



# **SUTTON COLDFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

## **Independent Work Policy**

**DATE: January 2026**

**REVISION DATE: January 2027**

Related documents include:

- [Assessment and Reporting Policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Pupil premium strategy](#)
- [IT Policy](#)

## **Introduction**

Independent work is work completed outside of timetabled lessons. Independent work within this policy refers to both teacher-directed tasks traditionally known as homework and other teacher-suggested and self-directed study. Research shows that independent tasks provide an opportunity to review and practice the concepts and skills taught in lessons, leading to deeper understanding and a positive impact on future attainment. This is important to bridge the gap between home and school, it informs future teaching and learning whilst helping students to develop crucial life skills such as time management, resilience, and accountability.

Independent work in Years 7-11 will be majority teacher-directed with specific tasks set regularly. Independent work for sixth form students will comprise a mixture of tasks which are teacher-directed, teacher-suggested and self-directed.

## **Independent work in Years 7-11**

### **Types of independent tasks**

The list below is not an exhaustive list of tasks that could be set for independent work but rather an indication of the type of tasks that are appropriate. There is an expectation that students would receive a variety of tasks over time.

- Preparation for future learning (such as reading ahead and summarising or planning for future tasks)
- Wider reading tasks for enrichment or consolidation
- Structured short-answer questions to consolidate learning in lessons
- A choice of tasks with varying levels of challenge
- Vocabulary or key-facts learning and recall
- Extended project work – either completed as individuals or collaboratively
- Guided research with appropriate support at the start of the work, such as detail of key websites or printed references
- Timed essays or extended pieces of writing
- Creative responses to the learning, e.g. creating pamphlets
- Online questions or interactive content
- Tasks set through Microsoft quizzes or forms
- Revision
- Write-up of experiments or practical work
- Rehearsal

In addition to independent work that has been set by teachers, we would recommend that all students spend time reading. This includes both reading for pleasure and wider reading around their subjects studied. We would encourage students to take advantage of our well-resourced library during their time out of lessons. Research has shown that students who read regularly develop a stronger vocabulary, better spelling, and clearer writing. Reading will also help strengthen concentration, comprehension, and critical thinking- skills. Reading for pleasure supports students' well-being and it provides a break from screens and daily pressures. Getting lost in a story can improve mood and lower stress levels. Stories help students see the world through other people's eyes. This builds emotional intelligence and helps them understand different perspectives, cultures, and experiences.

## Expectations

- All independent work that needs to be submitted for marking and feedback will be recorded on Teams.
- Independent work to be submitted will include details of the work being set and the date by which the work is due to be completed.
- To enable students to balance their time between independent work tasks and other activities, there will be at least three school days (and longer, when possible) between the independent work to be submitted being set and when it is due.
- Some independent work will be designed specifically to develop students' revision skills and will include activities that scaffold learning for assessments.
- In the two weeks leading up to school examinations, only optional revision tasks will be assigned to aid students with their examination preparation.
- Regular Feedback, as detailed in the assessment and reporting policy, will be provided to students so they are able to make progress. Types of feedback may include, but are not limited to, individual marked work, verbal feedback and whole class feedback both written and verbal. Not all independent work will require feedback, and some work may be peer assessed.

## Frequency and duration of independent work

Each year group will be set independent work proportional to the number of lessons a subject has per week/the number of subjects studied.

### Years 7, 8 and 9

To aid transition to secondary school year 7 students will only initially receive independent work to do outside of lessons for English, Maths, Science and French; all subjects will start to set independent work from 1<sup>st</sup> October in Year 7.

In Years 7-9 students will be set up to 40 mins per subject either weekly or fortnightly as detailed in the tables below. This could be one longer task or split between two shorter tasks, for example a subject such as History may choose to set two shorter 20-minute tasks weekly rather than one longer task set fortnightly.

<b>Year 7 Subjects</b>	<b>Number of lessons per fortnight</b>	<b>Frequency of tasks</b>
English, Maths, Science, French	6	At least weekly
Design (Dt/Food/Technology) and PE*	4	At least fortnightly
Geography, History, RS	3	
Art, Computing, Music, Drama	2	
Personal Development	2	None

<b>Year 8 Subjects</b>	<b>Number of lessons per fortnight</b>	<b>Frequency of tasks</b>
Maths	6	At least weekly
English	5	At least weekly
PE*	4	At least fortnightly

Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, French, Spanish, Design (Dt/Food/Technology)	3	
Art, RS, Computing, Music, Drama	2	
Personal Development	1	

Year 9 Subjects	Number of lessons per fortnight	Frequency of tasks
Maths, English	6	At least weekly
Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, French, Spanish, Design (Dt/Food/Technology), PE*	3	At least fortnightly
Art, RS, Computing, Music	2	
Drama	1	
Personal Development	1	None

\*Due to the regular rotation cycle within PE in Years 7-9 independent work will be set when possible and will be set at least twice within each activity rotation.

