



Independent Study Policy

Achieve Charter School of Paradise, Inc., which operates Achieve Charter School of Paradise, Achieve Charter High School, and Achieve Charter School of Chico (collectively, “Achieve” or the “Charter School”) may offer independent study to meet the educational needs of pupils enrolled in the Charter School. Independent study is an optional alternative education in which no pupil may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. Short-term independent study is available for students who must be absent from classroom-based instruction for a maximum of fifteen (15) cumulative school days per school year. The purpose of short-term independent study is to accommodate non-vacation travel plans, extended illness, or other extenuating circumstances that prohibit the student from accessing on-campus instruction.

In special circumstances and only upon prior written approval by the Principal, a student may be approved to participate in independent study for longer than the fifteen (15) cumulative school days permitted by this Policy. Such requests will be granted on a case-by-case basis at the sole direction of the Principal, for reasons including but not limited to, healthcare provider or county office of public health quarantine instructions, medical fragility, or extended illness. If a student is not approved for an extension of the fifteen (15) day cumulative maximum, further absences will be addressed in accordance with the Charter School’s attendance policy and may be considered unexcused and/or lead to truancy prevention measures, depending on the nature of the absence.

Achieve shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete their independent study successfully. The following written policies have been adopted by the Board for implementation at Achieve:

1. For pupils in all grade levels offered by Achieve, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be ten (10) school days.
2. The Principal or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study upon the following triggers:
 - a. When any pupil fails to complete one (1) assignment during any period of ten (10) school days.

b. In the event a student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's grading policy which considers ALL of the following indicators:

- The pupil's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the pupil's performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and pupil engagement set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
- The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
- Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
- Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. This record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

3. The Charter School shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school grade levels this shall include access to all courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria.

4. The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies* for the following pupils:

- a. All pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
- b. Pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span; or
- c. Pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

These procedures shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least all of the following:

- a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil.

- b. Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one (1) school day of the recording of a nonattendance day or lack of participation.
- c. A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
- d. A clear standard for requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference to review a pupil's written agreement, and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747.

Independent study expectations:

- Daily engagement and/or work completion during independent study is the equivalent of taking attendance when a student is on campus.
- Students who do not engage or complete work during independent study will not receive attendance credit.
- Students who are determined to fall under one of the criteria listed in section 4(a)-(c) above shall be supported by our tiered reengagement process below:

Tier 1

Achieve teachers or other Charter School employees will attempt to make contact with the student and parent to verify the contact information and to notify the parent/guardian of the student's nonattendance/non-participation within one (1) day of the recording of non-attendance or non-participation

Tier 2

Students will be reported to school administration. Administration will reach out and determine the cause for the nonattendance. The school administration member will:

- Ensure that communication with the parent is working, phone dialer, emails, and internet access
- Determine if there is a breakdown in communication and make any corrections
- Determine if the lack of participation is due to a lack of access to means of communication or connectivity and the Charter School will take the necessary steps to ensure the issue is resolved.
- Parent/guardian will be informed that continued nonattendance/nonparticipation in independent study could lead to further interventions, including:
 - A pupil-parent-educator conference
 - Development of an Attendance Plan through the Student Study Team (SST) process. Through the SST process, other forms of support will also be discussed such as additional time needed, emotional or mental health supports,

- and potential greater academic supports and interventions
- As a last resort, discussion of repeating the grade level content, either over the summer, or during the following school year

Tier 3

- If the reengagement strategies in Tiers 1 & 2 fail to improve independent study attendance, then a follow-up SST will be held
 - The administrator may develop an attendance plan that includes:
 - Teacher engagement
 - Both reward and consequences for further attendance
 - Review of the family circumstance for outside connection with health and social service
 - Discussion of repeating the grade level content, either over the summer or during the following school year
5. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for synchronous instruction and live interaction*:
- a) For pupils in transitional kindergarten through grade 3, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows: All students and families will check in with their teacher or teachers of record daily, through online (Zoom) interaction or phone conference.
 - b) For pupils in grades 4-8, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily live interaction between the pupil and a certificated or non-certificated employee of the Charter School and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows: All students and families will check in with their teacher or teachers of record or classroom aide daily (for live interaction) or weekly (for synchronous instruction), through online interaction (Zoom) or phone conference.
 - c) For pupils in grades 9-12, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows: All students and families will check in with their teacher or teachers of record at least weekly, through online interaction (Zoom) or phone conference

