Independent Learning policy 2019-20

	Our plan for education to understand the world and change it for the better
CURRICULUM Who we are	Thomas Tallis is a creative comprehensive school committed to a broad and balanced entitlement curriculum. Evidence informed, we use excellent teaching, data, and CPD to build quality, fairness and success for our young people for the long term. Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum enhance progress for everyone. Research and development focuses our thinking and improves our teaching and learning. We scrutinise our achievements and seek to improve them for all of our children. Our Habits of persistence, discipline, imagination, inquisitiveness and collaboration permeate everything we do. All our achievement and curriculum plans are based on this.
INCLUSION What we do	Inclusive Tallis enables our young people to understand themselves in a happy community characterised by positive peer pressure. Decision-making humanely balances the needs of individuals in community: we look for creative solutions to problems. We use feedback in all aspects of our life to develop young people's independence and improve our service. Our character values, which help develop character for learning as well as personal development are fairness, honesty, kindness, respect and optimism. They permeate everything we do. All our inclusion plans are based on this.
COMMUNITY How we work	Community Tallis aims to commission, sustain and model the best possible context for our students and our school to learn and grow, seeking enrichment and cultural capital for all our students. We know, understand and work with our community inside and outside school. We work in a national context with local knowledge of how students and staff flourish. We are committed to sharing and collaborating with other schools for the common good. Governors support our strengths and challenge strategically. Our community framework of connecting, communicating and collaborating permeates everything we do. All of our community and resourcing plans are based on this.

Jon Curtis-Brignell / Elizabeth Church
Governors Committee : Learning & Achievement
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At Tallis we believe that independent learning forms a vital part of students' learning experiences, helping to embed knowledge and skills acquired in class and providing young people with an opportunity to develop a range of crucial learning habits including independent thinking, creativity, resilience and initiative.

Defining Independent Learning

Independent Learning combines:

- The homework tasks set in order to complement the teaching and learning in the classroom;
- The revision of key content and skills in order to deepen students' understanding;
- Metacognition (students taking ownership of their own learning and understanding the best way to revise)

Research in the last decade has begun to focus on the relationship between independent learning and student achievement and has shown a clear resulting improvement, particularly for students at secondary school. According to The Education Endowment Foundation, the impact of homework on secondary learning is consistently positive (leading to on average five months' additional progress), whilst Hattie's Visible Learning assigns it an effect size of 0.64. However, beneath these averages there is a wide variation in potential impact, suggesting that how homework is set is likely to be very important.

The EEF has published guidance for setting effective homework / independent learning. They advise that:

1. Planned and focused activities are more beneficial than homework which is more regular but may be routine or not linked with what is being learned in class.
2. The broader evidence suggests that homework should not be used as a punishment or penalty for poor performance.
3. A variety of tasks with different levels of challenge is likely to be beneficial.
4. The broader evidence suggests that the quality of homework is more important than the quantity. Students should receive specific and timely feedback on homework.
5. Have you made the purpose of homework clear to children (e.g. to increase a specific area of knowledge, or fluency in a particular area)?

Why is independent learning important?

- It can develop *inquisitiveness*, by providing opportunities for long term research and other work.
- It can develop *collaboration*, by involving parents and others in the learning process and so providing an important motivational function.
- It can develop *persistence*, by allowing students to develop their ability to work independently.
- It can develop *discipline*, by allowing valuable practice and extension of skills, knowledge and understanding learned in the classroom.
- It can develop *imagination*, by allowing students to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom.

TALLIS HABITS *"Learning to understand the world and change it for the better"*

INQUISITIVE:
Wondering & questioning
Exploring & investigating
Challenging assumptions

COLLABORATIVE:
Co-operating appropriately
Giving & receiving feedback
Sharing the product

PERSISTENT:
Sticking with difficulty
Daring to be different
Tolerating uncertainty

DISCIPLINED:
Crafting & improving
Reflecting critically
Developing techniques

IMAGINATIVE:
Using intuition
Making connections
Playing with possibilities

While it is important that we continue to have a dialogue about the nature of independent learning, underpinning this is the systematic habit of planning, setting, doing, checking and feeding back on independent learning as a planned part of the curriculum.

