



The Norwood School

Independent Learning Policy

June 2019

Independent learning Policy

(Draft)

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1. Aim/rationale

Independent learning provides students with the tools they need to take their learning beyond the classroom and develop the key life skills of independence, responsibility, resilience and active curiosity.

To achieve this, teachers must base tasks on sound pedagogical principles that 'make things stick' for students. They must also seek to remove barriers to independent learning, through a constructive dialogue between school, student and parents.

Homework is instrumental in:

- Consolidating work covered in class and embedding it in learning;
- Extending work covered in class to develop confidence;
- Bolstering learner independence, resilience and ownership;
- Developing a healthy curiosity in the larger world;
- Modelling and embedding effective reading and research skills;
- Preparing students for future learning;
- Creating positive learning experiences inside and outside of school;
- Involving parents and carers in their child's learning.

This policy works alongside The Norwood School's Fair Workload Charter, Marking & Feedback and Assessment policies.

2.0. The Norwood School Independent Learning model

At the Norwood School, homework, projects, revision and reading for pleasure are referred to as **Independent Study**.

2.1.0 Key Stage Three (7-9)

Independent Study differs in Years 7 & 8 to Year 9, due to different key priorities:

Key priorities for Years 7 and 8:

- *Secure effective transition from Key Stage Two and build on the knowledge, skills and understanding students have acquired;*
- *Develop good learning habits from the outset;*
- *Showcase students' work and raise the profile of secondary early years students;*
- *Foster and maintain enjoyment, enthusiasm and curiosity.*

Key priorities for Year 9:

- *Build a solid base of core knowledge, skills and understanding to enable successful transition to Key Stage Four;*
- *Help students see the relevance of subjects in terms of the larger world of education and employment;*
- *Ensure students can think in an informed way about their future career;*
- *Develop a range of independent learning and revision strategies.*

2.1.1. Years 7 and 8 Independent Learning Programme

In Years 7 and 8, there are two main aspects to Independent Study; the termly cross-curricular project and the Independent Learning booklet (ILB).

Year 7 are not set Independent Study tasks in the autumn term to allow smooth transition to secondary school. Instead, they will receive their Independent Learning Booklet (see section ii below) at the beginning of the academic year (although for the academic year 2019-20, these will be introduced in half term 2 of autumn term).

i) Termly cross-curricular projects:

Students receive their summer project during their induction interviews in Year 6. These are taken in and marked by Year 7 tutors/ Projects are displayed, shared and prizes awarded for exceptional work and effort.

Year 7 and 8 projects operate on a cross-faculty rota. A group of faculties take group responsibility for one cross-curricular extended project once a year in 7 and 8.

Year 7

When	Suggested Project	Suggested faculties responsible
Summer holiday (transition)	'Learning around the world)	Year 7 team
Year 7 Autumn term	-	-
Year 7 Spring term	'The Crowning Dales evacuation'	English, Geography, History, Drama, Dance, MFL
Year 7 Summer term	'Food glorious food-for thought'	RS, Citizenship, ICT, PE, Visual Arts, Science

Year 8

When	Suggested Project	Suggested faculties responsible
Year 8 Autumn term	Positive Language Campaign	English, Citizenship, ICT, RS
Year 8 Spring term	Travel Guide	Geography, History, MFL, Visual Arts
Year 8 Summer term	'Get Moving' Kit	Science, Drama, Dance, PE

Marking and feedback are shared across faculties responsible for a project. Feedback for the projects will provide detail on where students have been successful, how they could have been more successful, and teachers will comment on effort, commitment and time-management.

ii) The Independent Learning Booklet (ILB)

The ILB provides a clear structure for students in Years 7 and 8 for Independent study. It should include (for each subject):

- Key content for the course, arranged into units, modules or learning cycles;
- Clear guidance on how to memorise, revise and practice effectively;
- Relevant reading that students can complete around the subject;
- Possible relevant trips and visits that students could undertake outside of school;
- Links to online resources with relevant passwords/ instructions (Educake, Linguascope, Hegarty).
- Practice exercises/ tasks/ questions with answers/ models at the back so students can self-correct;

Students in Years 7 and 8 are expected to spend 30-45 minutes per subject per week using the ILBs.

