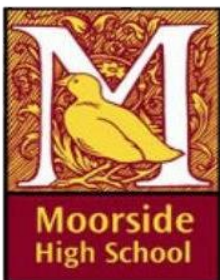




Moorside High School

Independent Learning Policy

rev. September 2024



Date Reviewed: September 2024
Date of Next Review: September 2025
Reviewed by: Quality of Education Governors

General Principles & Context

It is generally agreed both by practitioners and through research that independent learning forms an important part of the learning process and that, where independent learning is designed to complement classwork and is integral to a programme of study, achievement is raised. (Hattie 2003)

Students require a suitable environment in which to carry out independent learning, and the school is aware that this may sometimes be a problem for certain individuals.

The school expects parents to be fully supportive of its independent learning policy, recognising that parents are instrumental in any success. Parents, as much as their children, need to understand why tasks are set, how much independent learning can be expected, that it will be acknowledged appropriately and that rewards and sanctions will be applied consistently by all staff in the implementation of the policy. However, parents need also to recognise their own responsibility in encouraging their child, in monitoring that independent learning is completed and in supporting the school in its application of rewards and sanctions.

Independent learning will be set online using Assignments via Arbor as well as via online portals such as Sparx for Maths & English. Teachers will describe the independent learning on the online tool and attach any physical resources in order for the pupil to access from home.

Intent

At Moorside High School, our curriculum is designed to support our students to engage and achieve. Independent learning plays a vital role in achieving our educational goals by extending learning beyond the classroom and fostering personal development.

Our independent learning policy is designed to support:

- Consolidation – the reinforcement of knowledge and skills acquired during classroom learning by offering students an opportunity to practice, apply and review their learning promoting long term retention.
- Independence – nurturing self-directed learners who take ownership of their learning. The tasks set will encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning by encouraging self-study outside the classroom. Students will develop the ability to research, explore differing perspectives and solve problems.
- Critical thinking – promoting analytical reasoning and problem solving. This may involve open ended question, research-based projects, or problem-solving exercising. This encourages creative thinking, build evaluative skills, and encourages students to arrive at well-reasoned conclusion.
- Time management – builds a crucial skill which prepares students for life beyond education. Setting assignments with both short- and medium-term deadlines helps students to learn to prioritise tasks, work efficiently and meet deadlines.
- Reflection – students will receive feedback from their teachers which helps them to highlight areas for improvement and foster a growth mindset in their studies.
- Well-being and balance – our policy is designed to consider the well-being of our students by helping them to maintain a healthy balance between school and personal life. We have considered the importance of leisure time, personal development opportunities and family commitments. Independent learning tasks are meaningful, manageable, and purposeful.

Implementation

1. Departments are given an allocation at the beginning of the year which sets out guidance on the quantity of independent learning that teachers should expect students to undertake in their subject. Students and parents are also given a copy of the guidance for planning purposes. (*see Appendix One 'Independent Learning Guidance'*).

In general, at Key Stage 3 students are expected to spend between **30 mins to 1 hour on Sparx tasks** and **up to** 30 minutes on each task set in other subjects. However, it is not always appropriate or useful for independent learning to be set, and teachers will use their professional discretion where appropriate. Tasks which do not contribute to learning and which are set simply to fulfil the guidance are discouraged. At KS3, independent learning will not generally be set for completion during school holiday periods, unless it is an important task, e.g., revision towards an assessment following a half term holiday. If a child is ill, they will only be expected to catch up with essential tasks, with extended deadlines which will be negotiated with the teacher.

Year 7 have a phased start to independent learning with a focus on using Sparx effectively and developing good revision habits using the first half term with other subjects being added during the second half term.

At Key Stage 4, the nature of the work in different subjects varies considerably - in some subjects, regular short tasks are appropriate, whereas in others a sustained and time-consuming longer assignment or piece of coursework may be required, spanning several weeks. Where longer tasks are set the deadlines set by staff will be reflective of this.

Students are expected to spend between **30 mins to 1 hour on Sparx tasks** for Maths and between **30 mins to 1 hour** on each task set in other subjects. They can choose to spend more than the required amount of time on Sparx.

For KS4 students the focus of independent learning tasks is on consolidation of their learning. This may include practising key skills, completing practice exam papers or questions, creating revision materials or pre-reading to prepare students for a lesson in advance.

