

Independent Study Policy



**Williamstown High
School**



WILLIAMSTOWN
HIGH SCHOOL

Williamstown High School Independent Study Policy

Enhancing Learning

1. Rationale

At Williamstown High School students are encouraged to enhance their learning by completing regular independent study that includes reinforcing the content covered in class, completing directed, negotiated and independent homework tasks, revising notes for tests/exams, and dedicated independent reading time.

2. Purpose

With support from teachers and family members students should develop a study routine in line with a balanced school program, which incorporates a combination of being active, socialisation, down-time and part-time work (where applicable). This also teaches students to be organised as they learn to plan and prioritise their time using the study planner and other eLearning tools, such as Google Classroom and Compass.

3. Implementation

Role of students, teachers & families

Students should:

- Take responsibility for their own learning by completing independent study on time and to their best of their ability.
- Maintain an effective study planner.
- Communicate to the teacher and/or family if there are any difficulties/issues.
- Develop good learning and study habits with the support of the teacher and family.
- Catch up on work missed in consultation with the teacher

Teachers should:

- Set tasks that are purposeful and meaningful, and reinforce students' learning by following on in class from set tasks.
- Ensure students are aware of the work to be completed and encourage students to use the study planner to record tasks and due dates. Regularly check the study planner.
- Differentiate tasks where appropriate to support all students at the point of need.
- Provide timely and effective feedback to students, where appropriate.
- Take into consideration the workload of students so that they can manage their workload effectively, by having discussions with the students and other teachers.



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Families should:

- Encourage students to establish good independent study patterns through a study routine/planner.
- Provide a quiet area dedicated to independent study.
- Support the independent study practices of students, without completing work for them, and acknowledge success as they complete it.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning through discussing their homework or ideas/topics being taught in class.
- Encourage the use of, and regularly check, study planners and other eLearning platforms to enhance/assist with organisation and communicate with teachers. E.g. Google Classroom, Compass, etc.

Recommended time for independent study

Students should aim to complete regular independent study in line with a negotiated study routine with their teachers and family.

In the senior school, the work demands will increase and there will also be increased demands on the weekend, particularly during SAC and examination periods.

SEALP students should look to the year ahead of their actual year level to gauge how much time they should spend on independent study e.g. Year 8 SEALP student should complete 90 minutes of independent study.

These are recommended times only and should be discussed with the student, teachers and families. There may be days where students have extracurricular or family commitments. Students should take this into consideration when planning their study routine, to allow time for independent study within the daily recommended times for each year level:

Year 7	60 minutes
Year 8	80 minutes
Year 9	90 minutes
Year 10	120 minutes
Year 11	150 minutes
Year 12	180 minutes



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Independent Reading

Williamstown High School encourages all students to complete approximately 30 minutes of sustained reading daily on a text¹ of their choice. Students are supported at school with a period dedicated to an independent reading session in English each week. Families should reinforce this at home.

Consequences

Students are encouraged, and will be supported, to complete work on time. Where students have not completed work in a timely manner, there will be a consequence.

Depending on the task, students may be given the opportunity to complete the work at a catch-up class, during Homework Club, or lunchtime, as determined by the classroom teacher.

Where a student consistently shows a pattern of incomplete work, they may be given a detention and the family will be contacted to establish a support network for the student.

4. Specific Procedures

The policy will be available on the school website and in the study planner for students and families to reference.

Initially, staff will be briefed about the *Independent Study Policy* in a college meeting. This policy will be included in the induction process for new staff.

5. Evaluation & Review

This policy will be evaluated after 1 year and thereafter reviewed every 3 years.

6. Definitions & References

Independent study refers to the directed homework set in class, and the self-directed work students do at home, guided by the content they are studying in class, to reinforce their own understanding. This can also include revision for tests and exams. It is recommended by the teacher, but not enforced.

Homework:

- **Directed homework** is set regularly by the classroom teacher, and relates to class learning. These tasks are aimed to encourage independence, positive work habits, and organisational and time management skills. These tasks will either prepare students for new topics via research, or reinforce learning via practice.

¹ Text can be any reading material of the student's choice i.e. newspaper, online articles, blogs, novels, magazines, etc.



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- **Negotiated homework** is modified homework requested by families, in consultation with the student and teacher, to individualise the learning and support of the individual student's needs. This is for the purpose of targeting a particular need and may replace the directed homework in some cases.
- **Independent homework** is work initiated by the student, with support of their teacher and family, to complete work based on their own interests and/or school tasks or projects. These homework tasks are not school requirements, will be in addition to the directed homework, and are not corrected by the teacher unless the teacher chooses to, or it is part of the subject requirement. Independent homework should not add undue time or pressure to interfere with a student's balanced school program.

7. Consultative process

- Staff consulted for feedback on current policy in Term 1, 2016.
- Differentiation & Curriculum Leaders summarised feedback from staff for school council in Term 2, 2016.
- Students were surveyed for feedback in Term 3, 2016.
- A draft policy submitted to school council in Term 3, 2016.
- Feedback received from school council in Term 3, 2016.
- Second draft submitted to school council in Term 4, 2016.
- Feedback received from school council in Term 4, 2015.
- Final draft submitted for ratification by school council on 15 November, 2016.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by school council on 6 December, 2016.

Evaluation & Review:

This policy will be evaluated after 1 year and thereafter reviewed every 3 years.