

WHSC Independent Learning Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the General Office on (03) 9561 5811 or wheelers.hill.sc@education.vic.gov.au

The most significant academic learning that takes place outside of the classroom has traditionally been known as homework. From when children start primary school, readers are taken home by children to be shared with parents and guardians. As children move through schooling, readers are replaced by essays, worksheets, project work and an array of other learning activities. Evidence shows, however, tasks set for 'homework' that have no direct relevance to the set course work, which are not valued by the teacher or the student or are not subject to feedback, will not improve student learning.

PURPOSE

We define 'Independent Learning' as any learning activities that are set to be accessed and or completed outside of the classroom or are self-directed by the student.

When teachers set tasks to be completed outside of the school learning space, they should be mindful of the following:

- Is it necessary?
- How will it be assessed?
- How does it contribute to the student's knowledge and skill development?
- How is the task being presented?
- Is it differentiated and inclusive to cater for student needs?
- Is it accessible without explicit instruction?
- Does it build mastery?
- Has it been uploaded on Compass and a due date set?
- Will it be submitted electronically or hard copy?
- Is the quantity reasonable and fair?

Given the complexities of contemporary learning, our expectations of what is manageable for students to complete outside of the classroom has to be balanced against our knowledge of the student and what teachers can manage as practitioners. The time students spend on tasks will depend on age and learning capacity. As a guide, a student in Middle may spend one to two hours per weeknight, while Senior School students may spend in excess of three hours to 4 every night as well as weekends. It will depend very much on the subjects undertaken and the motivation of the student.

A wide variety of activities constitute learning outside of the classroom, including:

- Completing classroom work that was not finished in class
- Reading, particularly texts in English or other reading-based subjects
- Preparing for a new topic
- Studying for an assessment
- Collaborating with other students
- Working on out of class assignments
- Listening to/watching multimedia presentations

- Preparing for a class presentation
- Practising a musical instrument or drama performance
- Accessing YouTube or Edrolo for flipped learning
- Practising a language being studied
- Completing practice exercises in preparation for an assessment
- Work Placements

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

The College

- Ensuring that parents and carers are aware of the Independent Learning Policy
- Fostering lifelong learning and connecting families with the learning of their children
- Limiting independent learning set for completion over holidays or weekends (except for VCE)
- Setting limited independent learning the week before examination periods (Years 9-12) except for revision purposes
- Providing students with a student planner to organise their study

The Teacher

- Setting work that is appropriate for independent learning, for example, practice exercises, revision of concepts, extension exercises
- Setting tasks that are reasonable and manageable for the student concerned and within the time set
- Encouraging students to engage with problem solving, logical thinking and creativity
- Making independent learning requirements clear; the due date is stated, and work is returned in a timely manner and oral/electronic/written feedback is given when required
- Assisting students when difficulties arise
- Following up with students who have not completed independent learning with appropriate consequences or support
- Notifying parents via Compass if independent learning tasks are not submitted or are unsatisfactory or incomplete
- Consulting with a student on their return from absence about their learning
- Providing Learning Plans when students are absent for extended periods of time
- Assessing student independent learning on Progress Reports and Semester 1 and 2 Reports

The Student

- Bring planners and charged laptop devices to all classes so that they can access lesson plans and learning tasks
- Recording the details of all set independent learning and external study in their student planner/electronic device
- Being aware of the importance of independent learning and the College Independent Learning policy
- Recording due dates for major assessment tasks and assignments in the student planner/electronic device
- Utilising Compass to plan for assessment tasks and check for any set learning activities
- Accepting responsibility for the completion of independent learning tasks by the due date
- Seeking assistance from teachers, parents or carers when learning difficulties arise
- Organising their time to manage home and sporting commitments, recreational and other activities, and part time work, if applicable
- In the case of an absence, being responsible for seeking out and handing in the independent tasks as soon as they return or negotiating an alternate time with the teacher
- Where a student is learning independently in a designated space such as the VCE Centre, Art and Technology area or Library, the student is expected to follow the learning and behaviour protocols of that space, comply with any teacher or support staff instruction and ensure that they conduct themselves in way that is respectful, positive and learning focused

Parents and Carers

- Developing a positive and productive approach to independent learning
- Assisting their child to develop organisational strategies
- Encouraging them to take increasing responsibility for their own learning
- Where possible, providing a quiet place for regular independent learning and study
- Encouraging them to complete independent learning by the due date
- Helping them to balance the amount of time spent completing home learning and engaging in leisure, sport, part time employment, or family responsibilities
- Checking the student planner/ Compass to see whether any independent learning or study has been set
- Contacting the subject teacher if there are concerns about the independent learning, including if there are concerns about the number of tasks being assigned, whether too much or too little
- Contacting the relevant teacher or Sub School team to discuss any problems their children are having with independent learning

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	25/10/23
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	School Council
Review cycle	1 – 2 years
Approved by School Council	October 2023
Next scheduled review date	2025