Independent Study Policy 2024-2025

Intent

Our vision:

- To ensure independent study plays a pivotal role in reinforcing classroom learning and promoting academic development.
- To promote consistent routines around independent study, enabling students at Caister Academy to have the skills they need to achieve *outstanding academic success*.

Implementation

At Caister Academy, independent study is pre-planned, purposefully sequenced and integrated within all areas of the curriculum through subject-specific schemes of learning. Independent study includes a strong focus on **retrieval practice**, allowing students opportunities throughout the academic year to recall and apply prior learning, thus reinforcing their knowledge. Each independent study assignment will include a 'checklist for success' so that students' understand the expectations of their learning, enabling them to complete tasks and mastery of the material.

Potential Independent Study Activities

- Retrieval Practice: engage in prior subject/topic recall and reactivation activities utilising online revision platforms, *Knowledge Organisers,* and revision flashcards to consolidate prior learning.
- Routine question and answers: dive into question-and-answer sessions to sharpen comprehension and response skills, fostering a deeper understanding of the material (e.g. spelling tests)
- *Pre-Lesson Learning*: embark on pre-lesson preparation journeys, whether through pre-study, research, or delving into wider reading, enriching the learning experience, and setting the stage for informed classroom discussions.
- *Timed Practice*: test your skills with timed practice responses, honing your ability to apply learned concepts efficiently, ensuring readiness for assessments and real-world challenges.

Independent Study Expectations

Teachers will:
- Set independent study assignments using *Arbor* according to the frequency indicated in the table below.
- Monitor completion of independent study using *Arbor*.
- Award praise by issuing '*Ambition - Independent Study*' points (for good quality work completed on time and to the student's best ability)
- Sanction in line with the behaviour policy to ensure missed learning opportunities are caught up on (figure 1)

Students will:
- Access their assigned independent study assignment through *Arbor/*be directed to online platforms via *Arbor.*
- Request help from a member of staff or a parent if necessary.

- Attend independent study support clubs if needed: these run in every subject area and the days are outlined on the *Electives* schedule; the library is also open every night for support with independent study.
- Complete independent study to a high standard and on time.
- Contact class teacher prior to the deadline date if they are struggling to complete independent study.

Parents will:
- Ensure students have a quiet space to complete assignments at home, or that they access support facilities at school e.g. independent study support club or the library.
- Ensure students complete their independent study to a high standard and on time.
- Communicate concerns about independent study with the relevant teaching staff.

Independent Study Celebration

We wish to celebrate the efforts made by students when completing their assignments, and this celebration will be awarded through:

- Fortnightly prizes for tutor groups who are awarded the most independent study points.
- Half termly awards linked to students achieving the highest number of independent study points.
- Prize draws linked to outstanding effort in independent study tasks, where students could receive a mystery prize if they have shown outstanding effort on an activity. Students will be rewarded a token for a lucky dip prize adding to the year group collection of tokens leading to end of term big reward.

Homework frequency and time approximation

Year Group	Subject	Frequency	Time
7	English	Weekly	60 mins
	Mathematics		60 mins
	Science		30 mins
	Modern Foreign Languages		30 mins
	This equates to 180 mins a week (approximately 25 minutes a day)		
8	English	Weekly	60 mins
	Mathematics		60 mins
	Science		30 mins
	Modern Foreign Languages		30 mins
	Geography		30 mins
	History		30 mins
	This equates to 240 mins a week (approximately 35 minutes a day)		
9	English	Weekly	60 mins
	Mathematics		60 mins
	Science		60 mins
	Modern Foreign Languages		40 mins
	Geography		40 mins

	History		40 mins
	This equates to 300 mins a week (approximately 45 minutes a day)		
10	English	Weekly	90 mins
	Mathematics		90 mins
	Science		60 mins
	Options Courses Creative Arts and Technology Computing History Geography Modern Foreign Languages Performing Arts PE	Weekly	**4 x 45 mins**
	This equates to 420 mins a week (approximately 60 minutes a day)		
11	English	Weekly	**90 mins**
	Mathematics		
	Science		
	Options Courses Creative Arts and Technology Computing History Geography Modern Foreign Languages Performing Arts PE	Weekly	**4 x 45 mins**
	This equates to 450 mins (approximately 65 minutes a day)		

Independent Study Login Information

Whilst we set and monitor all independent study on *Arbor*, students may be directed to other subject-specific online platforms to complete their independent learning. The student login information for each of the portals that are currently being used is outlined below.

