



## **HSHMC Independent Study Policy**

### **(For Board Approval 8/30/2023)**

This policy specifies conditions and practices related to HSHMC's independent study programs, and that are aligned to Education Code sections 51744-51749.6, including 2022-23 updates. Charters are required to follow this EdCode, except in sections where charters are excluded. The Board recognizes that current HSHMC policies and practices are, and will continue to be, reviewed and updated, subject to new and pending legislation and regulation.

- 1) Independent Study is an option available to students as approved by the San Diego Unified School District in HSHMC's current charter. In addition, Independent Study is currently being implemented consistent with the HSHMC board approved (9/10/2020) Continuity of Learning Plan, and in alignment with recent changes in EC that are effective commencing in the 2022-23 school year.
- 2) The maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work is 20 days.
- 3) The level of satisfactory educational progress and the number of missed assignments that will be allowed before an evaluation is conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study, or whether the pupil should return to the regular school program, is found in the Master Agreement. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The 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.

Satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on all of the following indicators:

- a) 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 paragraphs (4) and (5) of subdivision (d) of Section 52060.
- b) The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
- c) Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
- d) Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

- 4) The content will be aligned to grade level standards and be substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. This shall include access to all courses offered by HSHMC for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria.
- 5) HSHMC’s Independent Study Program is an optional alternative instructional strategy for eligible students whose needs may be best met through study outside of the regular classroom setting.
  - a) Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan to serve students whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult.
  - b) As necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study.
  - c) Regarding pupils with exceptional needs – the pupil’s inability to work independently, need for adult support or related special education services shall not preclude the individualized education program team from determining that the pupil can receive a free appropriate education in independent study.
- 6) A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700). Tiered reengagement strategies may be required for students not meeting current attendance requirements (EC 51747(d)), and for all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the approved instructional calendar, pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month, or pupils who are in violation of the written agreement. 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 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,
- 7) Provide a plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year.
- 8) Provide a plan 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.

- 9) HSHMC's Principal or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement is maintained on file for each participating student as prescribed by current law. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5)
- a) The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, for reporting the student's academic progress, and for communicating with a student's parent or guardian regarding a student's academic progress.
  - b) The objectives and methods of study for the student'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 student. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
  - d) A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student'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 student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
  - e) The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student'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 other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion.
  - g) A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, and individuals with exceptional needs in order to be consistent with the student's IEP or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students 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 student may be required to participate. In the case of a student 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 student through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
  - i) HSHMC will comply with the written independent study agreement signature requirements set forth in Education Code Section 51747(g)(9), including:
    1. For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for fifteen (15) or more school days: Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the student 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 student, as applicable.

2. For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for fourteen (14) or fewer school days: Each written agreement shall be signed, within ten (10) school days of the commencement of the first day of the student's participation in independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the student 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 student, as applicable. For purposes of this policy, "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
3. Signed written agreements, supplemental agreements, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records assessing time value of work or evidence that an instructional activity occurred may be maintained as an electronic file.
4. For purposes of this section, an electronic file includes a computer or electronic stored image of an original document, including, but not limited to, portable document format (PDF), JPEG, or other digital image file type, that may be sent via fax machine, email, or other electronic means.
5. Either an original document or an electronic file of the original document is allowable documentation for auditing purposes.
6. Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the department, 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.