



HIGHFIELDS SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

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Rationale

At Highfields, we believe establishing good study habits and routines from Year 7 is vital in developing students' resilience, confidence, and independent study skills. It is an integral part of the learning process, enhancing and improving their progress over time.

Independent study supports:

- The development of good study habits from Year 7 (students knowing how to learn and being confident in using a range of strategies to do so).
- Retrieval/consolidation of substantive knowledge, this enables students to know and remember more. There is an alteration in their long-term memory.
- Formative assessment which enables teachers to address student misconceptions through responsive teaching.
- The development of students' vocabulary.
- The development of cultural capital. It provides students with opportunities to broaden their understanding of each subject they study and of the wider world.
- Parents/Carers being involved in their child's learning.

Planning for Independent study should:

- Be explicit in curriculum plans. This supports staff with managing their workload and ensures parity of experience for all students. (NB – tasks should be differentiated to suit the needs of students).
- Where possible (or when it is appropriate) utilise digital technology to ensure that teachers can easily check completion of independent study and it is self-marking, particularly at KS3.
- Be deliberately planned (spaced and interleaved) to support students' retrieval of knowledge and to enable students to practice subject specific skills (e.g. map skills in Geography).
- Provide opportunities for students to practice a range of strategies to rehearse, reduce and recall substantive knowledge and disciplinary skills.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to assess how well students can retrieve and understand knowledge and use this to ensure that their teaching is responsive.
- Prepare students for future learning (e.g. watching skills videos in food preparation for practical lessons combined with a forms quiz to check understanding).
- Provide opportunities for students to develop their vocabulary and to practice using vocabulary in a range of contexts.
- Provide students with opportunities to develop their cultural capital that will support contextualisation of learning in lessons (e.g. Shakespeare text, WW1 for war poetry).
- Be specific (e.g., not just revise/finish off work/bring in ingredients).
- Be monitored for completion so to accurately complete progress reviews.
- Be recorded on Bromcom.

Organisation of subject knowledge to enable independent study:

- To support students and their parents/carers with independent study. Substantive subject knowledge and curriculum resources should be easily accessible and well organised.

- In Years 7 and 8, this will be in the form of termly Knowledge Maps for each subject (up to 4 sides of A4 for core subjects and 2 sides of A4 for none core subjects). These will provide the essential subject knowledge that students need to know, understand and be able to retrieve to make progress. Knowledge maps will be available for parents to access on the school's website and for students they will be available electronically on Teams/OneNote. (NB - these are not a replacement for resources used to teach the curriculum).
- In Years 9 to 13, departments will use their chosen platform to share curriculum resources with students.

For 2023/24, development time will be provided for departments on CPD days to create Knowledge Maps for Years 7 and 8.

**Friday 27th October - Autumn term Knowledge Maps
Monday 8th January - Spring and Summer term Knowledge Maps**

Further guidance will be provided for HoDS at the beginning of the Autumn term.

Expectations for time allocated to independent study at each key stage:

Years 7 and 8
Core subjects will set 30 minutes each week. (Year 7 to begin week 4 of the Autumn term)
Non-core subjects should have the equivalent of 20 minutes each week (2 - 3 hours over a half term). (Year 7 to begin week 5 of the Autumn term)
Year 9
Core subjects will set 30 minutes each week. (Triple science would be x3 separate independent tasks.)
Non-core subjects should have the equivalent of 30 minutes each week (3 hours over a half term).
Year 10
A minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes per week for each subject (triple science would be x3 separate independent tasks).
Additional time for NEAs or preparation for examinations will be required at times throughout the year.
Year 11
A minimum of 40 minutes per week for each subject (Triple science would be x3 separate independent tasks.)
Additional time for NEAs or preparation for examinations will be required at times throughout the year.

In line with the principles of VESPA, the Sixth Form Independent Study Programme is designed to reflect the natural 'flow' of an academic year for Sixth Form students. In Year 12, the expectations of students gradually increase, building up to their school examinations. For Year 13 students, the level of expectation increases earlier in the academic year, building towards their period of revision in preparation for their final examinations.

The number of hours listed below is the total amount of independent study that students should be expected to complete each week. This will include work set by staff, but also proactive study tasks beyond this, such as revisiting prior learning, reducing class notes etc. There is not an expectation that staff direct the entirety of a student's independent study.

KS5	
Year 12 Students	
Term	Hours per week for each subject
Autumn 1	3 to 5
Autumn 2	4 to 6
Spring 1	5 to 7
Spring 2	5 to 7
Summer 1	5 to 7
Summer 2	4 to 6
Year 13 Students	
Autumn 1	4 to 6
Autumn 2	5 to 7
Spring 1	5 to 7
Spring 2 onwards	Exam preparation / revision

Providing additional support for students.

Heads of Learning School, in conjunction with the SENCO, should plan to use Higher Level Teaching Assistants/Teaching Assistants to support students who may, at times, find completing independent study to the best of their ability challenging. Heads of School may also provide additional support to students who are experiencing a range of barriers to learning which impacts on their ability to successfully complete independent study.