



Whitby School

Independent Study Policy

School Governance Status

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Review dates	By Whom	Approval date
May 2026	Staff and governors	6 July 2026

Signed by the Chair of Governors:

WHY IS INDEPENDENT STUDY IMPORTANT?

Independent Study is valuable for the following reasons:

- It helps pupils to make more rapid progress in learning
- It allows pupils the opportunity to develop the practice of working independently, this method of working is vital in the later stages of secondary education and beyond
- It helps pupils develop skills learned in the classroom
- It involves parents and others in the pupils' work for their mutual benefit
- It can provide opportunities for long term research and other work that benefits from being developed over a longer period of time
- It gives pupils valuable experience of working to deadlines and forms a link with various methods of study crucial to success at secondary school.

THE NATURE OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

At Key Stage Three, we have a system whereby there are two types of independent study:

Longer tasks: These last over a period of time between two weeks up to a maximum of four weeks. Longer independent study may be published on the Google classroom, which is accessible from the School website. Tasks may also be issued to pupils in a written format.

Shorter tasks: These will be set each week in Mathematics, Science, English (Literacy), ICT and MFL, and will usually last no more than 15 minutes. These tasks may be written work, but may also be preparation exercises, revision, research or reading. Occasionally they will be used to complete class work, although this will be rare.

KEY STAGE 3 INDEPENDENT STUDY

independent study Subjects	Long/Short independent study
English	In years 7-9, pupils are expected to read widely (fiction and non-fiction). Additionally, they will get research tasks and/or be asked to complete classwork.
Mathematics	In years 7-10 independent study is set using Sparx. All pupils are able to access the interactive Learning Journey and resources, and are expected to refer to this at regular intervals to support their classwork. Classes and individuals will be advised to do so by their class teacher as appropriate.
Science	pupils will be issued A5 Independent study booklets for each topic. A topic is approximately 4 weeks in duration. Some parts of this booklet will be set to complete at home, some parts will be completed in lessons. After three topics there will be an assessment, and pupils will be given directed revision to complete at home via the google classroom. This will be supplemented by a trial using the online learning platform Seneca Learning to set homework.
Art	Independent study is set to support classwork: this usually takes the form of research and practical tasks and sometimes learning keyword spellings. It is not set every week, but is set when it is useful to prepare for and support classwork.

Design & Technology	independent study or independent study and revision is set regularly in all areas of the Design Technology curriculum. independent study is set in DT to: • Encourage independent learning and study, including revision for assessments • Review and consolidate recent learning • Extend and challenge previous learning • Prepare for the next stage of learning, e.g. research or investigate • Ensure spelling and understanding of subject specific words and key terms • Allow parents to be involved in their child's learning Year 7 and 8 pupils will be issued independent study task once a fortnight and on average should take 20 minutes to complete tasks. Year 9 pupils will be issued independent study once a fortnight and on average should spend 30 minutes to complete tasks. independent study is generally set on Google Classroom and occasionally will be paper based. pupils who do not have access to Google Classroom at home or need support are welcome to use the IT room in the department before school from 8.30am, any break time, lunch time or after School.
Drama	Independent study is set to support classwork: this usually takes the form of research tasks, completing work started in class and on occasion learning lines. It not set every week, but is set when it is useful to prepare for and support classwork. Year 9: pupils are issued with an independent study booklet at the beginning of the course. Tasks are set to support classwork and learning. This may include writing up notes from lessons, learning lines and rehearsal.
Geography	Key Stage 3 Independent Learning is set via a specific google classroom for each year group, this is to support consistency across the key stage. pupils complete work online and submit via google docs to support tracking. Key Stage 4+5 independent learning tasks as appropriate to the curriculum with case study or research set to support depth of learning and skills. Independent learning will include revision for both internal and external examinations.
History	Independent study will be a mix of short independent tasks that could be revising for a test or completing a piece of online work, learning a list of key words or researching a topic prior to the lesson. This is set every two weeks.
ICT	Two tasks set per half term. The independent study is located on Google Classroom with submission dates indicated. pupils complete the tasks electronically or on paper if appropriate. IT room M1 is available at break, lunchtime and after school if pupils do not have a computer or internet access at home.
Religious Studies	A combination of long (four-week) and short, independent study tasks (set every two weeks) as appropriate to the curriculum.
MFL	Online vocabulary practice <i>Quizlet</i> given every week. Vocabulary linked to Sentence Builder folders used in lessons/ to exams/ to the content of lessons. Exam preparation/ independent study as required. Independent study will be set through Google Classroom. Check daily for updates.
Music	pupils are set revision from their knowledge organisers, which they receive for each half-termly topic. pupils may also be set short listening tasks to prepare for the next lesson.
PE	pupils may do independent studys set - occasionally to rarely - in KS3 to pre-load for lessons or research to prepare - pre-loading. More able and interested may select tasks to do from the PE Super Curriculum.