The ILB will be one single booklet for all subjects for students to take home.

Teachers will measure their impact through regular informal assessment (e.g. progress tests, quizzes) and will refer to the ILBs to guide them in their revision.

If faculties use online independent study resources that generate usage data (e.g. Hegarty, Educake), then teachers should regularly use the data on student usage to reward and motivate, as well as review/ address low usage.

ILBs will be periodically recalled by the Year 7 and 8 pastoral team to monitor uptake and impact.

iii) Timeline for launch of new Independent Study model (years 7 and 8)

From the academic year 2019-2020, year 7 will not receive homework for the first half-term. The focus will be on acclimatising to their new environment and developing strong routines around organisation and preparedness.

For the academic year 2019-2020, year 7 will receive their Independent Learning Booklets for all subjects at the start of **half-term 2 of autumn term**. From then on, these will be given to year 7 students from the start of the year.

From the academic year 2019-2020, year 7 will receive their first project at the beginning of Spring Term. From academic year 2020-2021, Year 7 will receive a project at the beginning of every term.

Year 8 will receive their first collaborative learning project in **autumn term of the academic year 2019-2020**. They will receive their first Independent Learning Booklets in spring term of 2020. In subsequent years, they will receive them from the start of the academic year (see table below):

Timeline for 2019-2020:

When	Year 7	Year 8
Autumn term: Half term 1	No project set. Focus on transition and independent reading.	Cross-curricular project 1
Half term 2	ILBs introduced	
Spring Term	Cross-curricular project 1	ILBs introduced Cross-curricular project 2
Summer term	Cross-curricular project 2	Cross-curricular project 3

Timeline for 2020-2021:

When	Year 7	Year 8
Autumn term:	ILBs introduced	ILBs introduced
	No project set. Focus on transition and independent reading.	Cross-curricular project 1
Spring Term	ILBs introduced Cross-curricular project 1	Cross-curricular project 2

Summer term	Cross-curricular project 2	Cross-curricular project 3
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2.1.2 Year 9 Independent Learning Programme

In year 9, Independent Study is set weekly, with emphasis on securing the fundamental knowledge, skills and understanding for successful transition into Year 10.

Tasks set should fall under the following categories:

Preparation: Learning future content through independent research or directed reading.

Extension: Continuation/ elaboration of learning to a more sophisticated level of detail or difficulty, or doing something new with what they have learnt.

Consolidation: Embedding skills/knowledge acquired in lessons through practice/ repetition/ testing.

Review: Developing a range of revision strategies in a specific area of study.

Independent Learning tasks will be set weekly on Show My Homework and monitored by teachers and faculty leaders. Students are expected to spend 30-45 minutes weekly per subject, or bi-weekly for subjects taught less than 3 periods per week.

2.2. Key Stage Four Independent Learning Programme

Year 9 into 10 is a key transition point in students' academic journey, and can accompany a dip in attainment if students do not develop effective revision and independent learning strategies. Students need to cope with higher demands on their time and commit larger quantities of academic material to their long-term memory to be recalled under exam conditions.

As with Year 9, Independent Learning tasks in Years 10 and 11 are set under the categories of **preparation, consolidation, extension and review**. Students are expected to spend at least 60 minutes per week per foundation subject, or 90 minutes per core subject on independent study.

In Key Stage 4, faculties should ensure that:

- Systems of monitoring are tightly regulated and that students in Key Stage 4 are supported but also held accountable for completing work to deadlines;
- Programmes of support/ intervention are in place from the beginning of year 10 in order to address underachievement;
- Students in their subjects have the materials and guidance they need to revise effectively in their subject;
- PLCs (Personalised Learning Checklists) are in place for students to navigate through what they can and cannot yet do confidently;

- Communication with parents is regular and timely in order to avoid the widening of gaps in knowledge and decline student engagement;
- Independent Learning tasks should space out practice and interleave old with new content and ensure that students are made to retrieve information from memory, solve problems, elaborate/ extend the knowledge and widen their repertoire of learning styles.

