



# Independent Learning Policy

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## 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 GCSE coursework assignments
  - 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.
- Students have a blank independent learning timetable in their planner and, if appropriate, a timetable for Extended Learning Projects for the year. The blank timetable should be completed upon negotiation with the student's subject teachers. This timetable is designed to provide an overview of the general pattern of extension work for the week.
- This student timetable aims to provide a structure which allows students to manage their workload whilst offering teachers flexibility in planning. Students are not usually asked to complete work for the following school day, in order to allow them to plan their workload.

***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.***

## EXTENDED LEARNING PROJECTS (ELPs)

In Years 7, 8 and to a lesser extent Year 9, students are set a number of Extended Learning Projects.

ELPs are set over a period of approximately three weeks and are published both in the student planner and on the Internet.

These projects are designed to develop skills such as creativity, enquiry, self managers and teamwork as well as developing subject knowledge. Students are set a maximum of two ELPs in each Learning Cycle. The Head of Department (or named other) will ensure that resources for the project are in place and will launch the project to the students in assemblies.

Extended Learning Projects are **compulsory** and all staff should follow the same procedures at the same time, providing equal opportunities for students. If a student does not complete an ELP, the sanctions should be applied as outlined below.

**In addition to Extended Learning Projects the department policies for all other independent learning is 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.

### **Key Stage 3**

Extended learning opportunities are built into the Key Stage 3 curriculum; they are used to research particular subjects, to complete lengthy written responses, to prepare for oral assessments, prepare for controlled assessments etc. The nature of the extended learning is such that it does not fit neatly into regular periods. A unit of work may include a series of lessons that are taught, without the need for extended learning, in preparation for a major assessed task which demands considerable extended learning input.

In order to avoid the setting of unnecessary work, and to increase the value of work that is set, English extended learning has been embedded in schemes of work when it proves beneficial in the development of skills and completion of tasks.

### **GCSE or equivalent studies**

At Key Stage 4, Extended Learning will be based around preparation for coursework tasks and the set texts. This involves students meeting deadlines and being self managers. It may be broadened to present on a topic or simply an extended writing and analysis task for coursework. Each Learning Cycle focuses on at least one area of the GCSE examinations, with Y10 dominated by Controlled Assessments. Extended Learning is a vital tool in the preparation for such assessments and will be set in order to prepare for them. As with Key Stage 3, the value of extended learning will be elevated through targeted assignment of tasks.

### **Key Stage 5**

At KS5 homework is set when necessary, in the week.

At all Key Stages there is a Learning Cycle Assessment every 7 weeks.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

### **Key Stage 3**

#### **Key Stage 3**

(See Humanities for Years 7 and 8 - In Year 8 students will be set a maximum of 2 homeworks per learning cycle, and these will be research based to encourage independent enquiry)

#### **Year 9**

One Geography ELP will be set during the year. Outside of the ELP, students will be set a maximum of 2 homeworks per learning cycle, and these will be research based to encourage independent enquiry.

### **GCSE or equivalent studies**

#### **Year 10 /11 ( One year course, four lessons a week)**

Independent study will be set for one hour per week – this may be divided into two half hour slots or one full hour depending on the task, to be completed at home.

#### **Year 10 /11 (Two year course, two lessons a week) -**

Independent study will be set once a week, for 30 minutes.

During the controlled assessment, students may be asked to do a small amount of additional enquiry.

### **Key Stage 5**

#### **AS /A2**

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

## **HISTORY**

### **Key Stage 3**

(See Humanities for Years 7 and 8 - Year 8 research topics will include Aspects of social life in Tudor England, Dangers and disasters in the 17th century and Victorian Life.)

#### **Year 9**

One joint History and Religious Studies ELP will be set during the year. Outside the ELP, research topics will be set every half term which will require students to investigate issues, present their findings in a variety of formats and make conclusions on their findings which will be presented to the rest of the class. These tasks will last 3 to 4 weeks. Topics to include: Who do you think you are? My family in the 21st century and Life in Britain 1940-1945.

### **GCSE or equivalent studies**

Other than course work 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 course work.

Year 13: Extension work is focused on The A2 research study. 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.

### **Year 8**

Students are taught Geography, History and Religious Studies as discrete subjects in 6 week teaching blocks. They will complete 1 Humanities ELP. Outside the ELP, homework will be set in accordance with each subject's policy.

## **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.

#### **Year 12 intermediate**

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.

## **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, but only if appropriate. Tasks may include the setting of regular vocabulary learning tasks, reading and writing exercises and when possible, listening exercises. 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 will not be set to be completed during school holidays at KS3.

### **GCSE or equivalent studies**

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 and set other work as appropriate. This will include preparation for the new 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, vocabulary learning,

translation work, essay writing, listening work, past exam paper questions and set other work as appropriate. Students also complete an "Article de la semaine" in which they summarise their extended reading. 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 may 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**

Students will be set extended learning activities according to which aspect of the subject they are following during that learning cycle, either citizenship or PSHEE. When studying citizenship during learning cycle 2 and 4 they will be given one compulsory extended learning activity per cycle. This will be related to the learning cycle assessment task. It will be set around the time of the assessment task and will contribute towards their assessment.

When students are studying PSHEE during learning cycles 1, 3 and 5 they will not be set compulsory extended learning activities. Instead students will be directed towards sources of information that support the learning undertaken in lessons. Students can then carry out further research at their own discretion. Due to the personal nature of this aspect of PSHCEE it is felt that students would benefit from accessing additional information if and when they need it.

### **GCSE or equivalent studies**

From Learning Cycle 2 to Learning Cycle 4, Year 10 students will be expected to complete the citizenship coursework requirements. Although it is a requirement that students complete coursework under controlled conditions, students will be asked to complete extended learning activities to support their coursework. This will include researching and carrying out active citizenship activities.

When students are studying PSHEE during learning cycles 1, 3 and 5 they will not be set compulsory extended learning activities. Instead students will be directed towards sources of information that support the learning undertaken in lessons. Students can then carry out further research at their own discretion.

In Year 11 students will be given one compulsory extended learning activity per learning cycle including both citizenship and PSHEE. This will be related to the learning cycle assessment task. It will be set before the assessment task as a way to prepare for this. It will also contribute towards their assessment.

## **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**

(See Humanities for Years 7 and 8 - In Year 8 homework will be set fortnightly and tasks will ensure pupils are able to develop their independent learning skills in a variety of ways. This homework should take no more than 30 minutes at a time).

#### Year 9

One joint Religious Studies and History ELP will be set during the year. Outside the ELP, Year 9 homework will be set fortnightly, as in Year 8 above.

### **GCSE or equivalent studies**

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**

Extended Learning Projects are not optional and all students are expected to hand in work that matches the abilities of the student. Consequently any failure to complete an Extended Learning Project will result in a departmental sanction being applied. The departmental rewards and sanctions for all extension work are outlined below:

### 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 forth coming 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.