KEY STAGE 4 INDEPENDENT STUDY

English

independent study will not be set for the following day unless it is a short piece of research and has been discussed with pupils prior to the independent study being set. independent study will not always be written – teachers will aim to incorporate a range of ideas into their planning.

Mathematics

In year 11 the independent study is more flexible as pupils will be set exam practice questions and past papers at the discretion of their teacher. However the main platform is Sparx. The focus for independent study in year 11 is addressing gaps or weaker areas. All pupils are invited to attend the Wednesday after school sessions where members of the maths department will be able to provide targeted support.

Science

For all teaching groups in Years 9 and 10 pupils will be issued A5 Independent study booklets for each topic. Topic lengths are variable. Most of this booklet will be assigned for pupils to complete at home.

In order to develop retrieval and revision skills, Y11 pupils will be set, approximately weekly, exam question sheets for biology chemistry and physics topics, starting with unit one topics in the autumn term, running sequentially through the paper one and paper two units.

This will be supplemented by a trial using the online learning platform Seneca Learning to set homework.

We strongly advise pupils purchase a revision guide from the department office (at cost price) as this will help with independent study and exam and assessment preparation.

Art

Y10. Approximately 4 tasks per half term depending on term length.

Y11 Weekly tasks but some may roll over two weeks.

Often, this will be to complete work that has been started in class or to create supporting work (for example, to research an artist or process, take photographs or create an artist study in a different media or technique).

DT Product Design, Engineering and Hospitality & Catering

Year 10 and 11 pupils are issued independent study weekly and are expected to spend a minimum of 45 minutes to complete tasks. In year 11, independent study tasks will focus on exam preparation to include key terms, topics and concepts as well as completing practice questions and past papers.

independent study is often set on Google Classroom or is paper based when appropriate. pupils who do not have access to Google Classroom at home or need support are welcome to use the IT room (T1) in the department before school from 8.30am, any break time, lunch time or after School.

Drama

pupils are often asked to research material, learn lines and attend extra rehearsals as part of their independent study for drama. This will also include completion of coursework and written work throughout the year. Tasks are set on google classroom and in some instances student will be set a specific written task to support classwork/learning. We set this work as and when necessary.

Electronics

At present, GCSE Electronics pupils in Year 10 and 11 can expect at least one independent study every two weeks, which should take up to one hour to complete. This will often take the form of structured questions and exam style questions from the WJEC GCSE Electronics resources. When coursework is being completed, pupils are expected to write up their report in draft form as a continuous process. Progress with this will be monitored frequently. At other times in the year, such as near exams or tests, independent study will take the form of revision and practice questions and exam papers.

Geography

pupils will be given tasks which either consolidate what has been done in class or extension work, looking into case studies. In Year 11, following the trial exam, pupils will be given focused tasks based on their performance.

Health and Social Care

All Key Stage 4 pupils will log their independent study in the back of their class book and will need to complete a table of this in their planner.

History

Tasks are ongoing revision and memory development through the use of a revision and independent study booklet and google classroom tasks. These are short and structured activities that could be creating revision resources or practising assessment/exam skills that are weekly activities. These will be checked regularly to ensure completion and feedback will be offered. In addition, there may be pre-reading ahead of starting a new topic. All resources are available via google classroom.

ICT

One independent study task per week. Each year group has their own independent study booklet which is located on Google Classroom. IT room M1 is available at break, lunchtime and after school if pupils do not have a computer or internet access at home.

Yr 11 independent study due every Thursday

Yr 10 independent study due every Tuesday

Year 9 independent study due every Thursday

MFL

Online vocabulary practice *Quizlet* given every week. Vocabulary linked to Sentence Builder folders used in lessons/ to exams/ to the content of lessons.

Exam preparation/ independent study as required.

Independent study will be set through Google Classroom. Check daily for updates.

Extension suggestions such as Podcasts, Duolingo and Memrise.

Music

pupils continue to complete short listening and appraising and revision independent study tasks, building on and embedding their knowledge and understanding of key musical terms and devices learnt at KS3. pupils must attend their instrumental or vocal lesson each week and are expected to practise five times a week. pupils are strongly encouraged to get involved in extracurricular musical activities as this really enhances their skills and progress in all areas of the course.

RS

pupils will receive a revision task for a mid or end of unit test, in the following lesson, approximately every four weeks (after approximately seven lessons). Reading and written tasks will be set as required by the teacher for the following lesson. Additional independent study will be set including learning key words and researching issues that are being studied.

Sports Studies

GCSE PE (Sports Studies)

All pupils will be issued with independent study once a week. This could be either a stand-alone task or working on their ongoing assignments. Sometimes there will be retrieval HW and use of the EverLearner platform is utilised to embed understanding on current topics as well as for retrieval/revision and pre-loading in preparation for future lessons.