Subject	Year group	Platform	Login details
All subjects	All year groups	**MS Teams**	In the student area of the school website, select Microsoft Teams **Username:** same as school ID **Password:** same as school password
All subjects	All year groups	**Seneca**	Website: https://senecalearning.com/en-GB **Username:** same as school ID **Password:** same as school password **Alternative**: use log in with Microsoft
Mathematics	All year groups	**SPARX Maths**	Website: www.sparxmaths.com Click on **Student login** **Search "Caister Academy"** when prompted to look for school **Sign on with Microsoft** when prompted, using school email address and password.
Science	Years 9 to 11	**Kay Science**	Website: www.kayscience.com **Username:** student school email address **Password:** created by student
MFL	All year groups.	**Language Gym**	Website: https://uk.language-gym.com **Username:** student school email address **Password:** created by student

Independent Study Monitoring

So that all stakeholders can celebrate and support the completion of independent study to a high standard, it is important that the monitoring of this is centralised.

- All independent study assignments will be set and monitored on *Arbor*.
- Staff will record completion of independent study assignments on *Arbor*. There is no expectation to record marks.
- Staff will assign positive points or award sanctions if independent study assignments do not meet the required standard or deadline, in line with the behaviour policy.
- Curriculum leaders will routinely perform subject-level independent study analysis to monitor the quality and regularity of assignments set within their department.
- Senior Leaders will review all points awarded to ensure student efforts are validated.

Student Support with Non-Completion

At Caister Academy, we believe in the importance of consistent independent learning to foster academic growth. To ensure that every student can engage with their independent study assignments effectively, teachers will diligently monitor completion on a weekly basis. For those students who do not complete their homework assignments, a targeted approach is taken to provide support and guidance with reasonable adjustments applied as part of the process.

Students who miss assignments will receive an IS1 sanction. This will include a restorative conversation to identify and resolve any barriers to independent study being attempted and agree a reasonable deadline for completion. If the student does not attempt independent study to a reasonable standard by the agreed submission date, this will move to an after school 30 minute departmental led independent study support session (ISSS). This intervention aims to address any challenges students may face and to ensure they do not miss out on valuable learning opportunities.

Following this intervention, if the independent study is still not completed or the student fails to attend, students will receive an IS2 sanction, where students will need to attend a 40-minute afterschool session led by the Senior Leadership Team. This will take place on a Monday. Failure to attend an IS2 will have the same escalation as a C2 sanction, as per the behaviour policy. Continued failure to attend independent study support sessions may result in an IS3 sanction, in which students will complete missed independent study in reflection.

Independent Study Support Schedule

Day	Independent Study Support Sessions		
Monday	Technology	Science	Art and Design
Tuesday	Geography	History	MFL
Wednesday	Library		
Thursday	Performing Arts	English	
Friday	Physical Education	Mathematics	

Independent Study Consequence Chart			
Positive engagement and interest. Verbal warning and support provided where appropriate.			
Code	**Staff Action**	**Reflection / Restoration**	**Potential Reasons**
IS1	**Written warning** Record on Arbor. *Parents informed by Arbor notification.*	Kept back for up to 15 minutes at end of lesson or next convenient time (e.g., break). Identify any barriers to homework being attempted, support to resolve and agree deadline for completion. Invite to homework support session.	Student does not attempt homework to a reasonable standard by the submission date. (This standard will consider any reasonable adjustments for the individual student.) Following an S1, student does not attempt work to a reasonable standard by

			the new submission date.
ISSS	**Independent Study Support Session** Record as ISSS on Arbor, placing student into allocated department session. Record in the student's planner. *Parents informed by Arbor notification.*	30 min after school support session led by departments. Discussion with the member of staff or department representative to support completion of homework. Identify any barriers to homework being attempted, support to resolve during the session. Failed ISS will result in S2.	Refusal to attend an IS1
IS2	**Central Homework Support Session** Record as S2 on Arbor, with teacher choosing a day when they can attend and support. Record in the student's planner. (Form tutor informed via Arbor). *Parents informed by Arbor notification.* *Member of staff calls home.*	40 min after school support session led by Senior Leadership Team – Monday. Homework to be completed under exam conditions. Failed S2 will result in S3.	Refusal to attend an ISSS.
IS3	**Reflection –** failure to attend an S2 central independent study support session.		
Students who persistently fail to complete independent study should be placed on a report. Coursework completion should be tracked and sanctioned on a lesson-by-lesson basis.			
The consequence chart is intended as a guide. Staff will use their professional judgement to make a final decision on which consequence to apply in which situation.			