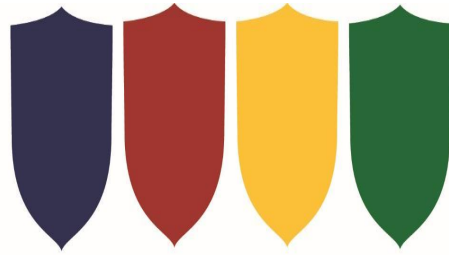


Whitstone School
inspiring futures



Independent Learning Policy

Person Responsible: Assistant Headteacher T&L

Date: July 2023

People Involved: Teaching & Learning Committee

Reviewed: Annually

Adopted: July 2023

Review due: July 2024

Whitstone School Independent Learning Policy

Vision

“The evidence shows that the impact of home learning, on average, is five months additional progress.” (The Education Endowment Foundation).

Our vision for independent learning at Whitstone School is to promote academic growth and independence for our students. We believe that independent learning should be purposeful and relevant to what students are learning in class, while also being manageable for staff to set, mark, and provide feedback on.

At Whitstone School, our independent learning assignments will prioritise tasks that develop knowledge and understanding, encourage independent learning, and are differentiated to meet the diverse needs of our student body. These tasks will be cohesive with subject schemes of learning, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

To achieve this vision, we will provide our students with a clear timetable of independent learning and communicate expectations consistently. We will also involve parents in the independent learning process by providing clarity about the tasks and offering guidance and support where needed.

Our overall goal at Whitstone School is to provide our students with the tools and resources they need to succeed academically and personally, while also promoting a culture of lifelong learning and personal growth.

Independent learning is defined as work that is set to be done outside of the timetabled curriculum. It contains an element of independent study and is important not only in developing effective study techniques but also in raising student attainment.

Independent learning is set to:

- Encourage students to develop effective study skills and time management techniques and the self discipline needed to be lifelong learners.
- Consolidate, reinforce and extend the material covered in lessons.
- Prepare students for new learning activities.
- Enhance opportunities for independent learning
- Involve parents and carers in student learning.

Independent Learning at Key Stage Three

Key Stage Three independent learning tasks are set to take up to one hour to complete with one task set per school day from Monday to Friday. Mathematics, English, Science, and Languages have weekly independent learning tasks, while Geography and History tasks are set on a weekly rotation. During the weekends, students have the option to complete our 'Weekly Creative Challenge.' This challenge will be set from a selection of subjects including Design Technology, Computing, Art, Dance, Drama, Music, or PE and involve completing a challenge linked to that subject.

There is no set schedule that dictates when a class teacher assigns an independent learning task. However, in order to ensure a consistent experience for all students, there is a timetable that indicates when students should complete their tasks. This timetable can assist students in managing their time and establishing a routine for task completion. Staff are aware of this timetable and will ensure that students always receive at least 24 hours' notice before a task is due.

Week A		Week B	
Monday	English	Monday	English
Tuesday	Maths	Tuesday	Maths
Wednesday	Science	Wednesday	Science
Thursday	Geography	Thursday	History
Friday	Languages	Friday	Languages
Weekend	Weekly Creative Challenge	Weekend	Weekly Creative Challenge

EPraise is an accessible platform for teachers, students, and parents/carers to set, monitor, and collaborate on independent learning tasks. Teachers create and assign tasks with due dates, while monitoring completion. Parents/carers view and monitor tasks, support their child's progress, and provide encouragement.

We believe that independent learning should be relevant to each subject's curriculum and contribute to the development of key skills and knowledge required. Therefore, each subject sets tasks that align with their curriculum and provide opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of the subject matter.

For more details on what the independent learning tasks look like in each subject, please refer to the specific subject guidelines provided below. The subject guidelines offer a simple summary of what independent learning looks like in each subject, including the type of work that students can expect to be assigned.

