



Creating Futures Together

WHSC INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY

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.

POLICY

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 and EXPECTATIONS

The College

- Ensure that parents, carers and students are aware of the Independent Learning Policy
- Foster lifelong learning and connecting families with the learning of their children
- Provide study strategies and techniques for students to build positive study habits
- Provide students with a student planner to organise their study and record all tasks to be completed outside of school

The Teacher

- Set work that is appropriate for independent learning, for example, practice exercises, revision of concepts, extension exercises, projects and extended tasks
- Set tasks that are reasonable and manageable for the student concerned and within the time set
- Encourage students to engage with problem solving, logical thinking and creativity
- Make 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
- Assist students when difficulties arise
- Follow up with students who have not completed independent learning with appropriate consequences or support
- Notify parents and guardians via Compass if independent learning tasks are not submitted or are unsatisfactory or incomplete
- Consult with a student on their return from absence about their learning
- Provide Learning Plans when students are absent for extended periods of time
- Assess student independent learning on Progress Reports and Semester 1 and 2 Reports
- Ensure that all feedback is provided in a timely manner

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
- Utilise Compass to plan for assessment tasks and check for any set learning activities
- Accept responsibility for the completion of independent learning tasks by the due date
- Seek assistance from teachers, parents or carers when learning difficulties arise
- Organise 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 Learning and Wellbeing Centre, 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

- Support their student/student to develop a positive and productive approach to independent learning
- Assist their child to develop organisational strategies
- Encourage student(s) to take increasing responsibility for their own learning
- Encourage students to use their school planners
- Check student planners for communications from teachers
- Where possible, providing a quiet place for regular independent learning and study
- Encourage student(s) to complete independent learning by the due date
- Helping student(s) to balance the amount of time spent completing home learning and engaging in leisure, sport, part time employment, or family responsibilities
- Check the student planner/ Compass to see whether any independent learning or study has been set, especially in Year7
- Contact 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
- Contact the relevant teacher or Sub School team to discuss any problems their children are having with independent learning or any aspect of their learning program

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