

Developing learner agency by supporting self-directed learning

Important things to note

- All learners will continue to have a full five day timetable each week.
- All learners will be onsite and supervised and supported by a teacher in all periods throughout the school week.
- All changes will be introduced in a slow and staged way with regular checking and reflecting on effectiveness.
- All decisions about what the students prioritise will be made in partnership with their teachers.
- Any students who want or need to continue working with their timetabled teacher throughout the week will be supported to do so.

Why are we focusing on this now?

Feedback from our students and teachers suggests we could benefit from the following things: developing learner agency and designing learning that enables students to work in an increasingly self-directed manner. We need to practise for this when we are in school, so that learners can cope with the more self-directed approaches of online learning. We also need to ensure that we design for enhancing learning relationships, collaboration and connection both online and offline and that we have mechanisms for ensuring that engagement with learning is tracked, so that “no-one slips through the cracks”. We also need to review how we approach NCEA so as to maximise opportunities to curate and collect evidence of learning over time, both online and in school.

What is learner agency?

Learner agency, is about having the power, combined with choices, to take meaningful action and see the results of your decisions. It can be thought of as a catalyst for change or transformation. Within a school context, learner agency is about shifting the ownership of learning from teachers to students, enabling students to have the understanding, ability, and opportunity to be part of the learning design and to take action to intervene in the learning process, to affect outcomes and become powerful lifelong learners. [Source](#)

What is self-directed learning?

Self-directed learning is an instructional (teaching and learning) strategy where the students, with guidance from the teacher, decide what and how they will learn. It can be done individually or with group learning, but the overall concept is that students are supported to take ownership of their learning. [Source](#)

How do the two relate to each other?



Self-directed learning is an instructional (teaching and learning) strategy and learner agency is something that the learner demonstrates. The two are interdependent in that by experiencing self-directed learning students are supported to develop greater learner agency. The greater the sense of learner agency a student has, the more capable they will become of effective self-directed learning. Experiencing self-directed learning and developing learner agency will support our young people in becoming effective life-long learners.

How will we do this in a meaningful and manageable way?

We are making this manageable for both the teacher and our learners by maintaining our timetable throughout the week and primarily focusing on self-directed learning on Thursday and Friday. All learners and all learning will be supervised and supported by a teacher every day of the school week. This is important as it will enable students who need or want to continue to learn as usual i.e. alongside their teacher following their normal timetable, will be supported to do so.

Monday & Tuesday

Students experience structured learning in Specialist Subjects as normal and focus on setting up learning for the week. Teachers design learning and assessment to support self-direction.

Wednesday

Students participate in Impact Projects within their Impact Project Hubs whilst being supported to work in an increasing self-directed manner.

Thursday & Friday

Students are supported to work in an increasingly self-directed manner choosing where to work and what to prioritise. Teachers are available to support as needed.

Taking a slow and staged approach

We will take a slow and staged approach as we are aware that all teachers and students are at a different point in their self-directed learning and learner agency journey. It is also important that we introduce this slowly so as to enable regular opportunities to check and reflect on the effectiveness of each phase. All teachers and all learners will start by focusing on introducing self-directed learning strategies and developing learner agency within the context of their specialist subject within their classroom space. When both teachers and students demonstrate readiness, then and only then, we will look at moving to the next phase.

Phase One	Emerging learner agency and self-directed learning practices
<p>Emerging learner agency by supporting student directed learning <u>within</u> the subject and classroom context.</p> <p>Teachers and learners develop an understanding of how to become more self-directed within their subject.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On Monday/Tuesday the teacher designs and communicates the learning for the week. ● The instructions, activities and resources for the week are posted on Google Classroom early in the week. ● On Monday/Tuesday the teacher focuses on ensuring all students understand what they are learning and why, and understand all of the instructions, activities and resources provided. ● On Thursday Tutor teachers work with their tutees to review their learning for the week and support the learner to prioritise what they are going to be working on within each of their specialist subjects. ● On Thursday/Friday the students <u>stay with the specialist subject teacher</u> and are supported to continue with their learning for that specific subject either independently or in groups. ● On Thursday/Friday the teacher focuses on “being on the floor” in their class and works with individuals and/or groups to provide specialist subject support and/or extension as needed. ● Teachers may engage in direct instruction/lead practicals and/or assessments on Thursday/Friday as and when it is needed. ● Students who are learning remotely due to health reasons continue to access all learning via Google Classroom and gain online support from their SS teacher as needed.
<p>Check and reflect</p>	<p>SLT gathers student and staff voice to see how Phase One is going and determines when we are ready to focus on Phase Two.</p>
Phase Two	Developing learner agency and self-directed learning practices

