Winchburgh Academy

Home Learning and Independent Study Strategy

Respect

Kindness

Ambition

Our vision

At Winchburgh Academy, home learning is one way of supporting young people to develop knowledge, skills, confidence and independence. It should have a clear purpose, build upon learning undertaken in school and help young people become increasingly able to take responsibility for their learning.

Home learning is not measured simply by the amount of work completed outside school. We recognise that valuable learning also takes place through reading, family and community experiences, clubs, sport, creativity, volunteering, caring responsibilities and personal interests.

Our approach reflects our school values of Respect, Kindness and Ambition:

- **Respect:** recognising the individual circumstances, needs and commitments of every learner and family.
- **Kindness:** responding supportively when barriers affect a young person's ability to complete learning at home.

Ambition: encouraging every learner to achieve, develop independence and prepare confidently for future pathways.

National and local context

This strategy is informed by:

- Curriculum for Excellence;
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators;
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);
- Scotland's commitment to Keeping the Promise;
- additional support for learning legislation and guidance;

West Lothian Council guidance and our commitment to raising attainment, promoting equity and supporting wellbeing.

In accordance with the UNCRC, young people have a right to an education that develops their abilities and talents, and a right for their views to be heard in decisions affecting them. Home learning should therefore be accessible, proportionate and responsive to pupil voice.

Consistent with GIRFEC and The Promise, our approach is relational and needs led. Where a young person experiences any challenges or barriers to completing home learning, staff will seek to understand what may be getting in the way and offer appropriate support.

Aims

Home learning and independent study will, where appropriate:

- consolidate, practise or extend classroom learning;
- develop independence, responsibility and effective study habits;
- support literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and wider skills;
- encourage curiosity, creativity and personal achievement;
- provide appropriate challenge and choice;
- help Senior Phase learners prepare for coursework, assessments and qualifications;
- strengthen positive partnerships among young people, families and the school;
- support young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Principles

Home learning should be:

- **Purposeful**: Every activity should have a clear connection to learning. It should not be issued simply to meet a routine or expectation.
- **Proportionate:** The time and demand involved should reflect the learner's age, stage, needs and wider commitments.
- **Inclusive and accessible:** Tasks should take account of additional support needs, access to technology, resources, space, time and support at home.
- **Flexible:** Staff should recognise that pupils' family circumstances, health, wellbeing, caring responsibilities and participation in wider achievement vary.
- **Engaging:** Activities may offer choice and use a range of approaches rather than relying solely upon written exercises.
- **Coordinated:** Where possible, faculties should be mindful of competing deadlines and the overall demands placed upon learners.
- **Supportive:** Difficulty completing home learning should prompt discussion and support.

Broad General Education: S1–S3

There is no expectation that every subject will set formal homework at fixed intervals. Teachers may provide purposeful home-learning opportunities when these will support or extend learning.

Activities might include:

- reading for pleasure or information;
- literacy or numeracy practice;
- retrieval practice and revision;
- research or preparation for future learning;
- completing or improving a piece of work;
- practical, creative or digital activities;
- discussion with family members;
- participation in clubs, community activities and wider achievement;
- optional resources for additional practice or challenge.

Pupils should not be disadvantaged if a task requires materials, technology or support that are unavailable at home. Suitable alternatives, resources or opportunities to complete the activity in school will be provided where necessary.

Senior Phase: S4–S6

Independent study is an important element of preparation for National Qualifications and progression beyond school. As learners move through the Senior Phase, they will be encouraged and supported to manage their time and take increasing responsibility for their learning.

Independent study may include:

- coursework and portfolio development;
- research, essays or extended responses;
- revision and retrieval practice;
- preparation for assessments;
- completion or refinement of practical work;
- wider reading;
- use of digital learning resources;

The amount required will vary according to each learner's subjects, qualification levels, assessment calendar, individual needs and stage in each course. Faculties should therefore provide clear guidance rather than rely upon a single fixed number of hours for every learner.

Roles and responsibilities

Young people

Young people will be encouraged and supported to:

- understand the purpose of an activity;
- record tasks and deadlines;
- plan their time and develop routines that work for them;
- complete activities to the best of their ability;
- use digital platforms safely and responsibly;
- ask for clarification, help or an adjustment when needed;
- communicate any barriers affecting their learning;
- make use of supported study and other available assistance.

