INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY

The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in the next stage of their lives.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING - POLICY STATEMENT FEBRUARY 2025

Approval Committee:	**Full Governing Body**
Author:	**Headteacher**
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Required to publish on website?	**Yes**
Statutory?	**No**

The Courtyard
INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The Courtyard seeks to ensure that all of its students receive a full education which maximises the opportunities for inclusion and achievement at school so that each student is able to realise his/her full potential. This includes gaining an independence which will be required to support a successful life beyond the classroom and adult life beyond the education system.

Students, parents/carers, teachers, support staff and governors all have a role in fostering, guiding and supporting this independence.

> "The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." Plutarch

2. Rationale

An independent learning task is work that is set to be done outside the timetabled curriculum. It contains an element of independent study in that it is not usually directly supervised by a teacher. It is important in raising student achievement, self-organisation and independence. Not all independent learning tasks are done at home; in fact, for some students who find it hard to work at home, or for some tasks which may require resources (books, software, equipment) more readily available at school, it is necessary or desirable to carry out the task at school. Independent learning tasks enhance student learning, improves achievement and develops students' study skills and as such is an integral part of the curriculum. It requires careful planning and integration into the scheme of work of each curriculum area.

3. Aims

Independent learning tasks enable students to:

- Consolidate and extend work covered in class or prepare for new learning activities.
- Access resources not available in the classroom.
- Develop research skills.
- Have an opportunity for independent work.
- Show progress and understanding.
- Provide feedback in the evaluation of teaching.
- Enhance study skills e.g. planning, time management and self-discipline.
- Help students develop good work habits for the future.
- Take ownership and responsibility for learning.
- Engage parental co-operation and support.
- Create channels for home school dialogue.

4. Expectations: When, how much and by whom?

At The Courtyard, it is understood that every child is unique, learns in different ways and needs an individual, tailored approach to ensure learning and independence are fostered to the full benefit of that student.

The school recognises that independent learning tasks may take many forms and may include reading, written work, observations, research and practice of other skills, as appropriate.

The Courtyard staff will therefore deliver a **subject specific timetabled independent learning plan**, **each week issuing three pieces of homework for Maths, English and Science** and following 5 fundamental characteristics as researched by Cathy Vatterott from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development:

- **Purpose**: teachers should assign an independent learning task when it has a specific purpose, rather than as a matter of routine
- **Efficiency**: the task should not take an "inordinate" amount of time
- **Ownership**: students' motivation is linked to how connected they feel to the content. Providing students with a choice in tasks or connecting tasks to students' interests can create a sense of ownership
- **Students' competence**: tasks should be differentiated by ability level, so that all students feel competent completing it
- **Aesthetic appeal**: tasks that are "visually uncluttered", have less information on the page and make use of graphics, are more appealing to students

All independent learning tasks will be communicated with students in lessons and confirmed in writing with further instructions, explanations and a completion date in GoogleClassroom, which all students have access to.

5. Responsibilities

The role of the student

The student will:

1. To listen to independent learning task instructions in class.
2. To regularly access the Google Classroom for instructions for the task and deadline date.
3. To ensure that the task is completed and handed in to meet the deadline.
4. To attempt all work and give their best.
5. To inform the class teacher of any difficulties.

The role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher controls the direction of independent learning tasks and the nature of tasks undertaken.

The teacher will:
1. Set tasks according to the agreed curriculum subject timetabled plan for each student in accordance with the 5 fundamental characteristics.
2. Provide the stimulus.
3. Give full and comprehensive instructions.
4. Set deadlines for completed work and ensure that they are met.
5. Provide feedback on all tasks promptly.
6. Provide help and support.

The role of the parent/carer

The parent/carer will:
1. Be acquainted and familiar with the school's independent learning policy.
2. Support their child with their independent learning tasks with regard to assigning a time and place for it to be completed.
3. Communicate with the school regarding any problems or support needed in helping their child with the completion of independent learning tasks.