in the teaching of independent learning skills and in involving parents in pupil learning and their progress.

Key Stage 3

In Year 7 students will be set an hour of homework per week. In Year 8 and 9 students will be set homework every two weeks. Some homework will be research based which uses a variety of resources such as newspaper articles and various websites. This will help support learning and prepare students for learning cycle assessments. Some homework will be to write out the definitions of key words and then to learn the spellings and meanings of key words. Some homework set will be to revise work to reinforce learning that has taken place in the classroom. (This homework should take no more than 30 minutes at a time).

GCSE

At KS4 Ethics, Religion and Life homework will be set once per week. Tasks will be varied to ensure pupils are able to develop their independent learning skills in a variety of ways but emphasis will be on GCSE exam questions and technique. Homework at KS4 should take up to 45mins-1hour.

Key Stage 5

At KS5 homework is set when necessary, in the week. Independent research and learning is expected after every contact.

SCIENCE

Key Stage 3

In Years 7 & 8 the homework will only apply when there is no ELP for science and should consist of no more than 20-30 minutes per week

In Year 9, students have one lesson of Biology, Chemistry and Physics per week and should receive one homework of approximately 30 minutes every two to three weeks from each teacher.

All KS3 homeworks can be written, learning key words, internet search or class work extension.

Only the ELP will receive written comments and other feedback can be given verbally or via peer assessment or other means

GCSE or equivalent studies

The amount of homework set depends on the demands of coursework at any time, however there should be approximately two 40 minute homeworks per subject per week, ie one from each teacher.

Key Stage 5

The amount of homework depends on the demands of the course and the demands of coursework to be handed in but should be roughly equivalent to three to four hours per subject per week

TECHNOLOGY

Key Stage 3

Year 7: Homework is set every other week. Students should spend about 20 minutes on this work.

Year 8: Extended homework project set and homework set every 4 weeks.

GCSE or equivalent studies

One homework per week. Pupils should spend at least 40 minutes on their homework.

Key Stage 5

Homework is set every week. Pupils should be spending up to three hours on their homework.

Rewards and Sanctions To Be Applied By All Departments

Rewards

Whilst departments may have slight variation (e.g. Student of the week etc) departments are expected to reward using verbal praise, stamps, postcards, note in planner or letter home for either high levels of work or effort.

Sanctions

There may be some variation of these at Key Stage 5.

Non completion of homework is addressed initially by the subject teacher in question. Students should be given every opportunity to hand in work within the next 24 hours with a note in the planner to inform parents.

If no good reason is forthcoming from the pupil after this point, it will entail a short detention, note in the planner with a revised deadline.

Further non completion will result in a departmental detention, entry onto E-portal and a standard letter home.

Continued non completion of homework after this point will result in Senior Staff detention, entry on E-portal. At this point the issue should also involve the learning Manager.

Learning Managers have the best knowledge of individual students in their year groups and may inform departments that a different sanctions policy may be more suitable. However, departure from the above policy is determined by either Learning Managers or the SEN department.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- All teaching staff:
 - follow the department policy for the setting and marking of extension work.
 - follow the school policy for rewards and sanctions
 - liaise with SEN staff on setting work for students needing support
- Heads of Department/Faculty:
 - develop and monitor department practice is in line with school policy
 - develop, with their team, extension tasks which are integral to schemes of work.
 - respond to parents' queries and concerns about extension work in their subject area
- Head of Learning Support:
 - monitor homework set for SEN students and support offered
 - monitor and develop Homework Club
- Deputy Head i/c curriculum will have an overview of school policies and will monitor the appropriateness of the work being set.
- Students - record and complete all extension tasks set
- Parents - support students in managing and completing work; sign planners

MONITORING

The policy will be monitored by the following, as outlined in Roles and Responsibilities:

- Heads of Department/Faculty
- Deputy Head i/c Student Services will monitor intervention and related rewards and sanctions
- Deputy Head i/c Curriculum will monitor policies and standards of work set
- Key Stage Coordinators as appropriate

The Governors will be responsible for approving the policy and any amendments suggested.