



St Mary Magdalene Academy

The Courtyard

THE COURTYARD

INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY

The Courtyard aims to offer an outstanding educational and social provision that will equip our pupils with the skills and experiences needed to discover and live out their potential.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING - POLICY STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 2019

ST MARY MAGDALENE ACADEMY
THE COURTYARD

Approval Committee:	Full Governing Body
Author:	Deputy Headteacher – Teaching and Learning
Last reviewed:	September 2019
Next review date:	September 2021
Required to publish on website?	Yes
Statutory?	No

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INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The Courtyard seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full education which maximises the opportunities for inclusion and achievement at school so that each pupil 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.

Pupils, 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 pupil achievement, self-organisation and independence. Not all independent learning tasks are done at home; in fact, for some pupils 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 pupil learning, improves achievement and develops pupils' 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 pupils 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 pupils 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 pupil.

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 being the focus of a curriculum subject** 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:** pupils' motivation is linked to how connected they feel to the content. Providing pupils with a choice in tasks or connecting tasks to pupils' interests can create a sense of ownership
- **Pupils' competence:** tasks should be differentiated by ability level, so that all pupils 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 pupils

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

5. **Responsibilities**

The role of the pupil

The pupil 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 pupil 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.

Policy written by: Deputy Headteacher – Teaching and Learning