Independent learning should:

- Be a planned part of the curriculum, beneficial to student learning, not an afterthought.
- Be clear, well scaffolded, and be able to be done independently, with minimal support.
- Have just the right amount of challenge. Not so challenging that students give up, but not so simple that they are not stretched.
- Have considered the resources that students will need, and any further support, to complete the work to a high standard – including any use of ICT.
- Be monitored for completion and act as an integral part of the ongoing learning cycle.
- Have elements that encourage curiosity and enquiry to flourish. Such independent learning can be completed in the time slot allocated, but that wouldn't stop a student going on a flight of excellence that sees him or her lost in learning that is wholly worthwhile.

Effective independent learning strategies include:

- Flipped learning - preparing for the next lesson
- Online learning, eg SAM learning
- Research or presentation-based tasks
- Extended enquiries / booklets - there is some evidence that homework is most effective when used as a short and focused intervention (e.g. in the form of a project or specific target connected with a particular element of learning) with some exceptional studies showing up to eight months' positive impact on attainment.
- Revision for high frequency low stakes tests
- Preparing for formal assessments
- Reading (with something checking it has been completed)
- Tasks which can be peer- or self-assessed

We will use the following principles for independent learning in 2019-20:

- We will refer to 'homework' as 'independent learning', in order to emphasise the responsibility that students should take for their own learning
- We have a clear policy on using the above as a list of effective independent learning tasks shared with students and parents
- We publish an official independent learning timetable published and shared with parents
- Where possible, independent learning tasks are built clearly into schemes of learning – an area that needs to be developed through the school
- We use some curriculum development time this year to continue to develop independent learning booklets at KS3
- Departments need to create an independent learning catch up slot with escalation to an SLT detention for failure to complete – see flow diagram

Frequency and amount

Studies suggest that there is an optimum amount of independent learning of **between 1 and 2 hours per school day (slightly longer for older students)**, with effects diminishing as the time that students spend on independent learning increases. Therefore, the school will aim for the following amount of Independent Learning to be set per night:

Key Stage	Year Group	Amount of Independent Work
KS3	Year 7	Up to 60 minutes

	Year 8	
KS4	Year 9	At least 60 minutes
	Year 10	90 minutes
	Year 11	2 hours
KS5	Year 12	5 hours per subject per week

Key Stage 3 Expectations

Published timetables have been drawn up to support the setting of independent learning across all subject areas. There is a suggested duration of around 30 minutes per allocated slot in Year 7 and Year 8. These timetables should act as a guide for setting independent learning; teachers are encouraged to take ownership of any tasks set and ensure that independent learning is spread evenly through the half term due so that students are not over loaded at the beginning or end of the term.

Key Stage 4 Expectations

In Years 9, 10 and 11, it is expected that students should have between 60 and 90 minutes of independent learning per subject per week. We expect that by Year 11 students should be completing two hours independent learning per day, building up from approximately 60 minutes per day in year 9 and 90 minutes per day in year 10.

Key Stage 5 Expectations

It is expected that for every hour of lesson time students in the Sixth Form will do one hour of independent study as 'independent learning'. Staff should set independent work that amounts to this **quantity and get students to note down clearly what is expected in their planners.**

It is expected that all Independent Learning will be set and monitored for completion using PARS. Students in all year groups will access independent learning through the Insight platform. Students in Years 7 to 11 should continue to note work set in their planner.

Independent learning and teacher workload

Given wider concerns surrounding teacher workload, we encourage teachers to find methods of setting and monitoring independent learning that do not add unnecessarily to their workload. Many of the effective strategies listed above should require minimal supervision, monitoring and / or marking and our advice where possible is to restrict the setting, monitoring and feedback of home learning to within lesson time. Over time, Independent Learning booklets designed as part of a scheme of learning will reduce workload.

JCB / EH, September 2019

Appendix 1: Tallis Homework Escalation Flowchart

Tallis Homework Failure Procedure

Curriculum Redirection

- **Student fails to complete homework**
  - Reset work if unusual
  - Pars entry
- **Failure to meet new deadline**
  - Refer to study room 1316 for all students 1331 for SEN
- **Teacher detention**
  - **Student fails to attend teacher detention**
  - **Persistent failure to complete**
  - Contact home and tutor
- **Curriculum leader detention**

Escalation

- Repeat CL detention for HW → **Students referred to homework support**
- Failure to attend CL detention → **Students referred to SLT detention on Friday**
  - CL adds detention to Pars by Thursday lunchtime
  - School notifies parents and carers
  - PWT collects students from Friday tutor time

Failure to attend → **Internal Exclusion**

Homework Support is 4 days of compulsory attendance at an after school homework class for an hour each day

SLT is a detention from 3.15 to 4.30 on Friday.