

WYVERN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT MISSION POLICY

RATIONALE

Establishing and maintaining an enthusiasm for learning are vital for students' participation in further education and employment. If students are to be successful, independent learners in the 21st century they need to be:

- Inquirers
- Thinkers
- Principled
- Prepared to take risks with their learning
- Resourceful
- Communicators
- Open-minded
- Reflective

Planned, differentiated independent mission (IM) has the potential to raise attainment by helping to develop and support confident, independent learners. If students feel that subject staff, tutors and parents value IM it helps create a culture of high expectations.

Independent Missions is most effective in supporting learning and developing independent learners if:

1. Students are positive about school, are involved in extra-curricular activities and see the importance of independent missions in supporting their learning.
2. Teachers value learning that take place outside lessons.
3. Parents/carers show interest in homework activities and offer moral support, provide resources and discuss general issues around independent mission.
4. Students have an element of choice in completing independent missions, eg the use of ICT, being able to present in different formats.
5. Independent missions are creative, innovative, individualised and challenging.
6. Independent missions have clear purpose and is relevant to learning. It is clearly planned and explained to students.
7. There are opportunities for students to work collaboratively on independent mission tasks.
8. Expectations regarding independent missions are set out clearly for students and parents.
9. Support is available in school for those who find IM difficult, both in terms of learning to learn and subject content.

AIMS

We are committed to providing IM which:

- encourages students to develop the skills and confidence to be successful and independent learners;
- requires students to develop self-discipline, meet deadlines and be organised;
- enables the completion of assignments and coursework;
- motivates and challenges the students;
- reinforces learning and prepares for subsequent lessons;
- aids assessment by closing the gap between where students are and where they need to go.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

It is the responsibility of the student to meet IM deadlines and complete it to the best of their ability.

ROLE OF SUBJECT TEACHERS

- Encourage students to use independent mission time to reflect on their learning and plan for the next steps.
- Ensure the purpose of the independent mission is made **explicit** to students - how does the independent mission relate to the learning objectives/help them prepare for an assessment task, test or examination?
- Use independent missions to promote creative thinking, present challenge or reinforce learning
- Differentiate independent missions so that it is accessible to all but also adds an element of challenge.
- In order to show that IM is valued avoid setting at the end of the lesson.
- Ensure students record independent missions in their planners and give a clear deadline. If it is a long term mission a weekly action must be recorded.
- Look for opportunities to provide choice and collaborative working.
- Celebrate good independent missions by sharing examples and awarding +4 points.
- If appropriate use the school VLE to post IM, provide links and give feedback.
- Provide constructive, prompt feedback and recognition using peer and self assessment to help keep marking load manageable. This is essential to demonstrate independent missions are valued.
- Set IM if there is a known absence.

- Display examples of ‘good’ independent missions.

GUIDANCE

- Set relevant independent missions related to the learning objectives - plan for homework.
- Encourage problem solving, creativity and development of thinking skills.
- Give opportunities to practise examples to reinforce learning and gain confidence.
- Use resource sheets, if appropriate, to avoid lots of copying - coloured paper attracts attention.
- If appropriate ask students to leave space in their exercise book to complete independent learning so it’s obvious if not completed.
- **When possible give the students choice as to how to complete IM.**
- Some subjects find IM exercise books work well.
- Do not use IM for ‘finishing off’ classwork.
- Provide a **variety of IM tasks** and plan with the needs of the individual in mind.
- Examples might include:
 - Set exercises
 - Research and preparation for next lesson
 - Investigations and practical tasks
 - Interviews
 - Designing**
 - Essay writing
 - Project work that spans several weeks (with monitoring points along the way)**
 - Coursework
 - Reading to enhance knowledge, understanding and imagination
 - Collecting and collating
 - Time for reflection
 - Watching and noting from TV, radio, website, newspapers
 - Listening practice
 - Spelling/vocabulary practice
 - Developing and extending classwork (not just ‘finish off’)
 - Study in preparation for an assessment or examination
 - Development of ICT skills**
 - Preparation for debate or presentation**
 - Use of YouTube/mobile phone technology/email/podcasts**

Independent missions raise difficult issues:

- Be aware that not all children go home to space, quiet and encouragement.
- Be aware that lack of understanding in class could result in mistakes being reinforced at home.
- Be aware that some students get very stressed when trying to perfect homework tasks.

ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS

- To appreciate and support the learning ethos of Wyvern Community School which values independent missions and believes that it can help students make progress.
- To take interest and provide support for work that is completed at home - give praise and encouragement.
- To support students in the organisation of their learning at home.
- To contact the school if there are concerns over work that is set or if further information is needed.

MONITORING

- Faculty Leaders and SLT (through MER process) will monitor and evaluate this policy in practice. Views of students, staff and parents will be sought regularly.

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