

Policy Title	Independent Study Policy
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Linked to (<i>and should be applied in conjunction with</i>) the College's policies on:	Learning and Teaching Policy

Equality Impact Assessment

The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.*	/
The EIA has not identified any conflict with the College's co-operative values.	/
Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality.	

*Inclusive of protected characteristics

Provenance	Date
SLT	5/16
Staff Consultation	5/16
Governors' Committee	
Full Governors' Meeting	7/16

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

Rationale

Helston Community College is committed to furthering the learning of students by creating a programme of work to be completed outside of the normal College day. It is an integral part of the curriculum and is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning. We believe that well organised independent study can play a vital role in raising standards of achievement. Independent study tasks will support work done in College and be an integral part of the students' overall academic and intellectual development.

Purposes

Independent study tasks could be set for a variety of reasons including:

- contributing to sound study habits and encouraging students to develop the skills, confidence and motivation needed to study effectively as independent learners. This will be of importance to students in lifelong learning and will develop their adaptability to meet the demands of working life after College;
- consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding developed in the classroom;
- extending classroom learning;
- encouraging students to learn independence, organisation and self-discipline;
- managing the demands and deadlines of examination courses;
- supporting academic and vocational studies;
- promoting and sustaining the involvement of parents and carers in the management of students' learning and keep them informed of the areas of study undertaken by their child.

It is recognised that good habits of independent study should be established from the time the student arrives at College in Year 7, building on primary school experiences. It is accepted that there will be peaks and troughs in the amount of work set and that the student is expected to acquire the skills necessary to cope with deadlines as they arise. Tasks may be completed at home or in supervised study sessions after College, depending on the resources and level of support needed to complete them to an appropriate standard.

Role of Heads of Faculty/Subject Leaders/ Programme Leaders

- To ensure that independent study tasks are planned as an integral part of a module of work and used to reinforce or extend the learning objectives covered in class.
- To ensure that tasks have an element of differentiation in order to cater for the range of abilities within a year group.
- To ensure that tasks are clearly identified and explained in the scheme of work for each module.
- To monitor the setting of tasks by teachers through Homework Diary and the quality of work produced by students through work sampling.
- Provide an additional support facility for students.
- Students to be referred to the appropriate Head of Progress following 3 or more referrals to faculty support sessions.

Independent study may take many different forms for example:

- Observation and recording
- Project work
- Coursework
- Set exercises from sheets or textbooks
- Reading for pleasure
- Research for later class work
- Developing IT skills
- Following up and developing class work

- Collecting and collating information
- Learning vocabulary, formulae, spellings
- Study in preparation for class work, assessment, or examination
- Watching and noting from a TV, radio or newspaper
- Reading to enhance knowledge, understanding and experience
- Reflecting and evaluating progress
- Investigations
- Interviews
- Designing
- Essay writing
- Listening practice or rehearsal

Guidelines on the frequency of task setting

As a rough guide, a minimum of one task should be set for every 300 minutes of teaching. A subject with 3 x 100 minute lessons a fortnight should be setting 2 tasks during a 4-week period. In a Post 16 class, it is expected that 3 hours of independent study per subject per week will be set. It is also expected that tasks become more substantial as the students' progress up through the year groups.

Role of the Student

Each student will need to write any assignments in their Student Journal and check the College's online Homework Diary. Students are expected to complete the assignment within the timeframe set. For students who do not meet the initial deadline, they will normally be offered one more chance to hand it in. If this new deadline is not met, then support is provided through one or more of the following:

- The student will be required to attend a break, lunchtime or after-school support session to complete the task. This is logged in School Information Management System (SIMS) as a homework concern. Support sessions will be run by the department or faculty.
- If a student fails to attend a break or lunchtime support session, then this will result in a compulsory after-school support session. It will be the responsibility of the department or faculty to contact home in the case of an after-school support session. This is logged in SIMS as a homework concern.
- If a student fails to attend an after-school support session this will result in the Head of Progress contacting home to arrange an extended after-school support session in order for the student to complete the assignment and as a sanction for failing to comply with point 2. The Heads of Progress or Assistant Heads of Progress will run the support sessions.
- If the student fails to comply with the above to complete the assignment, the issue is now considered as defiance and may result in the student being referred to the Internal Exclusion Room (IER) depending on the circumstances.
- If a student receives 3 or more referrals to attend support sessions, the Head of Progress should contact parents/carers to arrange for the student to attend support sessions with the Head of Progress for the duration of that half term.

Role of Teachers

- To allocate high quality independent study tasks to their classes, following the frequency guidelines in the previous section.
- To ensure students record the tasks in their learning journals along with deadline dates, and post all tasks on Homework Diary with guidance on the amount of time required to complete each task.
- To monitor the completion of tasks by students and mark the work promptly, focusing on providing good quality feedback.
- Marking of work in a traditional sense may not always be appropriate, but constructive feedback should always be provided.
- To record marks or grades in a mark book or spreadsheet so that they are readily available to inform report writing, for example.

Role of the Head of Progress

- To encourage students to complete independent study tasks to the best of their ability.
- To ensure that group tutors monitor student journals on a weekly basis; checking that students are using them correctly and dealing with any issues or problems.
- To have a range of appropriate support strategies for students who have difficulty in completing independent study tasks, such as:
 - Parental involvement
 - After College support sessions
 - Report card
 - Tutoring in independent study techniques
- To liaise with Heads of Faculty / Subject Leaders / Group Tutors to identify students who are not completing independent study tasks
- To celebrate and reward students who produce good quality independent study tasks.
- To support independent study through the PSHE Days.
- To act as the first point of contact for parents/carers who have any concerns with independent study tasks from any of the nine faculties.
- To have an overall view of how well each student is coping with the independent study tasks that are set.

Role of Parents/Carers

Students will develop an appreciation of the importance of independent study when there is a strong partnership between home and College, ensuring that high expectations for work are demanded. Parents/carers are strongly encouraged to monitor and support independent study at home and there is space in the student journal for both parents/carers and teachers to comment. Any concerns regarding independent study should be raised through the Head of Progress in the first instance.