BTEC Sports Award L1/2 and BTec Tech Award L1/2

pupils will not always be issued with independent study on a weekly basis - there will however be times where independent study will be issued in order to reinforce concepts studied in class and especially when revising in preparation for the Unit 1 external test. Sometimes there will be retrieval tasks for Unit 1 and use of the EverLearner platform is utilised to embed understanding on current topics as well as for retrieval/revision and pre-loading in preparation for future lessons.

In Core PE

pupils may do independent study set - occasionally to rarely - in core PE to pre-load for lessons or research to prepare - pre-loading. More able and interested may select tasks to do from the PE Super Curriculum.

Vocational Courses

A large part of these courses involves ongoing coursework. All pupils will have written work that they have to do as part of this coursework and these will be assessed. pupils will have work towards these that they must complete at home.

Whitby Sixth Form

Pupils at Whitby Sixth Form will be expected to study outside of lessons. Independent studies are an important aspect of all Sixth Form courses. This additional study is essential if pupils are to achieve or exceed their target grade. Failure to work outside of lessons is a breach of a pupils' learner agreement and will disadvantage them in terms of their final grade. Independent study is set in order to:

- Reinforce and consolidate work covered in lessons
- Encourage independent and reflective learning
- Develop a deeper knowledge and understanding
- Prepare pupils for future lessons or assessments
- Promote an interest and joy in learning
- Enable teachers in to make a judgement about a student's progress and level of attainment

Independent studies should be varied in terms of tasks and relevant and rewarding for pupils. In vocational courses independent study may constitute on-going work on an assignment or assignments.

Deadlines for all independent study should be manageable for pupils. Some independent study work will be assessed by tutors, often using exam board criteria and assessment objectives.

Whitby Sixth form recommends that for all level 3 subjects, pupils should study for a minimum of four hours per week per subject outside of lessons.

Level 2 subjects pupils should study for a minimum of three hours per week per subject outside of lessons.

HOW DOES THE School HELP pupils TO ORGANISE THEIR INDEPENDENT STUDY?

Each student in KS3 and KS4 are given a student log book at the beginning of the year. pupils should use these to record their independent study for each subject as a reminder of the task and its deadline date.

Staff aim to ensure that their instructions concerning independent study are clear to everyone in the class, and that all pupils have plenty of time to copy down what is expected. Long tasks will be published on the School's VLE (accessible from the School website). Short tasks should be written in the log book each week. As far as is practicable, this will involve independent tasks and will NOT be simply finishing off class work tasks in the main, as this approach can increase the workload of many pupils.

It is our aim to mark or respond to independent study within two weeks, in a way that is helpful to pupils, including comments which show pupils how their work could be improved.

HOW CAN PARENTS OR GUARDIANS HELP WITH INDEPENDENT STUDY?

Parents and carers should:

- check that independent study details are written in, clearly and regularly, in their son/daughter's log book- there is space there for a regular signature
- help their son/daughter to organise their time to best advantage so that things are not all left to the last minute or forgotten
- try to make sure that there are suitable working conditions at home
- take a positive and active interest in their child's work at home.

Parents and carers are encouraged to let staff know if there are problems with independent study. Perhaps a child seems to be doing too much, or not enough, or is finding it too easy or too difficult. In these cases, contact with the School is essential so that we can look into the matter.

FAILURE TO HAND IN INDEPENDENT STUDY

We expect completed independent study to be submitted on time. This gives pupils valuable experience of working to deadlines and facilitates staff with their marking schedules. If independent study is not handed in, appropriate action will be taken. Any problem may be recorded by staff to provide evidence for a specific or general problem which may emerge at a later date. It may be recorded on Class Charts and will be reflected in the attitude to learning grade.

THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR

- To check the log books each week
- To reward pupils who are using their log books effectively
- To closely monitor pupils who are not using their log books effectively.

THE ROLE FOR THE SUBJECT TEACHER

- To follow the independent study policy
- To mark and record independent study separately to emphasise its importance
- To reward pupils for effective independent study and put support in place for pupils who do not complete independent study effectively.

THE ROLE FOR THE STRATEGIC TEAM

- Strategic Team leaders will monitor the effectiveness of independent study alongside Heads of Department
- Strategic Team leaders will make sure that parents are informed of the School's policy
- Strategic Team leaders will support the work of Tutors through their own checking of planners and the independent study exercises completed by pupils.

A ROLE FOR PARENTS AND pupils

- Parents can expect to be kept informed of the independent study policy
- Parents will be expected to support "independent study time" by providing a suitable place at home for independent study to be completed
- pupils must make every effort to complete tasks on time, to the best of their ability.