English	Students will be set tasks that help them develop a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of key vocabulary. Additional challenge tasks are set which focus on developing their reading or writing skills.
Maths	Students will either be set a task from their Maths Independent Learning booklet or an online task (using My Maths). Online work needs to be 'checked out' and booklet work needs to be brought into school for checking.
Science	Students will be given a Science Knowledge Organiser which contains the key information from the topics being looked at in class. They will complete online quizzes weekly to test their knowledge and understanding. Students will also be given an extended piece of work for home once a half-term, which would look at improving and developing their working scientifically skills.
Geography and History	The purpose of Geography and History independent learning is to support the learning that has taken place in the classroom, this could include the following: research tasks, worksheets, learning new key terminology, a piece of written work relating to the lesson.
Languages	Students will have set vocabulary to learn each week. They will use the Languages Vocabulary exercise books provided to show their revision.
Weekly Creative Challenge	Each week one of the following subjects will set a challenge for students to complete. Completion is optional but those who complete the challenge will be rewarded for their efforts. Subjects: PE, Dance, Drama, Music, Art, Design Technology, Catering, Computing.

Independent Learning at Key Stage Four

At Key Stage Four, independent learning tasks are set weekly, and students are expected to spend up to one and a half hours completing them. These tasks are set and monitored through EPraise, and teachers have the flexibility to vary the type of work based on the specific needs of their students. This may include a range of activities, such as answering exam-style questions, revising and memorising key material, completing coursework, or consolidating work covered in lessons. By providing a variety of independent learning tasks, we aim to support students in their learning, encourage them to develop independent study skills, and ultimately help them to achieve the very best grades they can at GCSE.

There is no set schedule that dictates when a class teacher assigns an independent learning task. However, in order to ensure a consistent experience for all students, there is a timetable that indicates when students should complete their tasks. This timetable can assist students in managing their time and establishing a routine for task completion. Staff are aware of this timetable and will ensure that students always receive at least 24 hours' notice before a task is due.

Week A		Week B	
Monday	Option A	Monday	Option B
Tuesday	Option C	Tuesday	Option D
Wednesday	English	Wednesday	English
Thursday	Maths	Thursday	Maths
Friday	Science	Friday	Science

Non Completion of Independent Learning Tasks

Staff will log any instances where students fail to complete independent learning tasks through EPraise. Any independent learning task that is not completed or handed in on time will result in a one-hour Senior Leadership Team detention which always takes place on a Monday. During this time students will have the opportunity to complete any outstanding independent learning tasks. Parents/carers will be notified of the detention via EPraise. Students who fail to attend the detention will be required to spend the following Tuesday in Compass.

Responsibilities

The role of the Student

- To listen to all independent learning instructions and ensure comprehension.
- To check EPraise to ensure independent learning is completed correctly and on time.
- To attempt all work to the best of their ability.
- To inform the class teacher of any difficulties that arise.
- Attend Senior Leadership Team detentions for non-competition of tasks.

The role of the Parent/Carer

- To support by helping to provide a quiet space to work where possible.
- To support your child with organisation and time management.
- Help your child to establish an independent learning routine using the timetable to support.
- To use EPraise to monitor the independent learning that your child is completing.
- To offer support and guidance if necessary.
- To ensure your child attends any Senior Leadership Team detentions which are set.

The role of the Class Teacher

- Set independent learning tasks using EPraise and following the timetable.
- Provide an explanation of independent learning tasks and ensure all students understand what they have to do.
- Ensure all independent learning given is purposeful and links directly to the curriculum.
- Set independent learning that is appropriate to the student's ability.
- Monitor independent learning regularly and make sure students are completing it to the best of their ability.
- Log non-completion of independent learning tasks using EPraise.
- Communicate with parents if there is a problem regarding independent learning.

The role of the Subject Lead

- Monitor the setting of independent learning in their subject using the EPraise tracking facility.
- Run a termly report to be discussed in Line Management meetings that analyses the setting of independent learning tasks and the monitoring of submission.
- Ensure that independent learning tasks are effective and follow the agreed protocols.
- Monitor the non completion of independent learning in their subject and support as appropriate.
- Liaise with the relevant House Leader where additional support is needed.

The role of House Leader

- Monitor student completion of independent learning across their house and liaise with parents / Class teachers / Heads of Subject as necessary.
- Identify students who are not completing independent learning on three occasions in three subjects or more.
- Speak with the student to identify potential barriers to learning and seek to address these issue

The role of Ambition

- Support any SEN students who are struggling to access or complete independent learning.
- Run an Independent Learning Support group for SEN students who need it.

The role of Senior Leaders

- Lead the running of Senior Leadership Team detention.
- Ensure clear communication regarding the setting of independent learning to students, parents and staff.
- Guide staff through Professional Development and research to the effective use of independent learning.