



Principal **Nick Martin**
BSc, MA, PGCE, NPQH

Dear Parent/Carers,

As we now in the summer term and year 12 students are planning and preparing for their Internal Progression Exams (IPEs) in June, I am writing to highlight the importance of independent learning and private study in and outside of the classroom for every student within our Sixth Form. Independent learning and private study is demonstrated when a student is able to think, act and pursue their own studies with minimal or appropriate support depending on their ability.

Independent learning and private study is an important skill whether a student is planning to continue their studies at college, university, take an apprenticeship or even go straight into employment. A good independent learner is someone who is determined, persistent and has excellent time management. Reported benefits of independent learning include increased motivation and confidence and the ability for students to engage in lifelong learning; besides learning what to learn, it is also crucially important to learn how to learn.

Some research was conducted last year where students were asked how many extra hours of independent learning they conducted per week. We then looked at how this translated into average grades achieved and the results are very interesting.

Hours of extra independent study per week conducted	Percentage and total number of students in year 13 last year		On average what grade was achieved?
0-4 hours	3%	3	E grade
4-8 hours	11%	14	E grade
8-12 hours	21%	35	D/C grade
12-16 hours	25%	60	D/C grade
16-20 hours	11%	71	B grade
20+ hours	28%	99	A*/A grade

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Some tips to encourage Independent Learning and therefore increase the chance of enhanced progress towards higher grades:

Set goals: a good way to keep your motivation up is to think what you want to get out of your studies and what your future goal is, set yourself realistic targets.

Routine: develop good habits to learn, have a set time to relax and work every evening, after dinner on the kitchen table etc.

Time management: prioritise important milestones, exams, mocks, socials, use a diary, make it visual, and break things down into sizeable chunks.

Extension tasks: many of your current books have extension tasks in them, conduct further reading, use the sixth form learning platform on google drive (team drive).

Read: good independent learners are good readers, focus on key words, summarise, and highlight text.

Go solo: practice working on your own for long periods of time without seeking the help of an adult unless necessary.

Be persistent: if a task is challenging, don't give up, keep at it until you understand what you need to do.

Seek help: ask for support and advice if you really are stuck, take responsibility for your learning. This is still an important part of independent learning.

These are only a few ideas to get you started. Don't forget learning is personal and you should explore different techniques to unlock your learning potential. I am a strong advocate of independent learning and I believe we all have an important role in ensuring that our students are well prepared for their future pathways. I am confident you will join us as a Sixth Form to promote and encourage independent learning outside of the classroom. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Lee Huckle

Head of Sixth Form

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