In Key Stage 4, the pastoral teams will ensure that:

- Students are given clear guidance on how to effectively manage their time (see guidance sheet in Appendix 1. downloadable from the school website);
- Students complete an exam preparation and revision timetable and stick to it (see Appendix 2);
- An overview is maintained of where students are falling behind;
- Students' well-being is monitored in terms of stress, anxiety and potential depression associated with the build up to exams, with appropriate safeguarding measures taken;
- Parents know how to support their child in the lead up to exams;
- Students and parents are aware of what it means to be 'exam ready' (see 'Exam Ready' guidance booklet on the school website).

2.3. Key Stage Five Independent Learning Programme

Students face considerable challenges when coming from the intervention-rich experience of Year 11 to Key Stage 5, due in part to the largely linear nature of Key Stage 5 exams. Teachers should set tasks that also fulfil the functions of **preparation, extension, consolidation and review**. In addition, tasks set should involve the following:

- Extensive reading and effective note-taking;
- A range of advanced research strategies;
- Developing awareness of the wider world, culture and workplace that pertain to the subject;
- The development of critical thinking skills.

Teachers do not need to mark note taking, but students books/ folders will be scrutinised for evidence of organisation, presentation, independent learning, assessment criteria and student curriculum plans.

Students in Years 12 and 13 should commit to 5 hours of independent study. This includes use of study periods.

Students are expected to have completed preparatory work prior to lessons; failure to do so may result in their forfeiting the right to attend a lesson until all outstanding work is completed in their own time, through Compulsory Catch-up Club (after school in the Study Zone). Teachers will record this as yellow infringement on Behaviour Watch.

When a faculty has used sanctions/ home contact to no effect, a referral can be made to the SSSP (Student Services Support Programme). Students will then be registered and required to study independently from more structured work provided by subject specialists until students have made the necessary progress.

All faculties will provide an independent study booklet for the SSSP, and **will ensure PLCs are in place for each student**. Student-friendly versions of PLCs will be used by students, to structure and plan their Independent Study.

Due to the sheer quantity of content to be covered, students in Key Stage 5 must be able to independently learn key course content and read extensively outside of the classroom. This entails a more learner-centred model at Key Stage 5 which could involve a 'flipped classroom' approach, where students undertake the learning themselves for the follow-up work to be completed in the lesson.

3.0 Expectations and responsibilities

Independent Learning tasks should be engaging, varied, meaningfully integrated into curricula and relevant to lessons. Staff will regularly monitor and 'light-mark' tasks in line with the school's Marking and Feedback Policy.

All students should be encouraged to attend extra-curricular provision that widens their interests along the larger curricular dimensions of sports/fitness, the Arts, cultural awareness, communication and research skills.

Teachers should aim to promote wider reading through the Independent Learning tasks they set and within their curriculum.

3.1 Setting of homework

All core tasks are to be set on Show My Homework (SMHW). Tasks will be clearly explained by teachers in lessons, and physical copies of any necessary resources provided.

If parents or students have a query about homework, the student should seek the teacher out in the first instance or the parent should contact the form tutor. It is not an expectation that staff communicate with parents or students via the SMHW messaging function.

Teachers setting homework should not assume that students have access to ICT at home and ensure tasks are accessible to all.

3.2. Monitoring and Feedback

The table below outlines what tasks are set, how often they are monitored and how feedback is delivered.

Year	Tasks	Frequency	Monitoring/ Feedback
7-8	Independent study, using ILBs	Weekly	<p>Students can self-correct at home/ tick off and reflect upon tasks they have completed using the ILBs.</p> <p>ILBs are recalled by tutors termly</p> <p>Teachers check impact through informal assessment</p>
	Extended, Cross-curricular Projects	Termly	<p>Personalised, written feedback given by faculties attached to a project.</p> <p>Completion of projects monitored and logged via Show My Homework.</p> <p>Recognition of achievement through showcase events and prominent display of work.</p>
	Reading for pleasure	Weekly	<p>Monitored by tutors and made a feature of form time oracy activities.</p>
9	Preparation, Extension, Consolidation and Review tasks.	Weekly (30-45 minutes per subject per week)	<p>Monitored by class teachers on a weekly basis, HOFs on a monthly basis and SLT on a half-termly basis (deep dives)</p> <p>Homework is light-marked.</p>
	Reading for pleasure	Weekly	

