

Independent Learning Policy

1. Aim of the Policy

To establish a learning culture where all students

- have the skills to develop their own learning and build on experience
- will be challenged to develop their analytical and reasoning abilities
- are encouraged to learn the skills needed to consolidate learning
- plan and prepare for future lessons
- adopt an imaginative, resilient approach to their studies
- employ research and study skills and show an awareness of independent learning
- co-operate and work collaboratively to be enthusiastic participants in all lessons.

2. Purposes of Independent Learning

2.1 Independent learning enables students to consolidate, reinforce and practise skills and understanding developed at school.

2.2 For the less able, independent work in the form of homework can provide the opportunity to consolidate their understanding of classwork with less time pressure.

2.3 For the more able, independent learning provides the opportunity for more challenging activities to be completed that involve higher order skills.

2.4 Independent learning also allows parents to be involved in the learning of the students;

2.5 Well planned activities also provide opportunities for the development of research, analysis and presentation skills.

2.6 Understanding independent learning tasks is important to train students in planning, organising their time, and meeting deadlines. It therefore develops self-discipline and responsibility.

2.7 Importantly, independent learning encourages ownership of learning.

3. Definition of Independent Learning

3.1 Independent learning is a learning strategy that fosters self-improvement through planned self-supported study by students, under the overall guidance or supervision of a teacher or teaching assistant. It can include learning in partnership with another individual or as part of a small group.

Being able to foster independent learning behaviours means that students know how to become better learners, they know what is expected of them and how to apply their skills and promote active learning outside of the classroom.

Possible independent learning methods may include:

- Exercises to practise knowledge and skills learnt at school
- Essay planning
- Drafting or making final revisions to earlier drafts
- Problem solving
- Proof reading written work
- Completing class work
- Responding to, or creating a thought provoking question
- Involvement in discussion work
- Peer and self-assessment
- Target setting – for example, in response to teacher feedback
- Reading to extend knowledge or prepare for the next topic
- Researching
- Bringing information in from home
- Learning key words in a subject
- Revision using SAM learning or MyMaths
- Use of other web-based revision sites e.g. BBC Bitesize
- Project work
- Simple experiments
- Making a model
- Finding ingredients
- Drawing/sketching

- Planning for activities in a group

3.2 Independent learning involves learning in class and at home, to develop ideas and skills within the subject area.

3.3 Independent learning tasks encourage the learner to be better prepared for the demands of the classroom.

3.4 Feedback will be given to enable students to self-assess, peer assess and be active participants in their own learning. (see Feedback and Marking Policy)

3.5 Students will be given opportunities to take part in independent learning tasks at school outside of normal learning hours at lunchtime or after school. The Learning Resource Centre is open weekdays from 8am until 5pm for students to access a working space to study.

4. Frequency of Independent Learning

4.1 Students are encouraged to use Independent Learning on a regular basis, in *and* out of lessons.

4.2 Lessons will focus on skills that students need for independent learning and teachers will provide opportunities for students to be in control of their learning and progress as much as possible.

4.3 Students will be expected to use the 'C3B4ME' strategy in all lessons. This is where they are encouraged to seek advice and information from three sources e.g. text books, peers, or the internet, before asking the teacher. What do you think about this part?

5. Responsibilities of Teachers, Students and Parents

Subject Teachers are responsible for:-

- Setting independent learning tasks that are relevant to the scheme of work and consolidate and/or stretch learning and/or prepare learners for subsequent classwork.
- Helping to develop the skills for independent learning so that they become an integral part of the way we learn within lessons.
- Differentiating tasks to provide stretch and challenge.
- Varying the type of tasks, and providing opportunities for students to draw on resources available outside of the classroom.
- Assisting with the recording of tasks for SEN students.
- Ensuring that students have opportunities in lessons to reflect and respond to their written feedback.

6.1 Students are responsible for:-

- Listening to the instructions and advice offered with regard to tasks set and recording details of the task in their organiser as directed.
- Completing tasks to as high a standard as possible and within the timescale set by the teacher or themselves (agreed with the teacher).
- Requesting additional help from a teacher should it be required.
- Responding to feedback from the assessment of the work.

6.2 The role of parents

The school firmly believes that successful education is based on a partnership between students, teachers and parents. We believe that parents have a particularly valuable contribution to make with regard to independent learning. We hope that parents will support the school by making it clear to their children that they value independent learning and explaining how it can help them to make progress at school. Parents will understand that independent learning is not simply 'homework'. It is the way that students work, independently, to further their learning, to challenge and stretch themselves and to prepare them for their future in education and work.

It is important that parents are involved with their child's independent learning. This can be done by:

- Talking about lessons frequently and ways of independent learning.
- Establishing good study habits by discussing organisation of both time and resources.
- Encouraging regular reading and the use of the Learning Resource Centre in school or the local library.
- Offering encouragement and taking an active interest (without actually completing the tasks themselves!).

6.2 Students in the Sixth Form

Students in the Sixth Form are expected to be responsible for their own work and subject notes. Staff will monitor that notes are taken and organised appropriately for the course. Providing notes for students to annotate is generally a more effective use of time and stronger basis for independent learning than having students copy out large amounts of text.

Sixth form students will be encouraged to manage their workload effectively, taking account of taught lessons, private study in school and work at home. As a guide, students should expect to spend at least as much time on a particular course outside of taught lessons as the time provided for lessons. Students are expected to use some of their free periods in school for private study. The sixth form study area provides a dedicated area for research and quiet independent learning. Additionally, the Learning Resource Centre is an excellent resource where students can also benefit from the advice, guidance and support of the school's Learning Resource Centre assistants. In some circumstances in year 13, students are granted home study. This gives students more responsibility for organising their own learning and increases the sense of independence required for moving on to higher education.

It is very important that students plan their other working and leisure commitments around their study commitments.

Year 12/13 students will be expected to work with increasing independence, in not limiting their studies to particular units of material, set for homework, but expanding their reading and developing their skills on the basis of their own initiative. This will involve consolidating learning,

planning and preparing for future lessons, research, extra work and revision on areas of priority.

7. Monitoring and Review

The key names person on the Senior Leadership Team, responsible for the implementation (on a whole school basis) of this policy, is the Assistant Head (Training and Development). Heads of Department are responsible for the implementation of the policy in their subject areas. Monitoring and support is provided by linked members of the SLT.

Committee responsible for review: Governors Curriculum Committee

Review Date: September 2013

Next review: September 2015