

Dear Year 7 and 8 parents and carers,

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on Home Learning for Years 7 and 8. In particular, we will discuss how we are updating our approach to Independent Learning Booklets (**ILBs**) for the start of the Spring Term.

As you may already be aware, at The Norwood School we do not set discrete weekly homework tasks for students in Years 7 and 8. Instead students receive **ILBs** for each of their subjects. For a more detailed breakdown of our rationale for this please refer to the Independent Learning Guide shared at the beginning of the school year.

We are updating our approach to **ILBs** with the following aims:

- to achieve greater consistency between subjects
- to make **ILBs** easier to use
- to establish clearer expectations for students
- to develop a shared language around independent study between staff, students, and guardians
- to explicitly develop the good independent learning habits which students will need for study at Key Stage 4 and beyond

There are 3 unifying concepts which should be evident in the effective independent study of every subject: **Content**, **Skills**, and **Feedback**.

- By **Content** we mean: learning/revising what you need to know
- By **Skills** we mean: practising applying knowledge (for example with practice questions)
- By **Feedback** we mean: reflecting on strengths/weaknesses, recognising quality, and understanding/generating next steps

From our work with students in Key Stages 4 and 5, we know that our students tend to spend most of their time using **Content** techniques in their independent study (and these are often ineffective **Content** techniques), and very little time using **Skills**, or **Feedback** techniques.

These concepts will be used as the core structure of the **ILBs**. They will be signposted, so that students can recognise the type of study technique they are using, and consequently build good independent study habits.

Many of the other expectations will remain the same:

- Students are expected to spend a minimum of 30 minutes per week on independent study in each subject (45 minutes for core subjects)
- **ILBs** are integrated into lessons; teachers model how they are best used, and students bring them to lessons

- Teachers monitor students' work, and ensure there are systems for ensuring completion
- Although teachers are not expected to provide personalised written feedback, they regularly test students on the content and skills outlined in the ILBs

The ILBs for the first term will be checked by teachers in the first week back after the holiday; there will be after school catch-up sessions for students who have missing work. Students will start receiving their new ILBs for the Spring Term from the second week back.

It is our hope that through these updates, ILBs will provide the tools students need to effectively revise content, deepen skills through meaningful practice, reflect upon their performance, and take ownership of their learning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Clements (Independent Learning Coordinator)

Mr O'Sullivan (Deputy Headteacher)