			Monitored by tutors and made a feature of form time oracy activities.
10- 11	Preparation, Extension, Consolidation and Review tasks.	Weekly 60 minutes per subject per week (Foundation subjects) 90 minutes per subject per week (Core subjects)	Monitored by class teachers on a weekly basis, HOFs on a monthly basis and SLT on a half-termly basis (deep dives/ line management).
12-13		Lesson to lesson as appropriate. 4 hours per week in year 12 5 hours per week in year 13	Monitored by class teachers on a weekly basis, HOFs on a monthly basis and SLT on a half-termly basis (deep dives/ line management).

3.3. Facilitating Independent Study.

Recommended approaches for staff when planning Independent Learning tasks:

- Planning tasks that involve students actively retrieving information from memory, as opposed to merely practicing where no recall is required;
- Spacing out practice and interleaving practice of different topics or subjects;
- Including tasks that involve students trying to solve a problem with the foundation of knowledge they have;
- Ensuring students can elaborate on prior knowledge by doing something new with material they already know;
- Encouraging students to widen their repertoire of learning styles, as opposed to catering for preferred learning styles.

Practical considerations to bear in mind:

If students are required to print, arrangements must be made to facilitate student access to printers/ resources.

It should not be assumed that all students have access to ICT to complete homework, or benefit from having a quiet place to work at home. The library plays an important role in providing access to ICT and space to work, before school (from 8:00- 8:30), during break and lunchtime and after school (from 2:50-5:00). Regular Independent Study clubs in KS3 and KS4 are also in place as a supportive measure for students, and are planned and organised by faculties in the first instance. Coordination of provision should then take place

via heads of year. Support staff can be allocated to clubs via the SEN department.

It is also desirable that faculties promote and exploit the library as a resource, through inclusion of reading lists, well-planned library lessons and research tasks.

3.4. Promoting reading

Extensive reading for pleasure has proven benefits for cognitive development and academic performance, as well as well-being and happiness. It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to communicate to students the joys and benefits associated with reading for pleasure.

It is an expectation that students are always in the process of reading something for pleasure, fiction or non-fiction (e.g. periodicals, newspapers, journals, magazines, blogs, and articles).

Tutors will facilitate sharing and discussion of what students are reading. Form time activities will include silent reading in Years 7 and 8.

In year 7, a key focus for tutors from the outset is to get every student reading.

Faculties will provide reading lists that include a range of text types and develop interest and curiosity in the subject. Reading opportunities will feature prominently in schemes of learning and will develop the skill of reading a range of texts independently and strategies to deal with unfamiliar language.

3.5. Promoting numeracy

The Norwood School is committed to removing poor numeracy as a barrier to academic performance and access to future opportunities.

Faculties will further develop students' functional Maths skills through including relevant aspects of numeracy in their own curricula, and having an awareness of what mathematical skills/ students acquire in Key Stage 2.

Independent project tasks in Years 7 and 8 will aid independent mastery of key Maths skills as relevant to the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

Weekly Maths homework in Year 9 will consolidate a solid grounding in the key Mathematical skills and concepts required for Key Stage 4 study.

In Years 10 and 11, data-driven targeted intervention will take place in the form of tutorials and extra-curricular sessions designed to bridge the emergent gaps in learning.

The ILBs in Years 7 and 8 will also contain key functional Maths content (e.g. times tables, how to divide) in line with the school approach to teaching these (e.g. the agreed method for long division).

Numeracy also forms part of the tutor time programmes across all year groups and tutors should work consistently within the agreed programme for the year group.

