PPS Independent Learning (Homework) Policy 2026-2027

Phoenix Private School, Doha – For Students and Staff

Effective Date: August 2026

Approved By: Principal & Governing Body

Next Review Date: August 2027

1. Policy Statement

At The Phoenix Private School, we believe that learning extends beyond the classroom. Independent Learning provides students with purposeful opportunities to consolidate, practise and extend the knowledge, skills and understanding developed during lessons.

Our approach is designed to develop increasingly independent learners who take responsibility for their learning, develop positive study habits and understand that learning is a continuous process.

Independent Learning should be **purposeful, manageable, age-appropriate and connected to classroom learning**. PPS prioritises the **quality, consistency and impact** of independent learning rather than the quantity of work assigned.

The expectations and level of independence increase progressively from EYFS through Primary and into KS3.

2. Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To develop future leaders who are able to make positive changes throughout the world. We challenge today to create a better tomorrow.

Vision

To prepare a generation of:

- **Successful Learners**
- **Confident Individuals**
- **Responsible Citizens**
- **Effective Contributors**

Phoenix Values

P – Perseverance
H – Honesty
O – Originality
E – Enrichment
N – Nurturing
I – Inspiration
X – eXcited to Learn

Independent Learning should provide regular opportunities for students to demonstrate these values, particularly **Perseverance, Honesty, Originality, Enrichment and eXcited to Learn**.

3. Purpose of Independent Learning

Independent Learning is intended to:

- Consolidate and reinforce learning from the classroom.
- Provide opportunities to practise key knowledge and skills.
- Extend students' understanding where appropriate.
- Develop independence, organisation and responsibility.
- Support the development of positive learning habits.
- Strengthen long-term retention and recall.

- Encourage students to take increasing ownership of their learning.
- Provide opportunities for parents to understand and support their child's learning.
- Help students prepare for the increasing demands of future study.
- Develop confidence and resilience when working independently.

Independent Learning should **not** be used simply to increase the quantity of work completed.

4. Principles of the Independent Learning Approach

All independent learning at PPS should be:

Purposeful: Every task should have a clear learning purpose and link to the curriculum.

Age-appropriate: Tasks should reflect students' developmental stage, ability and level of independence.

Manageable: Students should not be expected to spend excessive amounts of time completing independent learning.

Consistent: Expectations should be communicated clearly and applied consistently across classes and subjects.

Inclusive: Tasks should take account of students' different needs, abilities and circumstances.

Independent: Students should complete the work themselves, with parents providing appropriate encouragement and support rather than completing the work for them.

Connected: Independent learning should reinforce or extend classroom learning rather than introduce significant amounts of entirely new content without support.

Feedback-informed: Where appropriate, teachers should review, assess or discuss independent learning so that it contributes to subsequent learning.

5. Phase Expectations

Expectations by Phase – Summary

Phase	Main Purpose	Core Expectations	Recommended Maximum Per Day
EYFS	Enjoyment, communication, early literacy and numeracy	Reading, phonics, early number activities and play-based learning	**15 mins – optional**
KS1	Consolidation and development of learning habits	Reading, spelling, iMaths and curriculum projects	**15-20 mins**
KS2	Consolidation, practice, application and increasing independence	Reading, spelling, iMaths, projects and selected additional practice	**20-40 mins**
KS3	Consolidation, revision, application and preparation for future study	Subject-specific independent learning, revision, research and extended tasks	**1 hr 30 mins**

These timings are **guidelines and maximum recommended expectations, not targets**.

EYFS – Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2

Approach

Independent Learning in EYFS is fundamentally different from that in Primary and KS3.

At this age, **play, exploration, communication, socialisation and family interaction are central to children's development**. Children should not be subjected to excessive formal homework.

EYFS independent learning activities are therefore **optional and developmental rather than compulsory**.