### Years 10 and 11

During Years 10 and 11 students will receive between 45-60 minutes of independent work per GCSE subject. This will be set at least weekly as a single task or the time could be split between smaller more regular tasks.

Subjects	Number of lessons per fortnight	Frequency of tasks
English	Year 10: 8 hours Year 11: 7 hours	At least weekly
Maths	Year 10: 7 hours Year 11: 8 hours	
Biology, Chemistry, Physics	4	
French and/or Spanish	5	
Other GCSE subjects	5	
Core PE	2	None
Personal Development	1	None

### Independent work in Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form we support the development of non-cognitive behaviours to shape attitudes, behaviours and approaches to learning by follow the principles of the VESPA model ([Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls - VESPA](#)). This is an effective system which structures students' experiences to assist them in building the mindset, work ethic, and strategies needed to achieve their full potential.

Independent work is a key component across all strands of the VESPA model:

- Vision - ensures homework completion is a goal-directed action
- Effort - the importance of consistent, proactive hard work
- Systems – organising learning materials and time

- Practice – deliberate practice that develops and builds skills
- Attitude- cultivates a resilient, growth-oriented mindset towards academic challenges

In the Sixth Form students study three or four A-level subjects, and they have 10-hour lessons per fortnight for each of these subjects. They may also complete an EPQ in Year 12. Independent work of between 3-5 hours per subject per week should be undertaken.

The structure of independent work will vary depending on the subject studied. Independent work in the Sixth Form will consist of a mixture of explicitly set work that will be teacher assessed and other teacher-directed practice which will not always require feedback and could be self-marked. This could be directed questions after every lesson or a longer-term independent task that will be completed in parallel to other work set on a more regular basis. Other independent work could be teacher-suggested or self-directed.

Students have timetabled supervised study periods in addition to their A-level lessons. Independent work should be completed both within school during supervised and non-supervised study periods and at home as they would do in Years 7-11.

Independent work in Sixth Form could include:

- Consolidation of lesson content
- Practice questions/online practice questions
- Writing essays
- Responding to feedback/completing student actions from marked work
- Write up of experiments or practical work
- Completed selected exam questions on topics covered
- Rehearsal
- Revision activities – both teacher-suggested and self-directed tasks
- Completing NEA tasks (when permitted by the subject/activity)
- Pre-reading before starting a topic
- Independent research
- Wider reading around a topic
- Completing full past papers when appropriate at the end of the course of study

This list is not an exhaustive list of tasks that could be set for independent work but rather an indication of the type of tasks that are appropriate. There is an expectation that students would receive a variety of tasks over time.

### **Generative artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini. We recognise that AI has many uses to help pupils learn but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism. There is an age limit for the use for Generative AI of 13 years old; students below this age should not be accessing AI tools

Pupils may use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas

- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images. All AI-generated content must be properly attributed

Pupils may not use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work
- If they are below the age restriction of 13 years old

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Head of Department**

- Ensure appropriate independent work is being set by subject teachers and that it is in line with the frequency of tasks given.
- Ensure the subject specific revision tasks are in place and they are being set by all teachers in advance of assessments.
- Follow up concerns raised by subject teachers regarding students and their independent work.

### **Head of Year**

- Monitor referrals raised by Heads of Department and intervene where concerns are raised about individual students across several subjects.
- Where needed, clarify whole school expectations and offer support to students in improving organisation.

### **Subject Teacher**

- Inform students about independent tasks on the day it is set in addition to recording details of any independent work that needs to be submitted for review on Teams.
- For Year 10/11 GCSE groups, communicate to classes in September the planned day that assessed independent work will be set each week.
- To enable students to balance their time between independent work tasks and other activities, ensure there will be at least three school days (longer, when possible) between independent work to be submitted being set and when it is due.
- Set the departmentally agreed revision tasks to support students preparing for assessments.
- Monitor completion of independent work, offering support to students who are experiencing difficulties in completing their work.
- Where work is not completed on time, record a behaviour point on SIMS, in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- Consider each student's completion of independent work to inform judgements provided in students' reports.

### **Student**

- Check Teams regularly to confirm the details of independent work set.
- Ensure that independent work is completed to the best of your ability, and by the deadlines communicated.

- Contact the subject teacher about any difficulties with completing work before the deadline including whether there are any issues accessing Teams.

In the case of absence, ensure independent work is completed and submitted at the earliest opportunity, asking teachers for help if required. **Follow official guidelines regarding the use of AI** [JCQ-AI-poster-for-students-2.pdf](#)

### **Parent/Carer**

- Provide and encourage an appropriate environment conducive to learning.
- To monitor via the Satchel: One Parent App to see the independent work that has been set and that students are completing it.
- Contact school via telephone or by email to [enquiry@suttcold.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@suttcold.bham.sch.uk) with any concerns relating to independent work, providing daughter's name, tutor group and the subject concerned.
- Additional support available for pupil premium students is detailed in our pupil premium strategy which can be found on the school website [Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls - Pupil Premium](#)