



Independent Study Policy 2025-2026

Our vision:

- To ensure independent study plays a pivotal role in reinforcing classroom learning and promoting academic development.
- To promote consistent routines around independent study, enabling students at Caister Academy to have the skills they need to achieve *outstanding academic success*.

Implementation

At Caister Academy, independent study is pre-planned, purposefully sequenced and integrated within all areas of the curriculum through subject-specific schemes of learning. Independent study includes a strong focus on **retrieval practice**, allowing students opportunities throughout the academic year to recall and apply prior learning. Each independent study assignment will include a 'checklist for success' so that students' understand the expectations of their learning, enabling them to complete tasks and mastery of the material.

Potential Independent Study Activities

- **Retrieval Practice:** engage in prior subject/topic recall and reactivation activities utilising online revision platforms, *Knowledge Organisers*, and revision flashcards to consolidate prior learning.
- **Routine question and answers:** dive into question-and-answer sessions to sharpen comprehension and response skills, fostering a deeper understanding of the material (e.g. spelling tests).
- **Pre-Lesson Learning:** embark on pre-lesson preparation journeys, whether through pre-study, research, or delving into wider reading, enriching the learning experience, and setting the stage for informed classroom discussions.
- **Timed Practice:** test your skills with timed practice responses, honing your ability to apply learned concepts efficiently, ensuring readiness for assessments and real-world challenges.

Challenge and Independent Study

Every **half term**, each subject will provide a '*Be an Excellent...*' learner sheet that provides opportunities to develop knowledge and expertise beyond the classroom curriculum. These tasks will signpost students to interesting articles, programmes and podcasts as well as set tasks to consolidate and extend what has been learned inside the classroom. Students that successfully attempt tasks from the '*Be an Excellent...*' will receive a green Caister Coin. These entitle the student to receive an instant prize and will also go towards their year group score totals.

Independent Study Expectations

Teachers will:

- Set independent study assignments using *Arbor* according to the frequency indicated in the table below.
- Attach any paper tasks to the *Arbor* assignment so students can print off a copy if it is lost.
- Monitor completion of independent study using *Arbor*.
- Award praise by issuing '*Ambition - Independent Study*' points (for good quality work completed on time and to the student's best ability).
- Sanction in line with the behaviour policy to ensure missed learning opportunities are caught up on.

Students will:

- Access their assigned independent study assignment through *Arbor*.
- Request help from a member of staff or a parent if necessary.
- Attend independent study support clubs if needed: these run in every subject area and the days are outlined on the *Electives* schedule; the library is also open every night for support with independent study.
- Complete independent study to a high standard and on time.
- Contact class teacher prior to the deadline date if they are struggling to complete independent study.

Parents will:

- Ensure students have a quiet space to complete assignments at home, or that they access support facilities at school e.g. independent study support club or the library.
- Ensure students complete their independent study to a high standard and on time.
- Communicate concerns about independent study with the relevant teaching staff.

Independent Study Celebration

We wish to celebrate the efforts made by students when completing their assignments, and this celebration will be awarded through:

- Fortnightly prizes for tutor groups who are awarded the most independent study points.
- Half termly awards linked to students achieving the highest number of independent study points.
- Prize draws linked to outstanding effort in independent study tasks, where students could receive a mystery prize if they have shown outstanding effort on an activity.
- Students completing the 'Be An Excellent...' tasks will receive a green Caister Coin for instant prizes and this will contribute to the overall year group totals.

Homework Frequency and Time Approximation

Year Group	Subject	Frequency	Time
7	English	Weekly	60 mins
	Mathematics		60 mins
	Science		30 mins
	History	Fortnightly	30 mins
Geography	30 mins		
Modern Foreign Languages	30 mins		
	This equates to 195 mins a week (approximately 30 minutes a day)		
8	English	Weekly	60 mins
	Mathematics		60 mins
	Science		30 mins
	History	Fortnightly	30 mins
Geography	30 mins		
Modern Foreign Languages	30 mins		
	This equates to 195 mins a week (approximately 30 minutes a day)		
9	English	Weekly	60 mins
	Mathematics		60 mins
	Science		60 mins
	Modern Foreign Languages		40 mins
Geography	40 mins		
History	40 mins		
	This equates to 300 mins a week (approximately 45 minutes a day)		
10	English	Weekly	90 mins
	Mathematics		90 mins
	Science		60 mins
	Creative Arts and Technology		4 option subjects x 45 minutes each
Computing History			
Geography			
Modern Foreign Languages			
Performing Arts			
PE			
	This equates to 420 mins a week (approximately 60 minutes a day)		

11	English Mathematics Science	Weekly	90 mins 90 mins 90 mins
	Creative Arts and Technology Computing History Geography Modern Foreign Languages Performing Arts PE		4 option subjects x 45 minutes each
	This equates to 450 mins (approximately 65 minutes a day)		

Independent Study Login Information

Whilst we set and monitor all independent study on *Arbor*, students may be directed to other subject-specific online platforms to complete their independent learning. The student login information for each of the portals that are currently being used is outlined below.

