



St. Ninian's HIGH SCHOOL

Scoil Ard Noo Ninian

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HEAD TEACHER Mr C. J. Coole

Our Ref: TNS/GK

4th December 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Independent Learning

Thank you to those parents who completed the recent survey on Independent Learning. The results of this survey, along with the results of a survey of students and feedback from staff have been used to review this new initiative. A slide show summarising the results, conclusion and action point from the review is available on our website.

We are really pleased with the engagement with Independent Learning Tasks (ILTs). There has been greater engagement and higher quality work being produced than we have seen in previous years with traditional homework tasks. Feedback from students and parents suggests the level of academic challenge, the range/type of task being set and the targeted amount of about 2-4 hours a week is about right. We are confident that we are on the right track with this strategy.

There are, however, some concerns that have been highlighted. These generally relate to the co-ordination of tasks; other “homework tasks” being set alongside Independent Learning Tasks; the ability of students to manage their time; and how equipped families feel to support their children. Completing the larger unstructured tasks, managing multiple tasks, and fitting tasks into an already busy and productive life schedule is the cause of some stress for some students and their families.

In an attempt to address these concerns we are making the following changes:

1. Independent Learning Tasks will be the only work expected of students outside of lesson, as feedback suggests additional activities set by subject teachers have added to the workload.
2. Some of the planned upcoming tasks have been removed or delayed in order to reduce and smooth out the demand.
3. We are reviewing and making changes to the larger less structured tasks with the aim of ensuring Year 7 tasks are smaller and more structured.
4. We are looking at how we space tasks out in Year 7, to help build their skills over the year and not overwhelm them in the first term.
5. The pastoral team is reflecting on how they can provide more support for students, helping them to plan ahead to manage their time and upcoming deadlines.

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Live to Learn
Learn to Live

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Several parents asked for more details about the tasks we set and the deadlines students are being asked to meet.

Our [webpage on Independent Learning](#), which can be found under the “Learning” menu has a calendar of the year that includes tasks that are currently set and those that are planned to be set. The page also has a downloadable copy of all the live tasks students are to attempt including details about the amount of time they should spend on the task, where to get additional help and how the tasks will be marked and feedback given. The page is regularly updated.

We hope the changes that we have made and the changes we are hoping to make will address the concerns raised. We also hope that parents and guardians will continue to support us and this initiative by encouraging and guiding students to complete the tasks to the best of their ability whilst managing their eagerness and determination so that they remain healthy and happy.

Independent Learning aims to develop the skills and habits which our young people require to be successful learners at GCSE, A-Level and beyond. We are trying to do this in a sensible and sensitive way taking into account the wide range of values, expectations and abilities of our young people and their families.

Our aim is to ask for feedback again later in the academic year in order to carry out a second review.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Smith', written in a cursive style.

Mr A Smith
Deputy Head Teacher