

Access to the Internet

For some tasks and projects, access to the internet is necessary. If you do not have good internet access at home please encourage your son/daughter to attend The Study Zone where a suite of good quality PCs are available with internet access .



Show My Homework

All independent study appears on Show My Homework which all students and parents have access to through login codes supplied by the school.

How can I support my son/daughter?

You have a crucial role to play. You can help your son/daughter by providing an environment conducive to study and taking an active role and interest in his/her independent study.

- Set aside a quiet area for work if possible. If not, remember that independent study does not have to be completed at home— encourage your son/daughter to use after school facilities such as The Study Zone (see below)
- Log in to **Show My Homework** on a regular basis and set up notifications on your smart phone to keep up to date with deadlines
- Keep a resources box including a calculator, stationery, paper, dictionary and thesaurus
- Check and sign your son/daughter's planner weekly
- Encourage, praise and reward your son/daughter for his/her effort particularly where they have found work challenging
- Write positive comments in his/her planner and on his/her work
- Assist in crucial skills such as planning, drafting and proof reading
- Test your son/daughter's learning by quizzing them at mealtimes or on car journeys
- Organisation – support your son/daughter in organising their time to ensure that independent study does not become a source of undue stress and pressure at home. Spread projects over several evenings.
- Encourage independence- please try to judge when it is appropriate to take more of a back seat. Grades need to be based on students; work not parents'!

The Study Zone

This takes place in CS2 every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 15.00-16.00. It is open to ALL students. There are also members of staff present to help if your son/daughter requires.



Independent Study at Maidenhill- A Guide For Parents

Why do we set Independent Study?

- To raise achievement across academic courses
- To enable students to become lifelong learners
- To develop study and work routines
- To build positive links between school and home



What is Independent Study?

Independent Study Projects (ISPs) are extended pieces of work designed to be completed in approximately 4 hours. ISPs are set for students in Year 7 only. Students are expected to manage and organise their time effectively in the completion of each project. However, a straightforward approach is to spend 1 hour each day over 4 days to complete each project. This spreads out the workload and enables students to fit in any other sports clubs, interests or other commitments over the week.

Independent Study Tasks (ISTs) are shorter more regular tasks set for students in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. They are usually designed to take between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

Key Stage 3

In **year 7** students receive one Independent Study Project (approx' 4 hours) most weeks and shorter (approx' 30mins) weekly Independent Study Tasks in maths, French and science.

In **year 8 and 9** independent study is set weekly for English, maths, science and fortnightly for all other subjects.

For year 7.8 and 9 There may also be preparation to do in advance of certain DT lessons such as preparation of ingredients. Students are also expected to do revision prior to tests and assessments. In addition, students should be spending at least 30 minutes reading per week.

Overall, students in Key Stage 3 should spend a minimum of 1 hour a day engaged in learning activities away from the classroom.

Key Stage 4

For each two-week cycle of the timetable, a Year 10/11 Maidenhill student should receive 2 Independent Study Tasks per fortnight per subject (1 task for religious studies).

In addition, there may be additional short preparation tasks in advance of certain practical subjects. Students will also have to complete revision in preparation for tests and assessments. Longer tasks may also be set over 2 sessions for larger pieces of work.

Regular revision of all work covered is also expected.



Challenging your son/daughter to achieve their best!

If your son/daughter finishes their independent study within the allocated time please ensure they do the following:

- Proof read all work. If it isn't perfect then it isn't finished!
- Deepen understanding by researching a topic not included in the task
- Revise previous work (see revision skills section below for ideas)

Enriching the curriculum– Ideas for parents

Independent study should not just come from teachers. As part of the wider independent learning schedule we would like all parents to consider providing the following learning opportunities:

- Read a book by an author you've not heard of
- Write a protest letter to an MP or newspaper about an issue you care about
- Watch the news and conduct extra research on a news story you do not fully understand
- Cook a meal with food you've never eaten before
- Write a list of things you would like to accomplish before the age of 18,25,30 etc.
- Try a new sport or activity
- Hand write a letter to a family member and post it
- Grow something that you can eat
- Visit a museum or National Trust property
- Learn to play a musical instrument
- Speak to an older relative about your family history

Revision

This is a vital component of independent study at Maidenhill. Your son/daughter will be set a number of revision tasks throughout key stage 3 and 4 in order to prepare for tests and exams. Good quality revision is NOT simply reading through books but actively doing specific and focussed tasks. Below are a few of the most effective ideas for revision:

- Writing notes
- Making spider diagrams or mind maps
- Making revision cards or posters
- Getting parents or others to quiz or test knowledge
- Completing past or exemplar exam questions

Deadlines

Each project/task will be set with a reasonable and achievable deadline. We try to develop independent organisational skills in each student so expect students to take responsibility for meeting each deadline. However, if you feel that your son/daughter will be unable to complete work by the set deadline please contact the relevant teacher via the student planner or school email briefly outlining the reasons and giving some idea of the earliest date of completion or, if you wish to discuss the matter, please telephone the school office.

How are tasks and projects assessed?

Assessed work will be marked within a reasonable timeframe and returned to your son/daughter with written feedback on 'what went well' and 'even better if'. Where appropriate they will also be given a grade and given the opportunity to improve.

What happens if work is not done?

If independent study is not handed in on the published deadline and there is no contact from parents asking for an extension, a detention will be issued in line with the school's behaviour for learning policy. In some instances, teachers may decide to give 1 day's grace for tasks/projects to be handed in but this is at their discretion.

What if I feel my son/daughter is doing too much?

No student should need to go over the guidelines for time allocation to achieve good grades. If your son/daughter is regularly spending too much time on work please talk through with them the reasons for this. It may be that they are spending time doing unnecessary activities not related to the task or may be having difficulty in organising themselves. Please contact the relevant teacher or learning community leader if you have a concern or would like some advice.

What if I feel my son/daughter isn't doing enough?

No student should ever have 'nothing to do'! If your son/daughter has finished a task or project in significantly less time than expected, please check that the work is detailed, accurate and generally completed to a high standard. If the work is not perfect, it is not finished and the student should spend more time on it. However, if you feel your son/daughter is not being set enough work please contact the relevant teacher or learning community leader as soon as possible.