Suggested Activities

Where appropriate, teachers may provide:

- Phonics activities.
- Letter and sound recognition.
- Up to **five key spelling/high-frequency words per week**, where developmentally appropriate.
- Early number and counting activities.
- Number recognition and simple mathematical games.
- Reading and sharing books with parents/carers.
- Talking about stories and asking questions about characters and events.
- Practical activities involving sorting, counting, shapes and patterns.
- Opportunities for role play, small-world play and imaginative activities.

Reading

Parents are encouraged to read with their child regularly. The focus should be on enjoyment, vocabulary, communication and comprehension rather than completing formal written tasks.

Parents can support their child by:

- Reading stories together.
- Asking questions about the story.
- Encouraging children to predict what might happen.
- Discussing unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Encouraging children to identify sounds and letters where appropriate.

Time

Optional independent learning: no more than approximately 15 minutes per evening.

Children should have substantial opportunities for play, social interaction, physical activity and family time.

6. Primary Phase

Primary independent learning should progressively develop students' independence while reinforcing the knowledge and skills taught in school.

The emphasis should be on **quality, consistency and purposeful practice**.

Recommended Time

Independent learning should generally take approximately:

- **Key Stage 1:** 15-20 minutes per evening
- **Key Stage 2:** 20-40 minutes per evening

These are maximum recommended expectations rather than targets. Students should not be required to continue working for excessive periods simply because they have not completed a task within the recommended time.

Where a student is consistently taking significantly longer than the recommended time, parents should communicate with the class teacher.

6.1 Mandatory Primary Independent Learning

The following form the core expectations for Primary students.

Reading

Students should read regularly at home.

Reading may be:

- Independent reading.
- Reading with an adult.
- Shared reading.
- Reading aloud.
- Reading age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction.

Parents are encouraged to discuss what their child has read to develop comprehension, vocabulary and enjoyment of reading.

Spelling and High-Frequency Words

Students should practise their weekly spelling words regularly.

Activities may include:

- Reading and saying words.
- Writing words.
- Identifying spelling patterns.
- Using words in sentences.
- Dictation.
- Word games.
- Online activities.
- Revisiting previously taught spelling patterns.

Spelling practice should not rely exclusively on worksheets. Teachers are encouraged to use varied and engaging approaches.

Parents may support children by regularly revisiting current and previously taught spelling words.

iMaths

Students should complete assigned **iMaths** activities to reinforce mathematical knowledge and skills taught in class.

Where appropriate, students may also use mathematical equipment, practical resources, textbooks or educational games to consolidate previous learning.

Students should be encouraged to explain their mathematical thinking rather than simply provide answers.

Projects

Curriculum-linked projects may be assigned where they provide meaningful opportunities for students to:

- Apply knowledge.
- Conduct research.
- Make connections between subjects.
- Develop creativity.
- Develop presentation skills.
- Work independently.
- Demonstrate originality.
- Develop problem-solving skills.

Projects may be assigned on a **termly basis** and must include clear instructions, success criteria and a reasonable timeframe.

7. Optional Primary Independent Learning

Teachers may provide optional activities for students who would benefit from additional consolidation or for families who wish to support further learning.

These may include:

- Additional Mathematics practice.
- Grammar and punctuation activities.
- Writing practice.
- Topic-related activities.
- Revision of previously taught concepts.
- Educational games.
- Online learning activities.
- Reading for pleasure.
- Research and enrichment activities.

Optional activities must be clearly identified as **optional**.

They should not create pressure for students or families and should not form part of the mandatory homework requirements.

Optional activities generally do not need to be returned for marking unless specifically stated by the teacher.

8. Primary Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Mathematics Guidance

Reading

Students should have regular opportunities to read at home. Parents are encouraged to listen to their child read and discuss the text.

When students encounter unfamiliar words, parents can encourage them to:

- Sound out words.
- Use phonics knowledge.
- Blend sounds.
- Segment words.
- Use contextual clues.
- Look at illustrations where appropriate.
- Reread the sentence.

The aim is to develop increasingly confident and independent readers.

Grammar

Grammar activities should reinforce rules and concepts already taught in class.

