



HOE VALLEY SCHOOL INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

Person Responsible: Assistant Head Teacher
Date Adopted: Autumn 2020
Date of last review: Autumn 2024
Date of next review: Autumn 2025

To be read in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Policy, and Assessment Policy

1. WHAT IS INDEPENDENT STUDY?

Independent study is work that is completed outside of curriculum lessons. Independent study activities constitute any element of learning that is not necessarily directly supervised by a teacher. Independent study activities represent an extension or consolidation of the activities of the school curriculum.

2. WHY IS INDEPENDENT STUDY IMPORTANT?

Hoe Valley School believes that independent study is a vital part of the curriculum because it:

- Allows practice and consolidation of work done in class and allows preparation for future classwork
- Encourages independent thought
- Develops skills in using libraries and online learning resources
- Provides opportunities for a range of different learning activities and facilitates individual and group work
- Allows assessment of students' progress and mastery of skills and concepts
- Trains students in the planning and organisation of time
- Encourages ownership and responsibility for learning
- Provides opportunities for parental co-operation and understanding
- Prepares students for the world of work and higher education
- Encourages students to take part in 'Purposeful Practice' and embed key knowledge in long-term memory using retrieval practice.
- Fosters the development of metacognitive self-monitoring behaviours
- Provides opportunities for "flipped learning" such that students can explore the curriculum in more depth with their teachers

3. ENTITLEMENTS

All students from Years 7 to 10 have one lesson of timetabled “Independent Study” per fortnight within the school day, whilst current Year 11 will have 3 lessons per fortnight (a relic of their outgoing curriculum model).

Students are expected to complete a significant amount of their independent study at home; their single timetabled independent study lesson would be seen as an opportunity to seek guidance on approaches to learning from the supervising teacher. This also pays dividends when students are expected to revise for their mock and final exams, which simply cannot be achieved in school alone.

4. REWARDS & SANCTIONS

Students will be rewarded for excellent learning behaviours during a designated independent study lesson – see the Behaviour for Learning policy. Additionally, completion of high quality independent work will be rewarded by the student’s classroom teacher and could include:

- House points
- Verbal and written praise
- Post card or phone call home
- Displaying of work with the classroom and beyond

As in the world of work, there are consequences when deadlines are not met or when work is not completed to a satisfactory standard (if help is not sought). If students do not complete independent work and have not attempted to resolve any issues they have found with this they will receive a sanction which is logged on Edulink. The sanction is at the discretion of the teacher, but may include a detention and should also include a phone call home, should it be a regular occurrence.

5. WHAT KIND OF INDEPENDENT STUDY WILL BE SET?

Independent study for years 7 & 8 will be set in EBACC subjects only - 15 minutes per subject per week. Independent tasks should be carefully planned and directed by each Faculty lead, such that students have the same high-quality experience. All independent tasks should have a rationale behind them in terms of developing high-quality long-term memories, skills or learning behaviours. This could include self-quizzing using knowledge organisers, exam questions, Google Form quizzes or practice calculations for example. Whatever is set, should receive feedback for improvement which can take any form.

Independent learning for years 9, 10 & 11 is one hour per week per subject. HoFs have the freedom to direct their Faculties to set forms of study that are most suited to success in their own GCSE area. This could be a combination of self-quizzing using knowledge organisers, practice GCSE questions and whatever else is necessary within a teacher’s specific subject area.

Teachers set independent study tasks at the beginning of the lesson, which is then written into the Google Classroom which feeds into the student’s Google Calendar. Teachers set work that does not require the teacher supervising independent study lessons to deliver the learning.

6. SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT STUDY TIMINGS

| Year | Subjects | Duration/Subject | Hand in Time | Home Working |
|------|----------|------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 7-8 | EBACC | 15 Minutes | Weekly | Increasing as the terms progress |
| 9-11 | All | 1 hour | At the discretion of the teacher | A minimum of 1 hour a night should be expected |

7. WHAT WILL INDEPENDENT STUDY LESSONS LOOK LIKE?

It is expected that students come prepared to work independently during this time, ensuring they know what it is they need to complete and that they have the resources and equipment necessary to complete it. Where a student has completed all their independent study tasks and have nothing further to do in a independent study session, they should complete additional numeracy work on Dr Frost, continue to read their current book or use SENECA learning to consolidate the current learning in one of their subjects.

All independent study lessons should have periods of silence to ensure that all students are able to make the best possible use of the time they are given in School to complete this work.

The supervising teacher delivering the lesson will be available to provide support and guidance but it should be noted that they will not necessarily be a subject specialist for the tasks that have been set. It is important, therefore, that students ensure they are completely clear about what it is they need to do before they attend an independent study lesson. Students may use their Chromebooks during independent study sessions at the discretion of the teacher delivering the session. Students are permitted to use headphones during prep, as some prep may require them to watch tutorial videos or similar.

8. HOW CAN PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN?

Hoe Valley School recognises that the support of parents is of great importance. Our expectation of parents is that they should:

- Visit the school website / parent curriculum booklets to see what topic students are following
- Check their child’s Google Classroom, where appropriate, whilst prioritising independent study
- Provide a study space in the family home where independent study can be completed with minimal distraction
- Contact the school if they are concerned with the setting of Independent study (see Parental Complaints Policy)