

## **Independent Learning and Homework Policy**

### **1. PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES**

Independent Learning is a crucial skill that all our learners must work towards. They must be able to plan, monitor and evaluate aspects of their own learning to develop the metacognitive and cognitive skills required to become effective self-regulated learners.

Although there will be times within the taught curriculum where students will be required to work independently, this policy refers to any work or activity which students are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own, in groups, or with the support of parents or carers. Independent learning can take place during our dedicated timetabled slot, Period 6, or at home as 'homework'.

The Key Purposes of Independent Learning at Braunton Academy

- To reflect on the day's learning to consider what went well and what needs further development.
- To reflect on, and act upon, feedback given by peers or teachers.
- To organise learning resources effectively including managing the presentation of exercise books or folders.
- To establish gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding and to put an action plan in place to secure the learning.
- To 're-present' the day's learning in a format that best suits the learner.
- To commit to memory, using a range of cognitive strategies, the key elements of subject knowledge.
- To practise applying knowledge and understanding in a range of exercises from textbooks, study guides, websites or past papers.
- To practise practical skills either independently or as part of extra-curricular clubs.
- To read widely for pleasure and to develop a deeper understanding of topics studied.
- To undertake research in preparation for new topics or to deepen knowledge and understanding of ongoing topics.
- To undertake creative projects either individually or collaboratively with others.
- To prepare for formal assessments through well-planned revision activities.

### **2. ORGANISATION OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING & HOMEWORK**

Homework will be posted on *Class Charts*, an online platform which all students and parents/carers have access to. This will give information on the tasks set by the teacher for

the student, with links to relevant documents or websites, and the date the work needs to be handed in. Some tasks are also linked to *Google Classrooms in some subjects*.

During Period 6, it is expected that students will arrive at the session equipped with a reading book and with all the necessary resources to complete their planned tasks.

### 3. EXPECTATIONS AND ENTITLEMENTS

The Academy has built in a period of 30 minutes at the end of each day which is focused on Independent Learning. All students undertake this study time either in their tutor bases, the library or in The Study depending on their Additional Learning Needs. During this time, the expectation is that students maintain an atmosphere of 'library quiet' so that all students can remain focused on their learning.

We also provide a supervised 'Homework Club' each evening in the library, offering students the chance to use computers and a quiet space for them to study and complete homework tasks.

#### a) KEY STAGE 3

The Academy also will set independent learning tasks to be completed at home using the following allocation at **Key Stage 3**.

SUBJECT	GUIDELINE	Time
English	Weekly reader using <i>Sparx Reader</i> . <i>Fortnight</i> spelling, punctuation and grammar tasks. Additional meaningful extended tasks of various types may be set – research, extended writing, drafting, redrafting etc.	1 hr
Mathematics	Weekly task set using <i>Sparx Maths</i> .	1 hr
Science	Weekly task related to taught units.	1 hr
Languages	Weekly task in either French or Spanish.	20 mins
Design & Technology	Tasks set approximately every two weeks to continue to support class work.	30 mins/week
Computing	One termly task.	30 mins/week
Geography	One task every half term.	1hr/half-term
History	One task every half term.	1hr/half-term
Belief & values	One termly task.	1hr/term
Art	One termly task.	1hr/term

Due to the nature of the timetable, the night that homework tasks will be set varies according to the teaching group and so a fixed date timetable is not issued.

Teachers should not set homework tasks to be completed for the next day but should give a clear deadline for each task so that students can plan their study appropriately.

Tasks should be scaffolded as appropriate to support students with Additional Learning Needs.

In Years 7 and 8 it is expected that students will spend between 30-40 minutes per subject each night. In Year 9, this should be extended to 45-50 minutes per subject each night.

#### b) KEY STAGE 4

In **Key stage 4**, students can expect to be given a homework task to complete in each subject area on a weekly basis. The type of task will vary depending on the subject and the needs of the course. Students should be made aware that even when a formal task has not been set, it is their responsibility to engage with their subjects so that they:

- Understand the content of the subject matter they are learning
- Commit key knowledge and terminology to memory
- Apply their learning to exercises, questions, quizzes, new situations
- Identify gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding and develop action plans accordingly
- Undertake planning and preparation for NEAs as required

Key Stage 4 students should spend on average, 2-3 hours each day on independent study in total. (30 minutes per day are completed in Period 6)

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

i) SUBJECT TEACHERS are expected to:

- Set appropriate and purposeful independent learning and homework tasks on a regular basis that will allow students to consolidate learning from lessons or to research new aspects of learning. This will also include adapting certain tasks for students that require it (e.g. SEND needs or EAL needs)
- Check that all tasks have been completed to an acceptable standard and on time.
- Give prompt and appropriate feedback to students on what they have done well and further areas for improvement.
- Complete Mid Term Assessments (MTAs) each term to give feedback to parents / carers on the standard of homework completed using the 1-4 grade system. (Appendix 1)

ii) TUTORS are expected to:

- Review a student's approach to independent learning and homework in the termly Progress Review meeting with the student.
- Support students in developing metacognitive strategies that will help them with independent learning in P6
- Maintain a purposeful learning environment in P6

iii) STUDENTS are expected to:

- Accept that deadlines must be kept.
- Find out what work has been missed if they have been absent as a result of a trip or activity and catch up on it. Being away on the day that homework is set is not an excuse for not doing it.
- Resolve problems with homework tasks before the deadline. If necessary, students should see the member of staff concerned for help in good time.
- Take a pride in doing their best.
- 

iv) PARENTS / CARERS can help their children by:

- Supporting them with their independent work at home by helping to create a good space for study, or if this is not possible, encouraging their child to attend Homework Club in the Library after school each afternoon.

- Taking an active interest in what has been studied in the day and asking questions about what needs to be done for homework.
- Using the parent / carer login to *Class Charts* to support their children to meet all deadlines.
- Acting as a 'sounding board' for ideas.
- Helping to test knowledge so that learning can be secured into the long-term memory.
- Contacting their child's tutor / Head of Year if there are any problems that might affect their child's ability to complete homework or to raise issues relating to homework.

## 5. INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

### a) Incentives

Developing the habits of a self-regulated learner brings its own intrinsic rewards. Students should feel more confident and successful in their learning and should be making progress in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding. Being able to plan for, monitor and evaluate independent learning will give students more control over their learning which should contribute to their wellbeing as they progress through the Academy.

Students will be able to gauge how successfully they are acquiring the skills of self-regulation following each Mid-Term Assessment by looking at the grade awarded by their subject teachers for Homework.

Particularly good effort with independent learning and homework tasks will be rewarded on *Class Charts*. Rewards may also come in the form of stickers, stamps, or postcards.

### b) Sanctions

If students are not working productively during their independent learning sessions and are disturbing the learning of others, they will be removed from the session to work in a different space. This will lead to an after-school detention on the following evening with SLT. Persistent removal will lead to coaching in how best to manage this time.

If students fail to complete their homework, the teacher will inform parents through *Class Charts*. If the situation does not improve, the student may be placed on a departmental report, be referred to their Head of Department, Head of Year, have a letter sent home, or have their parents/ carers invited in to discuss the matter with staff to agree an action plan.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

a. Class teachers, tutors and Heads of Year will monitor the setting and completion of homework for students through *Class Charts* and inform Subject Heads/Head of Year and/or the Deputy Head of any concerns.

b. Subject Heads will monitor and quality assure the homework tasks set in their departments through the diagnostic tools in *Class Charts*.

- c. The Deputy Head will review the implementation of the Homework Policy annually in collaboration with all middle leaders.
- d. SLT and the Trustees Committee group responsible for teaching and learning will review the policy and impact regularly.

## APPENDIX A : MID-TERM ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTORS

### HOMEWORK / INDEPENDENT LEARNING

#### **Grade 1 – Excellent**

- You self-manage your independent tasks extremely well.
- You plan, organise and complete tasks to the best of your ability.
- You always meet your deadlines.
- Your independent work shows that you are making excellent progress in your learning towards developing the knowledge, skills and understanding you need for the subject.

## **Grade 2 – Good**

- You usually self-manage your independent tasks well.
- You usually plan, organise and complete tasks to the best of your ability.
- You usually meet your deadlines.
- Your independent work shows that you are making good progress in your learning towards developing the knowledge, skills and understanding you need for the subject.

## **Grade 3 – Requires Improvement**

- You need to focus more on self-managing your independent tasks.
- You need to consider the way that you plan, organise and complete tasks.
- You sometimes fail to meet your deadlines.
- Your independent work shows that you are making some progress in your learning towards developing the knowledge, skills and understanding you need for the subject.

## **Grade 4 – Cause for Concern**

- You have not yet established how to work independently.
- You need to work hard to plan, organise and complete tasks seeking help where necessary.
- You regularly fail to meet your deadlines.
- Your independent work does not yet reflect your progress towards developing the knowledge, skills and understanding you need for the subject.

## **Guidance for teachers**

- Grades should be awarded using a 'best-fit' method.
- The Grade 1 category should only be given if most of the criteria have been met and this should not be the 'default' setting.
- Heads of Department and Heads of Year should be aware of those students whose grades are at Grade 3 or 4 as some form of intervention will be required to bring about an improvement