

Independent Learning Policy



The Cottesloe School

Policy Type:	Non Statutory
Reviewed by:	Mrs Hooley (Assistant Headteacher - Teaching and Learning) Mrs Baldwin (Head of School) Mr Youngs (Assistant Headteacher - Sixth Form) Ben Cleland and Carolyn Stirk (Governors)
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Last reviewed:	New Policy
Next review:	Summer Term 2027

Rationale

At The Cottesloe School (TCS), we believe that students independently working outside of the classroom is an essential part of the learning process. We call this independent learning. It reinforces and extends classroom learning, fosters independent study skills, and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Independent learning often plays a key role in raising a student's level of attainment¹. At TCS, we value the importance of family time and leisure time for all students in order to achieve balance in their lives, and to benefit from wider opportunities. Therefore, our independent learning policy aims to provide clear guidelines for staff, students, and parents/carers to ensure that independent learning is purposeful, manageable, and beneficial. This policy must be used in conjunction with TCS' Independent Learning Companion Guide.

Aims

- To enhance students' understanding of the curriculum and consolidate their classroom learning.
- To develop independent study skills, 6Cs, and self-discipline.
- To encourage a partnership between school and home in supporting students' learning.
- To provide opportunities for students to engage with and explore their interests beyond the classroom.

Principles

1. **Quality over quantity:** independent learning should be meaningful and relevant to the curriculum, rather than merely a set amount of work.
2. **Adaptive:** independent learning tasks should be tailored to meet the diverse needs of all students, including those with SEND.
3. **Feedback:** students should receive timely, constructive feedback on their independent learning to support their progress and development.
4. **Variety:** independent learning may take various forms, including written assignments, reading tasks, problem solving, research, data analysis, evaluation, projects, revision, and where appropriate practical activities.
5. **Parental involvement:** parents and carers are encouraged to support their child's independent learning but should not complete tasks on their behalf.
6. For all year groups, independent learning assignments will be set using subject Google Classrooms. The assignment will contain brief details of the task and any resources to support completion. This allows parents/carers and students to view all assigned independent learning tasks.

¹ The Education Endowment Foundation states that homework has a positive impact (5+ months) on progress compared to those who do not engage with homework.
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework>

Expectations

For students:

- Check Google Classroom daily.
- Complete independent learning to the best of their ability and submit it on time.
- Take responsibility for managing their independent learning schedule, begin tasks early enough that there is time to seek help when needed.
- Students must complete work that is completely their own. AI tools are only to be used to support their work and, must follow the guidance set out in the school's [AI Policy](#). Clear acknowledgement of the use of these tools is expected in any instance where AI has been used. AI should **not** be used to complete tasks and create submitted work. It could be used to support planning, idea exploration, or clarification etc.
- Engage with feedback as set out in the school's [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) to improve their future work.

For teachers:

- Set independent learning that is relevant, purposeful, and aligned with the curriculum.
- Set aside time in lessons to explain the task and set a deadline that enables students to complete high quality work, ideally a minimum of a week.
- Use Google Classroom to clearly communicate independent learning tasks, including deadlines and success criteria.
- Provide timely feedback that helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Feedback may take the form of: whole class, verbal, written, peer or self assessment, and may include other opportunities to act on the feedback with a view to improve.
- Understand the impact of AI misuse when planning independent learning. In addition to guiding students to the appropriate use of AI by explaining that inappropriate use of AI could be deemed as plagiarism and/or deter from learning, and how to acknowledge AI through the correct referencing system.

For parents/carers:

- Encourage and support their child in completing independent learning.
- Provide a conducive environment for studying at home or encourage their child to attend the interventions available to students in school.
- Communicate with teachers if there are concerns regarding independent learning, if additional support is needed, or if a situation arises that prevents their child from completing the independent learning.
- A parent/carer who is concerned about the amount of time their child is spending on independent learning (whether this is too much or too little) should contact their child's subject teacher or form tutor in the first instance.