Subject	Year group	Platform	Login details
All subjects	All year groups	MS Teams	In the student area of the school website, select Microsoft Teams Username: same as school ID Password: same as school password
All subjects	All year groups	Seneca	Website: https://senecalearning.com/en-GB Username: same as school ID Password: same as school password Alternative: use log in with Microsoft
Mathematics	All year groups	SPARX Maths	Website: www.sparxmaths.com Click on Student login Search "Caister Academy" when prompted to look for school Sign on with Microsoft when prompted, using school email address and password.
Science	Years 9 to 11	SPARX Science	Website: http://www.sparxscience.com/ Click on Student login Search "Caister Academy" when prompted to look for school Sign on with Microsoft when prompted, using school email address and password.
MFL	All year groups.	Language Gym	Website: https://uk.language-gym.com Username: student school email address Password: created by student

Independent Study Monitoring

So that all stakeholders can celebrate and support the completion of independent study to a high standard, it is important that the monitoring of this is centralised.

- All independent study assignments will be set and monitored on *Arbor*.
- Staff will record completion of independent study assignments on *Arbor*. There is no expectation to record marks.
- Staff will assign positive points or award sanctions if independent study assignments do not meet the required standard or deadline, in line with the behaviour policy.
- Curriculum leaders will routinely perform subject-level independent study analysis to monitor the quality and regularity of assignments set within their department.
- Senior Leaders will review all points awarded to ensure student efforts are validated.
- Parents can check on students' outstanding independent study tasks via the Arbor Parent Portal and teachers will comment on completion of tasks in reports using the Attitude to Independent Study grade.

Student Support with Non-Completion

At Caister Academy, we believe in the importance of consistent independent learning to foster academic growth. To ensure that every student can engage with their independent study assignments effectively, teachers will diligently monitor completion on a weekly basis. For those students who do not complete their homework assignments, a targeted approach is taken to provide support and guidance with reasonable adjustments applied as part of the process.

Students who miss assignments will receive an IS1 sanction. This will include a restorative conversation to identify and resolve any barriers to independent study being attempted and agree a reasonable deadline for completion. If deadlines continue to be missed, this will move to an after school 30 minute departmental led independent study session (ISS) and the student will be placed on a subject independent study report for two weeks. This intervention aims to address any challenges students may face and to ensure they do not miss out on valuable learning opportunities.

Following this intervention, if the independent study is still not completed or the student fails to attend, students will receive an IS2 sanction, where students will need to attend a 40-minute afterschool session led by the Senior Leadership Team. This will take place on a Monday. Failure to attend an IS2 will have the same escalation as a C2 sanction, as per the behaviour policy. Continued failure to attend independent study support sessions may result in an IS3 sanction, in which students will complete missed independent study in reflection.

Independent Study Session Schedule

Day	Independent Study Support Sessions		
Monday	Technology	Science	Art and Design
Tuesday	Geography	History	MFL
Wednesday	Library		
Thursday	Performing Arts	English	
Friday	Physical Education	Mathematics	

Independent Study Consequence Chart

Positive engagement and interest. Verbal warning and support provided where appropriate.

Code	Staff Action	Reflection / Restoration	Potential Reasons
IS1	Written warning Record on Arbor. <i>Parents informed by Arbor notification.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kept back for up to 15 minutes at end of lesson or next convenient time (e.g., break). Identify any barriers to independent study being attempted, support to resolve and agree deadline for completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student does not attempt independent study to a reasonable standard by the submission date. (This standard will consider any reasonable adjustments for the individual student.) Following an IS1, student does not attempt work to a reasonable standard by the new submission date
ISS	Independent Study Session Record as ISS on Arbor, placing student into allocated department session. <i>Parents informed via Arbor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 min after school session led by departments. Discussion with the member of staff or subject representative to support completion of independent study. Identify any barriers to independent study being attempted, support to resolve during the session. Student will go onto 'Independent Study Subject Report' for two weeks Failed ISS will result in IS2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refusal to attend an IS1 Student fails to hand in two pieces of independent study
IS2	Central Independent Study Session Record as IS2 on Arbor <i>Parents informed via Arbor. Member of staff calls home.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 min after school support session led by Senior Leadership Team – Monday. Independent study to be completed in silence. Failed IS2 will result in IS3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refusal to attend an ISS.
IS3	Reflection – failure to attend an IS2 central independent study session.		

Students who persistently fail to complete independent study should be placed on a report. Coursework completion should be tracked and sanctioned on a lesson-by-lesson basis.

The consequence chart is intended as a guide. Staff will use their professional judgement to make a final decision on which consequence to apply in which situation.