Parents can support learning by asking children to explain:

- What the grammatical rule is.
- Why it is used.
- How it can be applied in a sentence.

Mathematics

Mathematics independent learning should reinforce important numeracy skills and mathematical concepts taught in class.

Students may use:

- iMaths
- Textbooks
- Mathematical equipment
- Number lines
- Times-table resources
- Educational games
- Practical activities

Regular retrieval and revision of previously taught mathematics is encouraged to support long-term retention.

9. KS3 Independent Learning

KS3 students are expected to take significantly greater responsibility for their independent learning.

Independent learning is set by subject teachers and will vary according to:

- The subject
- Current curriculum units
- Assessment requirements
- Student needs
- Upcoming assessments
- Opportunities for consolidation and extension

Students should increasingly be responsible for:

- Recording what work has been set
- Organising their time
- Meeting deadlines
- Completing work to an appropriate standard.
- Seeking help when necessary.
- Responding to teacher feedback.
- Revising previously taught content.

Recommended Time

KS3: up to approximately 1 hour 30 minutes per evening.

This represents an overall recommended maximum across subjects rather than an expectation that every student completes 90 minutes of work every evening.

Teachers should communicate effectively to avoid unnecessary duplication or excessive workload.

10. KS3 Independent Learning Timetable

The timetable below provides the planned subject rotation for KS3 independent learning.

	7A	7B	8A	8B	9A	9B
Sun	Math Geography	English History	Comp. Sci History	Science	Math	Art/Music
Mon	English History	Science Math	Science	Math	Comp. Sci	English
Tues	Science	Comp. Sci French	Math Geography	English Comp. Sci Geography	English History	Math Geography
Wed	Art/Music French	French	English Art/Music French	History French	Science Geography Art/Music	Science
Thurs	Comp. Sci Arabic Islamic	Geo Art/Music Arabic Islamic	Arabic Islamic	Art/Music Arabic Islamic	French Arabic Islamic	French Arabic Islamic

Subject teachers remain responsible for communicating the specific task, deadline and expectations.

11. Differentiation and Additional Support

Independent learning should be appropriately differentiated.

Students may receive modified or additional tasks where this is necessary to support their learning.

This may include students:

- Receiving SEN support.
- Participating in additional support programmes.
- Requiring additional consolidation.
- Requiring greater challenge or extension.
- Participating in ASP or other intervention programmes.

Additional work should be purposeful and proportionate.

Students should not be given significantly greater quantities of homework simply because they require additional support.

Where appropriate, more able and gifted and talented students may receive **extension and enrichment activities** that deepen thinking rather than simply increase workload.

12. The Role of the Teacher

Teachers are responsible for:

- Planning purposeful independent learning
- Ensuring tasks are age-appropriate and accessible
- Clearly communicating instructions and deadlines
- Differentiating tasks where appropriate
- Coordinating workload within their phase/subject team
- Providing appropriate resources
- Reviewing or assessing independent learning where appropriate
- Providing feedback where it will improve learning
- Monitoring completion
- Identifying students who may require additional support
- Communicating with parents where concerns arise

Independent learning should inform classroom practice where appropriate

13. The Role of the Student

Students are expected to:

- Complete independent learning themselves
- Put the same level of effort into independent learning as they would classwork
- Take responsibility for meeting deadlines
- Organise their resources
- Ask for help when they do not understand a task
- Act honestly and submit their own work
- Respond positively to feedback
- Develop increasing independence as they progress through the school.

KS3 students in particular are expected to take increasing ownership of planning and managing their workload.

14. The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play an important supportive role.

They should:

- Provide a suitable environment for learning.
- Encourage regular routines.
- Provide appropriate resources where reasonably possible.
- Show an interest in their child's learning.
- Encourage their child to complete work independently.
- Encourage reading and discussion.
- Help their child understand instructions where necessary.
- Communicate with the school if difficulties arise.

Parents **should not complete independent learning for their child**.