3.6. Sanctions/ rewards

Positive reinforcement should be the cornerstone of teacher feedback on Independent Learning tasks. Completion of work to a good or improved standard can be addressed in the following ways:

- A positive phone call home;
- Giving Behaviour Watch Points;
- Faculty rewards systems (reward trips, positive postcards home);
- Recognition in Year assemblies/ tutor time;
- Featuring students' work in classroom display;
- Referring explicitly to good pieces of work in the lesson;
- Introducing a competitive element (e.g. through league tables for usage of Hegarty Maths)

Non-completion of Independent Learning tasks can be addressed by teachers, departments and faculties in the following ways:

- Logging via the 'No Homework' tab on **Behaviour Watch**, which will trigger a text message home;
- Arranging a class detention for the student to complete the outstanding homework task;
- Phoning a parent to discuss barriers to homework completion
- Faculty-led homework clubs;
- For repeated non-completion, a faculty-led longer homework detention;
- Issuing a faculty homework report;
- If homework is not being completed across a range of subjects, tutors to issue a homework report.

Appendix 1: Time-management guidance (downloadable from school website)

How can I effectively manage my time?

We would like to encourage students to begin planning and managing their time in order to establish effective routines at this stage in the lead up to their GCSEs in a year's time. We have considered ways in which students can successfully organise their time across the week to ensure they consolidate their learning and revise in a meaningful way.

Students will be guided through this in school, but it is important that they are able to take ownership of this at home, and that they are supported in enabling this to happen by their families. At this stage students must reflect on the amount of time they devote to independent study beyond their time in school, both in the evenings and the weekend.

This plan reflects a week, with time broken down into 30 minute sessions. We best learn and retain information in smaller chunks. **This means 20 minutes of active learning, a 5 minute break and 5 minutes checking what has been learnt.** The success to managing time in this way is about establishing a routine across the week—students need to find a rhythm! At the same time, many students share with us that they go to bed late or play on computer games or use their phones into the early hours of the next morning. Students need to get into the habit of 'lights out' at 10pm, in order to rest as growing adolescents, and be alert and ready for learning the next day. It is important that students begin now to work out what works best for them.

Steps to completing this plan—a guide for students...

1. *Quantify your work...what do you have to consolidate and revise?* You need a list of topics for each subject you are studying. The more specific, the better. If you are unsure, ask your teachers about the topics you are covering in Year 10. Make a big chart that details all of your topics.
2. *Prioritise your aspects of your learning...which topics need most attention?* Using your list of topics, write a number next to each one from 1 to 10, indicating which topics need most attention in your plan. However, you must cover everything!
3. *Establish what you have to do in your week...what other commitments do you have?* Block out across the week the activities that you have to do in addition to your school work. This will include responsibilities in the family, clubs you might attend and other commitments. This is where reflecting on this with your family is so important.
4. *Structure your independent study time...what will you revise and when?* Ideally, you would spend at least 3 hours a day outside of your lessons reviewing your learning and completing additional work in relation to what you are studying—in the end this will just become revision. In the lead up to exams, you should be spending at least 6 hours a day at the weekends and in the holidays revising. Vary your revision each day, as you are less likely to get bored if you revise lots of smaller chunks of learning from different subjects. Plot this on your plan.
5. *Reward yourself...how will you motivate yourself to work in this way?* It's so important that as well as the time you dedicate to independent study, you also reward yourself. For every 2 hours of study, you should give yourself 1 hour of reward. This will look different for everybody; it might involve meeting up with friends, spending time on a video game, or even the time you devote to social media! Plot this on your plan!
6. *Tick off what you have achieved...how will you know what you're confident in and what you need to work on?* Reflect on how well you are doing and keep going back to your big chart of topics.

We hope this is useful and can support students in maximising their potential to achieve in their exams. Students should speak with Mr Harvey or their Form Tutor for help in completing this.

Appendix 2: Exam preparation and revision template

Exam Preparation & Revision Timetable							
	Monday 19 th January	Tuesday 20 th January	Wednesday 21 st January	Thursday 1 st February	Friday 2 nd February	Saturday 3 rd February	Sunday 4 th February
7 - 7:30							
7:30 - 8							
8 - 8:30							
8:30 - 9							
9 - 9:30							
9:30 - 10							
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