Schedule

- Independent learning tasks will be set fortnightly. With the exception of Core Subject (English, Maths, and Science) who may set tasks weekly but within the time allocation detailed below.
- The size of the task will depend on the subject and year group.
- The following is a guideline for the amount of independent learning expected per fortnight. It excludes any time required to properly and fully prepare for any assessments including, but not limited to, mock examinations and external examinations:

Key Stage 3:

Year 7 and 8

Subject cluster	Teaching hours per fortnight per subject	Independent learning minutes per fortnight per subject	Max. minutes set per fortnight per subject cluster
English, Maths, Science	7	60 - 120	360
History, Geography	3	20 - 30	60
French or German	3	20 - 30	30
Art and Design	4	20 - 30	30
Drama, Ethics, ICT, Music	2	20 - 30	120
TOTAL			600

NB: If maximum minutes allocated: 10 hours a fortnight / 1 hour a day (Monday - Friday)

Year 9

Subject cluster	Teaching hours per fortnight per subject	Independent learning minutes per fortnight per subject	Max. minutes set per fortnight per subject cluster
English, Maths, Science	7	60 - 120	360
History, Geography	3	20 - 30	60
French or German	5	30 - 40	40
ICT	1	20 - 30	30
Choices subjects	3	20 - 30	160
TOTAL			650

NB: If maximum minutes allocated: 10 hours and 50 minutes hours a fortnight / 1 hour and 5 minutes a day (Monday - Friday)

Key Stage 4:

Year 10 and 11

Subject cluster	Teaching hours per fortnight per subject	Independent learning minutes per fortnight per subject	Max. minutes set per fortnight per subject cluster
English, Maths, Science	8	60 - 120	360
Option subjects	5	60 - 120	480
TOTAL			840

NB: If maximum minutes allocated: 14 hours hours a fortnight / 1 hour and 24 minutes a day (Monday - Friday)

Key Stage 5:

The significance and role of Independent Learning at Key Stage 5 represents the most pronounced change in the nature of the qualifications being studied after GCSE. Teachers will focus on guidance and understanding within the classroom; the student is expected to develop a secure knowledge and context outside of the lesson. As a general rule, students should spend an hour carrying out independent learning outside of the lesson for every hour spent inside the classroom with a teacher.

More information about the nature of independent study at Key Stage 5 can be found in the TCS Independent Learning Companion Guide.

Year 12

Total Learning hours per fortnight	Teaching hours per fortnight for 3 subjects	Additional study (EPQ/Core Maths/Further Maths) per fortnight	QSR time per fortnight	Personal study time per fortnight	PSHCE & Exam hour per fortnight
50	27 (9 hr / subject)	2-5	9	7-12	2

NB: Year 12 Students will have between 16 and 21 hours of independent learning time via the QSR and personal study time a fortnight. Assuming a student makes the most of this time, they can expect to be carrying out 6 to 9 hours of independent learning at home.

Year 13

Total Learning hours per fortnight	Teaching hours per fortnight for 3 subjects	QSR time per fortnight	Personal study time per fortnight	PSHCE & Exam hour per fortnight
50	27 (9 hr / subject)	9	12	2

NB: Year 13 Students will have 21 hours of independent learning time via the QSR and personal study time a fortnight. Assuming a student makes the most of this time, they can expect to be carrying out 6 to 9 hours of independent learning at home.

Support for Independent Learning

Any student is welcome to attend 'Independent Learning Club' which will be held at lunchtimes.

If the deadline for an independent learning assignment is not met, or if the independent learning completed is of a poor quality, this will be recorded electronically on the school's management system (Bromcom). Students will be expected to complete/improve the independent learning. Should students receive three independent learning negative Bromcom behaviour events in a week they will need to attend 'Independent Learning Club' to access support with completing independent learning.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this independent learning policy will be monitored by TCS' Senior Leadership Team and Curriculum Leaders through:

- Regular feedback from students, parents/carers, and staff.
- Analysis of independent learning completion rates and the impact on student achievement.
- Periodic reviews of the policy to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, earlier if there are any legislative changes.