If a task is too difficult, parents should encourage their child to make a reasonable attempt and then communicate with the teacher.

Parents should not feel that they need to provide extensive tutoring or purchase additional resources to enable their child to complete routine independent learning.

15. Independent Learning and Classwork

Classwork should not routinely be sent home for completion without prior communication with parents.

Where a student persistently fails to complete classwork, the school may provide an opportunity for the student to complete the work during an appropriate supervised period, such as lunchtime, rather than routinely transferring unfinished classwork into homework.

Parents will be informed where incomplete classwork becomes a persistent concern.

16. Assessment, Marking and Feedback

Independent learning should be reviewed in a manner proportionate to its purpose.

Depending on the task, teachers may use:

- Self-assessment.
- Peer assessment.
- Whole-class feedback.
- Verbal feedback.
- Written feedback.
- Quiz results.
- Retrieval activities.
- Automated feedback.
- Teacher marking.

For core subjects, digital quizzes or similar activities may be used where appropriate to provide students with immediate feedback.

Teachers should use the information gained from independent learning to identify misconceptions and inform future teaching where appropriate.

Not every independent learning activity requires detailed written marking.

17. Late or Missing Independent Learning

Students are expected to complete independent learning by the stated deadline.

Where independent learning is not completed:

1. The student will receive a reminder.
2. The teacher will establish whether there is a legitimate reason for non-completion.
3. Parents may be contacted where non-completion becomes a concern.
4. Persistent non-completion will be addressed through the school's behaviour and pastoral procedures.

A record of independent learning completion may be maintained by teachers where appropriate.

Where a student repeatedly fails to complete independent learning over a sustained period, this may be reflected in the student's overall learning habits, effort or attitude to learning.

Exceptional Circumstances

If a child is unable to complete independent learning, parents should communicate with the class/subject teacher, preferably before or on the day the work is due.

This allows the teacher to determine whether:

- The task was inappropriate
- The student requires additional support
- There was a genuine circumstance preventing completion
- Further clarification is required

The school will seek to respond reasonably and proportionately to individual circumstances.

18. Independent Learning and Wellbeing

PPS recognises that students require a healthy balance between learning, family time, play, physical activity, sleep, social interaction and other interests.

Independent learning should therefore **never become a source of unnecessary stress**.

Teachers should consider:

- The student's age.
- The time required.
- Other subjects' expectations.
- Assessment periods.
- School activities.
- Individual circumstances.
- The overall workload.

Students and parents should contact the school if independent learning is regularly taking substantially longer than the recommended time.

19. Educational Enrichment at Home

Families who wish to provide additional learning opportunities are encouraged to do so through enjoyable, meaningful activities.

Examples include:

Mathematics

- Sumdog
- Math Playground
- Topmarks
- EducationCity
- PrimaryGames
- Maths games and practical activities

English

- ReadTheory
- ReadWorks
- British Council LearnEnglish Kids
- Grammaropolis
- Reading for pleasure

Science

- Discovery Kids
- Science News for Students
- Science Kids
- Planet Science

Online resources should be selected according to the child's age and suitability.

Subscription-based resources should not be required unless specifically communicated by the school.

20. Quality Assurance and Review

The Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Phase/Subject Leaders will monitor the implementation of the Independent Learning Policy to ensure:

- Expectations are consistent.
- Work is purposeful.
- Workload is appropriate.
- Tasks are suitably differentiated.
- Students receive appropriate feedback.
- Parents understand expectations.
- Independent learning supports rather than replaces high-quality classroom teaching.

The policy will be reviewed annually or earlier where required.

21. Our PPS Commitment

At Phoenix Private School, independent learning is not about **doing more work**. It is about **learning more effectively**.

Our aim is to develop students who are increasingly able to:

Think independently. Work responsibly. Persevere when learning is challenging. Take pride in their work. And remain excited to learn.

Through a consistent whole-school approach from EYFS to KS3, independent learning will support our mission to develop **future leaders who are able to make positive changes throughout the world**.

Achieving Together.