

A GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT STUDY AT A LEVEL



**BISHOP
STOPFORD
SCHOOL**
Sixth Form
faith | justice | responsibility | truth | compassion

What is Independent Study?



Independent Study is an essential part of A Level learning and helps students develop the organisation, focus, and academic independence needed for success in sixth form and beyond.

Students are expected to complete a minimum of five hours of Independent Study per week for each subject, in addition to their timetabled lessons. This time should be used productively to consolidate learning, complete homework, review class material, carry out wider reading, and prepare for upcoming assessments.

Students have a range of spaces available where they can complete their Independent Study, depending on the type of work they need to do. These include the Study Centre, Collaborative Work Room, Olive Grove, Library, or a free classroom when available.

Using these spaces effectively allows students to choose an environment that suits their work, whether they need a quiet area for focused study or a space where they can work collaboratively with others. Regular and consistent Independent Study is key to making strong academic progress at A Level.



How should students structure their time?

Creating an effective study timetable for a student begins with understanding how much time they realistically have each week alongside school, homework, and other commitments.

Encourage them to list all their subjects and help them prioritise areas they find most challenging or have upcoming exams in. Support them in breaking study time into manageable sessions (around 30–60 minutes), with each slot focused on a specific task rather than a general goal such as “revise Maths”. Some students may find it helpful to update their study timetable monthly.

It's important to build in regular breaks to help maintain concentration, as well as time to review previous learning. While consistency is key, a good timetable should also be flexible, allowing adjustments if something isn't working, so students can develop a sustainable and effective study routine. The next page of this booklet contains a blank copy of a study plan, which students can use.

Creating a plan should respond to questions such as

- ‘How will I distribute time for each subject evenly?’
- ‘Is it best to put in a subject slot directly after a lesson I've had in it, or vary the approach?’
- ‘Is this time for consolidating what I've learnt, or exploring new areas as in the Subject Independent Study Guides?’

Support in creating Study Plan is available from Form Tutors, Heads of Year, or the Head of Sixth Form.

A	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	After school (3:30-5:00pm)	Evening (6-9pm)
Mon							
Tues							
Wed							
Thurs							
Fri							

B	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	After school (3:30-5:00pm)	Evening (6-9pm)
Mon							
Tues							
Wed							
Thurs							
Fri							

What techniques can students use during their Independent Study?

Students should speak to their subject teachers if they require specific ideas for Independent Study in each subject area. However, the strategies below are effective across a range of subjects and provide an excellent starting point.

- Using the specialist Independent Study Guides for every subject, available on the website.
- Using the knowledge learnt in the Transition & Careers Programme.
- Pre-reading ahead of lessons using subject textbooks or other resources
- Watching relevant videos to supplement current and future learning
- Using textbook work questions to scaffold learning
- Reformatting lesson notes such as mind maps, revision cards
- Self-quizzing using sites such as Seneca or Quizlet
- Writing everything recalled about a topic on a mini whiteboard or paper, without notes
- Planning, practice exam question answers
- Watching model answer videos
- Completing exam questions in timed conditions
- RAG rating confidence on the subject specification (which subject teachers will be able to provide for students)
- Using exam board mark schemes and examiner reports to self-mark responses