Teachers

When providing home learning or independent study, teachers will:

- ensure that activities have a clear learning purpose;
- explain the task, expected outcome and deadline;
- provide sufficient time and appropriate resources;
- consider additional support needs and individual circumstances;
- offer accessible alternatives when required;
- avoid assumptions about access to devices, materials, adult assistance or a quiet study space;
- be mindful of learners' wider workload and wellbeing;
- provide feedback when this will support learning;
- tell learners where and how they can access help;
- recognise effort, engagement and improvement.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers can support learning by:

- showing interest in what their young person is learning;
- encouraging manageable routines and good attendance;
- helping their young person to plan ahead;
- encouraging reading, wider interests and participation in activities;
- supporting their young person to ask for help when required;
- contacting the school if there are concerns about workload, access, wellbeing or support.

Parents and carers are not expected to become teachers or provide specialist resources.

The school recognises that the support available within different households will vary.

The school

Winchburgh Academy will:

- provide information about home-learning and independent-study expectations;
- promote supported study and access to suitable learning spaces;
- provide resources, digital access or alternative arrangements where reasonably possible;
- teach study, organisation and time-management skills;
- listen to pupil and family feedback;
- monitor the impact of home learning upon attainment, engagement, equity and wellbeing;
- support departments to develop proportionate and consistent approaches.
- Offer support sessions about successful study skills, including student and parent/carer workshops and through our curriculum.

Digital learning

Home learning may be shared through Microsoft Teams, Glow, subject-specific platforms or paper-based materials.

The choice of platform should be made clear to pupils and families. A learner should not be disadvantaged because of limited access to a device, connectivity or confidence using a particular platform. Paper copies or opportunities to access resources in school will be made available where required.

Young people should follow the school's expectations for safe, respectful and responsible use of digital technology.

Equity, inclusion and wellbeing

Winchburgh Academy recognises that not every learner has the same access to time, technology, resources, adult support or a suitable place to study.

Staff should remain mindful of circumstances including:

- additional support needs;
- care experience;
- young-carer responsibilities;
- family illness or bereavement;
- financial pressures or digital exclusion;
- mental or physical health needs;
- disrupted attendance;
- family responsibilities and living arrangements;
- participation in employment, sport, clubs or community activities.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- additional time;
- adapted instructions or resources;
- reduced or prioritised tasks;
- paper-based alternatives;
- access to devices or school facilities;
- supported study or help from an appropriate member of staff;
- an agreed alternative way of demonstrating learning.

This reflects GIRFEC's focus on wellbeing across the SHANARRI indicators and Winchburgh Academy's commitment to ensuring learners feel included, respected, responsible and supported. Scottish Government GIRFEC practice guidance

When home learning is incomplete

Incomplete work should be approached through curiosity, dialogue and support.

Staff will:

1. speak with the young person and seek to understand the reason;
2. clarify expectations and check that the activity was understood and accessible;
3. offer appropriate support, adjustment or additional time;
4. recognise patterns that may indicate a wider barrier to learning or wellbeing;
5. involve parents, carers, the PSR teacher or Pupil Support when this would be helpful;
6. agree proportionate next steps with the learner.

Repeated non-completion may indicate an unmet need, an access issue, competing pressures or that further support is required. Responses should remain restorative, proportionate and consistent with the school's relationships-based approach.

Monitoring and review

The strategy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if national or local guidance changes.

Its effectiveness will be considered through:

- pupil voice;
- feedback from parents and carers;
- staff consultation;
- engagement and attainment information;
- equity and wellbeing considerations;
- feedback on access to supported study and digital resources;
- relevant national and West Lothian Council guidance.

Learners should be involved meaningfully in reviewing whether home learning is purposeful, manageable and accessible.

Consultation Process

This Home Learning and Independent Study document has been considered and created following consultation with our key stakeholders across the school community.

Winchburgh Academy Staff: **26 August 2026**

Parent Council: **2 September 2026**

Students (Pupil Parliament): **4 September 2026**

Their views have been carefully considered and incorporated, where appropriate, into this whole school strategy.