2. Independent learning tasks are set using Arbor Assignments, with the required resources attached for download at home. Students are encouraged to download the appropriate application onto a suitable digital device so that independent learning messages can be retrieved when necessary. Guidance for students and parents has been shared via Tutor Time, the school bulletin and parents communication channels
3. If on occasion, specific tasks are not set for KS4 students, they are expected to complete their own independent revision making use of resources on the school website. [GCSE Examinations - Moorside High School](#)
4. Teachers apply sanctions consistently and appropriately for non-completion or late submission of tasks, according to school behaviour policy, whilst still being flexible enough to accommodate specific situations and individuals
5. Teachers reward excellence and effort in tasks completed by implementing the Moorside High School reward system by awarding house points.
6. The school gives parents details, at least annually, on the course content for each subject within each year, with advice and information on how parents might support their child in his/her home study; this could be through the School Website Learning Journeys, KS4 Options booklets; Parents Evenings or through specifically organised events.
7. The school offers provision in school for those who do not have an appropriate environment or support at home for independent study, and for those who prefer to undertake work in school. This may be offered within departments on a subject basis, or as a whole-school initiative in the form of an independent learning club.

8. Parents are encouraged to provide a suitable environment for their child to undertake study at home, and to monitor the completion of independent learning tasks.
9. Subject teachers will arrange for appropriate feedback to be given on tasks completed independently, according to the school marking, assessment, recording and reporting policy.
10. The school leadership team monitor the quality of the independent learning set and the number of students who complete independent learning to the required standard.
11. This policy is reviewed annually by the Leadership Team and Governors so that any amendments or alterations can be made in light of current practice.

Appendix 1: MHS Independent Learning Guidance 2024 - 2025

Intent

As detailed in our Independent Learning policy at Moorside High School, our curriculum is designed to support our students to engage and achieve. Independent learning plays a vital role in achieving our educational goals by extending learning beyond the classroom and fostering personal development.

This guidance is designed to give teachers, parents and students direction on how much independent learning students should undertake in addition to their studies at school.

Implementation

Sparx

Sparx is a personalised learning platform that aims to support and supplement students' learning in Maths and English by providing tailored resources and interactive exercises aligned with their individual needs. Students may not always complete the tasks set during the time allocated by their teacher for the task. Completing the amount of time allocated is the requirement NOT the completion of a task.

You can always complete MORE Sparx than the expectation if you wish to.

All students have a Sparx log in assigned to them. This is their school email address and password. Queries about Sparx log ins should be directed to C Mickelburgh (Maths) and E Morley (English)

KS3 Independent Learning Guidance

At KS3 the focus of independent learning is to build positive habits such as time management and to consolidate learning in core subjects and engage students' interests in the wider curriculum.

Sparx is the basis of independent learning for Maths and English. Foundation subjects cater for different learning styles, interests, and abilities by offering opportunities for creative expression, collaboration, independent research.

Each week English and Maths independent learning will be set via Sparx. Students should spend **between 30 minutes and 1 hour** completing these tasks.

In addition, students should spend **up to 30 minutes per week** on independent learning tasks as per the list below to ensure that a balance of subjects is achieved. If longer independent learning tasks are set by staff such as project work, the deadline will be reflective of this. Deadlines for tasks should be **no less than one week** from the date the work was set. Sparx tasks run from Monday to Monday (7 days for students to complete the tasks set).

Year 7 Independent Learning Guidance

SPARX expectations are as follows for Y7:

- Maths – **1 hr** per week
- English – **30 – 60 mins** per week

In addition to Sparx weekly independent learning

- Science – **30 mins** per week
- Languages – **30 mins per week**

During HT 1 students will only receive Maths, English, Science and languages independent learning. Students should focus on using Sparx effectively and getting into good revision habits for core subjects.

From HT 2 onwards

In addition to Sparx weekly independent learning, following the guidance below, complete **up to 30 minutes** per week on independent learning tasks for all subjects as listed.

WEEK A	7H	7I	7J	7K	7L	7M	7N
	Art French History IT Music RE	French Geography German History RE	Drama Food Tech German History IT	Art DT German History Music RE	Art Geography German IT Music	Drama DT German History IT RE	Drama DT French History IT Music

WEEK B	7H	7I	7J	7K	7L	7M	7N
	Drama DT Food Tech Geography German	Art Drama DT Food Tech IT Music	Art DT French Geography Music RE	Drama Food Tech French Geography IT	Drama DT Food French History RE	Art Food French Geography Music	Art Food Tech Geography German RE

Year 8 Independent Learning Guidance

SPARX expectations are as follows for Y8:

- Maths – **1 hr** per week
- English – **30 – 60 mins** per week

In addition to Sparx weekly independent learning, following the guidance below **up to 30 minutes** per week on independent learning tasks for all subjects as listed.