* The tiered reengagement strategies, plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction, and plan to transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction (paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 above) shall not apply to:

- a. students who participate in an independent study program for fewer than 16 schooldays in a school year;
- b. students enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom-based instruction who, under the care of appropriately licensed professionals, participate in independent study due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse. Local educational agencies shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for students to participate in independent study pursuant to this subdivision; or
- c. independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15

school days or less for affected students under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 41422 and/or 46392, and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

6. The following plan shall be utilized to transition* pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days: The student will be included in in-person instruction the following day after the school receives notice from the student's family.
7. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study pupil, including but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments, for reporting the pupil's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding a pupil's academic progress.
 - b) The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
 - c) The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the pupil. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
 - d) A statement of the policies adopted pursuant to Education Code Section 51747, subdivisions (a) and (b) regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
 - e) The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
 - f) A statement of the number of course credits or, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
 - g) A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of pupils who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs in order to be consistent with the pupil's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health supports.
 - h) The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an

optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

i) Independent study agreements shall be fully executed as follows:

- a. Signatures on the independent study agreement shall include the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of Division 11 of the Family Code.
- b. Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education, that may be a marking that is either computer generated or produced by electronic means and is intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature. The use of an electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature if the requirements for digital signatures and their acceptable technology, as provided in Section 16.5 of the Government Code and in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22000) of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, are satisfied.
- c. For a student participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 15 school days, each written agreement shall be signed, before the commencement of independent study.
- d. For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for 15 school days or fewer, each written agreement shall be signed, during the school year in which the independent study program takes place. The written agreement may be signed at any time during the school year, but it is the intent of the Legislature that parents or guardians of pupils be provided the agreement at or before the beginning of the school year.
- e. For a student participating in an independent study program due to the emergency conditions specified in this policy, each written agreement shall be established within a reasonable amount of time as follows:
 - i. Where reasonable, given the emergency conditions, the independent study agreement for independent study scheduled for more than fifteen schooldays shall be signed prior to the commencement of independent study. If the emergency conditions make obtaining signatures prior to the commencement of independent study unreasonable, the signature for independent study scheduled for more than fifteen days will be obtained as soon as reasonably possible. For independent study scheduled for fifteen (15) schooldays or fewer under emergency conditions, each written agreement shall be signed during the school year in which the independent study program takes place.

8. Achieve shall comply with Education Code Sections 51744 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter Schools Act and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.
9. The Superintendent may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.

Amendments to the Independent Study Written Agreement During Term of Agreement

If a material change to the student's independent study program occurs during the term of the independent study written agreement, the Charter School shall provide written notification of the change.

A "material change" may include but is not limited to the following:

- Change of course(s);
- Change of teacher or teachers of record;
- Change of certificated employee responsible for special education programming;
- Change of grade level;

Required Notification

Written notification shall be provided to:

1. All individuals who signed the original independent study written agreement;
2. Any newly assigned teacher or teachers of record; and
3. Any newly assigned certificated employee responsible for the student's special education programming, if applicable.

Such written notification shall be in an electronic form and shall describe the change and the effective date of the modification.

No Requirement for Re-Execution

Unless otherwise required by law or regulation, changes to the student's independent study program during the term of an agreement shall not require the execution of a new independent study written agreement, nor an addendum to the agreement. The written notification described above shall serve to document the modification.

Maintenance of Records

The School shall maintain documentation of any written notifications of modifications to the independent study written agreement in the student's educational record.

Adopted: 01.17.17

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