<p>Developing learner agency <u>across subjects</u> but within your classroom context.</p> <p>Teachers develop a deeper understanding and can support learners to become more self-directed across subjects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On Monday/Tuesday the teacher designs and communicates the learning for the week. ● The instructions, activities and resources for the week are posted on Google Classroom early in the week. ● On Monday/Tuesday the teacher focuses on ensuring all students understand what they are learning and why, and understand all of the instructions, activities and resources provided. ● On Thursday Tutor teachers work with their tutees to review their learning for the week and support the learner to prioritise what they are going to be working on within each of their specialist subjects and helps the student to determine what subjects and learning they need to prioritise. ● On Thursday/Friday the <u>students stay with the specialist subject teacher</u> and are supported to continue with their learning for either that subject or the subject they have chosen to prioritise on that day/period either independently or in groups. ● On Thursday/Friday the teacher focuses on “being on the floor” in their class and works with individuals and/or groups to provide specialist support and/or extension as needed. ● Teachers may also provide general learning support for students who are prioritising other specialist subjects that period/day. ● Teachers may engage in direct instruction/lead practicals and/or assessments on Thursday/Friday as and when it is needed. ● Students who are learning remotely due to health reasons continue to access all learning via Google Classroom and gain online support from their SS teacher as needed.
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<p>Check and reflect</p>	<p>SLT gathers student and staff voice to see how Phase Two is going and determines when we are ready to focus on Phase Three.</p>
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<p>Phase Three</p>	<p>Embedding and expanding learner agency and self-directed learning practices</p>
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Embedding and expanding learner agency and engaging in self-directed learning across subjects and across the school.

Teachers have deep understanding and feel confident supporting learners as needed.

- On Monday/Tuesday the teacher designs and communicates the learning for the week.
- The instructions, activities and resources for the week are posted on Google Classroom early in the week.
- On Monday/Tuesday the teacher focuses on ensuring all students understand what they are learning and why, and understand all of the instructions, activities and resources provided.
- On Thursday the Tutor teacher works with their tutees to review their learning for the week and support the learner to prioritise what they are going to be working on, **whom they are working with and where in the school they will be working** and helps the student to determine what subjects and learning they need to prioritise.
- On Thursday/Friday the **students do not need to stay with the specialist subject teacher (although they will always need to check with their timetabled teacher first)** and are supported to continue with their learning for the **subject they have chosen to prioritise on that day/period** either independently or in groups.
- On Thursday/Friday the teacher focuses on “being on the floor” **for any students in their learning common and works with individuals and/or groups to provide specialist support and/or extension as needed.**
- **Students who want or need to stay with their teacher and continue with their timetable as usual will be supported do so.**
- **Teachers may keep their class together so as to engage in direct instruction/lead practicals and/or assessments on Thursday/Friday as and when it is needed.**
- Students who are learning remotely due to health reasons continue to access all learning via Google Classroom and gain online support from their SS teacher as needed.

Check and reflect

SLT gathers student and staff voice to see how Phase Three is going and determines how we can continue to improve and evolve our approaches.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What if I (or my son or daughter) need structure and support every day of the week?

Answer: Learners will be able to work with their teacher and follow their timetable as per normal during any phase. When a teacher recognises a learner needs more support and structure they will ensure the learner stays with them throughout the week.

Question: Will learners be able to do whatever they like on Thursday and Friday?

Answer: No. Teachers and learners will work in partnership at all times. Learner decisions about what and where they are working at every stage and phase will be a joint decision between the learner and teacher.

Question: Will learners be able to learn from home and/or go off-site on Thursdays and Fridays?

Answer: No. All learners will be onsite and will be supervised and supported by teachers at all times.

Question: Does this mean the subject teacher is no longer responsible for getting the students in their class across the line?

Answer: No. Subject teachers will continue to be responsible for supporting the success of each and every learner within their specialist subject.

Question: How will you take the class roll if students get to work with other teachers on Thursday/Friday?

Answer: At every phase and stage and every day and period of the school week learners will need to check in with their timetabled teacher so their attendance can be recorded this will also give teachers a chance to let students know if they need to stay with their timetabled teacher.

Question: When can teachers within departments start team-teaching within their subject lines?

Answer: Teachers can team-teach within their subject and subject lines within any phase of our journey towards learner agency and supporting self-directed learning.

Question: How will we organise spaces if teachers want to team-teach and departments want to work together?

Answer: We will create a spreadsheet of all the available teaching spaces/periods of the week and departments will work together to confirm locations for Term Three and Four. Once this is confirmed it will be made available to students so they know where teachers/classes are located.

Link to [SLT Observation Template](#) - any staff are welcome to use this if they would like to observe each other.