WEEK A	8H	8I	8J	8K	8L	8M
	Science German History IT RE Creative Subject X2	Science Drama German IT RE Creative Subject X2	Science French Geography German RE Creative Subject X2	Science Drama French IT Creative Subject X2	Science German History IT Creative Subject X2	Science French Geography RE Creative Subject X2

WEEK B	8H	8I	8J	8K	8L	8M
	Science Drama French Geography Creative Subject X2	Science French Geography History Creative Subject X2	Science IT History Drama Creative Subject X2	Science Geography German History RE Creative Subject X2	Science Drama French Geography RE Creative Subject X2	Science Drama German History IT Creative Subject X2

KS4 Independent Learning Guidance

At KS4 the focus of independent learning is to support students in their preparation for external examinations at the end of Y11 by consolidating key knowledge and skills in subjects, and developing critical thinking, and reflection.

Independent study tasks at KS4 will focus primarily on consolidation work such as creating revision resources in preparation for assessments in a topic. These resources should be kept as part of the overall revision towards a student's final GCSE examination. Occasionally, it could include preparation for upcoming lessons, for example pre-reading on a topic to be studied in lesson.

If no specific task is set by the teacher, students should spend 30 minutes on their own independent revision making use of resources on the school website. [GCSE Examinations - Moorside High School](#)

Year 9 Independent Learning Guidance

SPARX expectations are as follows for Y9:

- Maths – **1 hr** per week

In addition, following the guidance below...

- English – **1 hr per week** independent study
- Science – **30 mins per subject** (*Biology, Chemistry, Physics*) **per fortnight**
- Languages – **at least 30 mins per week** independent study
- Option subjects **at least 30 mins per week** independent study for each.
- RE **at least 30 mins** per week

KS4 Independent Learning Guidance

At KS4 the focus of independent learning is to support students in their preparation for external examinations at the end of Y11 by consolidating key knowledge and skills in subjects, and developing critical thinking, and reflection.

Independent study at KS4 will focus primarily on consolidation work such as creating revision resources in preparation for assessments in a topic. These resources should be kept as part of the overall revision towards a student's final GCSE examination. Occasionally, it could include preparation for upcoming lessons, for example pre-reading on a topic to be studied in lesson.

If no specific task is set by the teacher, students should complete their own independent revision making use of resources on the school website. [GCSE Examinations - Moorside High School](#)

Year 10 Independent Learning Guidance

SPARX expectations are as follows for Y10:

- Maths – **at least 1 hr** per week

In addition, following the guidance below...

- English – **1 hr per week** independent study
- Science – **30 mins per subject** (*Biology, Chemistry, Physics*) **per fortnight**
- Languages – **at least 30 mins per week** independent study
- Option subjects **at least 30 mins** per week independent study for each
- RE **at least 30 mins** per fortnight

KS4 Independent Learning Guidance

At KS4 the focus of independent learning is to support students in their preparation for external examinations at the end of Y11 by consolidating key knowledge and skills in subjects, and developing critical thinking, and reflection.

Independent study at KS4 will focus primarily on consolidation work such as creating revision resources in preparation for assessments in a topic. These resources should be kept as part of the overall revision towards a student's final GCSE examination. Occasionally, it could include preparation for upcoming lessons, for example pre-reading on a topic to be studied in lesson.

If no specific task is set by the teacher, students should complete their own independent revision using resources on the school website. [GCSE Examinations - Moorside High School](#)

Year 11 Independent Learning Guidance

SPARX expectations are as follows for Y11:

- Maths – **at least 30 mins** per week

In addition, following the guidance below...

- English – **at least 1 hour** per week independent learning
- Science – **30 mins per subject** (*Biology, Chemistry, Physics*) **per fortnight**
- Maths – In addition to Sparx...half an examination paper per week independently completed
- Languages – **at least 30 mins per week** independent study
- Option subjects **at least 30 mins per week** independent study for each
- RE **at least 30 mins** per week
- IT **at least 30 mins** per fortnight