



AST/THO

15 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

The staff at Colton Hills work to make the most of the school day and maximise each learning opportunity for the benefit of every student. This is crucial to ensure student achieve the best possible grades. In this letter, I would like to outline some changes to independent study, the behaviour for learning policy and parental communication for this academic year, as we continue our journey to being a World Class school.

### **Independent Study**

Independent study is essential. It gives pupils the opportunity for research, develop independent learning skills and reflection. Through independent study, students are able to consolidate previous learning and prepare for future topics; extend learning in the classroom and assess progress towards their targets; receive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their work in each subject area and develop the skills they will need to in preparation for exams.

This year, term 'homework' is replaced with 'independent study' and all independent study will be identified to students by teachers as either 'Pre' or 'Post' independent study. These changes highlight the importance of this work outside the classroom and emphasise the way that it will be fully integrated into the learning that is done in lessons:

### **How frequently should independent study be set?**

Students are expected to spend two hours a day on independent study. This includes general reading and literacy, and numeracy tasks such as Times Table Rock Stars. Research states that two hours of homework leads to significantly better outcomes.

Student planners contain the independent study timetable for the two-week timetable. This is so students have a rough guide of what they will need to be working on each night. It will also aid parents and carers in supporting their child.

The independent study timetable is at the bottom of this letter for your reference in supporting students to ensure that homework is being set.

### **Behaviour for Learning Policy**

We have identified a way to tackle more effectively instances of low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons. As you may be aware, Ofsted have reported that across the country "children are losing up to an hour a day of teaching because of a damaging culture of low-level disruption and disrespect in schools".





At Colton Hills, we completely reject this culture, and, in a similar way to other schools we are developing a system of consequences to help us rapidly deal with and thus eliminate low-level disruptive behaviour. The school's PRIDE values underpin our School Expectations, which clearly outline the behaviour for learning we expect to see to maximise learning.

The consequences for not following the rules have also been updated and we have devised a clear description of unacceptable behaviour which will result in a consequence. This can be found in more detail in the school's behaviour policy on our website.

The main differences from previous years are that if a student reaches a Stage 2 (10-minute detention) or a Stage 3 (1 hour detention) these will be set after school **on the same day**, and you will be able to monitor this using the new Go4Schools Parent app.

Please note if a child receives more than one Stage 2 these will be completed the same day.

If a student reaches a Stage 4 (1 and-a-half-hour detention on Tuesdays), this will be arranged in advance and you will receive a call or text.

The change has been made to ensure students have the opportunity to complete work missed in lesson or close gaps in their learning and have a restorative conversation with the teacher before leaving. This is crucial to build, repair and maintain positive relationships between staff and students so that they come to school the next day with a fresh start, they have corrected their behaviour and therefore they can focus on maximising their learning.

### **Improving communication with Parents – Go4Schools**

To allow you to monitor if your child we are also introducing a new parent app called Go4Schools, which links in with our school systems. This will replace the ClassCharts app that we have used for the previous couple of years.

In the new software you will be able to see not only pupil conduct and homework, but also timetables, attendance, attainment, progress and reports. Instructions for accessing the system can be found in the help guide here: <https://www.go4schools.com/mobileappparentguide/>.

You can also find this link on the school website and included at the end of this letter are full instructions for setting up the App.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Stephens  
Headteacher

