



INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY

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At Tallis we believe 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.

Aims of this policy:

- Ensure consistency in the approach to independent learning for students across the school
- Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to independent learning

Defining Independent Learning

Independent Learning combines:

- The **homework tasks** set in order to complement the teaching and learning in the classroom or through remote learning
- 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)

Background

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. The school closures in March 2020 have encouraged us to review our independent learning policy, building on last year's experiences and exploring how it should work in conjunction with remote learning.

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 quality of homework is more important than the quantity. Students should receive specific and timely feedback on homework.

5. The purpose of homework needs to be clear to children (e.g. to increase a specific area of knowledge, or fluency in a particular area).

Independent learning practice and recommendations:

- Independent learning should be set each week on PARs with resources clearly available through Teams.
- It should be a planned part of the curriculum, beneficial to student learning, and work effectively in conjunction with both school-based and remote learning.
- Tasks must be clear, well scaffolded, and be able to be done independently.
- There should be just the right amount of challenge. Not so challenging that students give up, but not so simple that they are not stretched.
- Considerations need to be given to resources that students will need, and any further support, to complete the work to a high standard – including any use of ICT.
- Independent learning should be monitored for completion and act as an integral part of the ongoing learning cycle.
- There should be elements that encourage curiosity and enquiry to flourish.

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 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

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 and in the listed subject areas:

Year 7&8

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
English	Maths	Science	Geography	History
RE*/Computing**	Drama*/Dance**	Art*/Music**	Languages	DT

*A-week **B-week

In KS3 students should be spending 30-45 minutes on each homework task.

Year 9

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Option E	Option F	Option D	Option C	Science
English	Maths	Science	English	Maths

Year 10

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Option F	Option E	English	Option D	Option C
Maths	Science	Maths	Science	English

Year 11

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Option C	English Lit	Option D	Option E	Option F
English Lang	Maths	Science	Maths	Science

In KS4 students should be spending between 60-90 minutes on each homework task.

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.

Tallis will be proactive in ensuring:

- Staff, students and parents understand independent learning involves the completion of tasks which complement knowledge and skills taught in lessons.
- The official independent learning policies are placed on the website and parents are clearly informed about expectations with regard to independent learning and how it works with remote learning.
- Where expectations are not met, there is a clear escalation process which is published and followed (see appendix 1).

Summary

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.

JCB/EH September 2019.

Updated: WA September 2020

Appendix 1: (to be adapted to follow new procedures regarding collection from zones.)

