
INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

Excel Academy Charter Schools, which operates Excel Academy Charter School – Helendale and Excel Academy Charter School – Warner (collectively, “EACS” or “Charter School”) offers independent study to meet the educational needs of all students enrolled in the Charter School. Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. EACS shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully.

The following written policies have been adopted by the Board of Directors for implementation at the Charter School:

1. For students in all grade levels offered by the Charter School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be twenty (20) school days.
2. An evaluation shall be completed to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in the independent study under the following circumstances:
 - a. In the event that a student misses three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days.
 - b. In the event the students educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School Satisfactory Educational Progress Policy and procedure which considers All of the following indicators:
 - i. The pupils' achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the pupils' performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and pupil engagement set forth in Education Code 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
 - ii. The completion of assignments, assessments or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
 - iii. Learning required concepts as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - iv. Progress toward successful completion of the course of study or the individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

The evaluation will be documented in the attendance record and learning record documents and will be maintained as mandatory interim student record which shall be maintained for a period of

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three years from the date of evaluation and, if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to the 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:

- a. Pupils not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of a local educational agency's approved instructional calendar;
- b. Pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span;
- c. Pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code 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 lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a non-attendance 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.
- e. An Attendance Intervention Meeting (AIM) will be held once a student receives a second Progress Improvement Notification (PIN) to determine if it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study. The meeting shall include a review of the pupil's written master

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agreement, and reconsideration of the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being. If the student and parent/guardian elect to stay enrolled, the team will develop an agreement to help support the student to make satisfactory educational progress, including additional resources and supports.

- f. If the student continues to make unsatisfactory educational progress, then a third Progress Improvement Notification (PIN) will be given and an internal evaluation will be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study. If the evaluation finds that it is not in the student's best interest to remain in independent study, the student may be removed in accordance with the process outlined in Board Policy 6115 on Attendance, Progress Notification (PIN) and Involuntary Withdrawal.

5. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747 (e) to provide opportunities for both synchronous interaction and live interaction:

- a. Pupils in all grades Tk-12 will have access to their teacher or teachers of record (as designated by Education Code Section 51747.5) for synchronous instruction opportunities as outlined in Education Code Section 51747(e) between the pupil and a Charter School employee or employees for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness. This interaction may take place in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.
- b. For pupils in Transitional Kindergarten through grade 3, inclusive, opportunities for daily synchronous instruction will be provided for all pupils throughout the school year by their teacher or teachers of record.
- c. For pupils in grades 4 to 8, inclusive, opportunities for both daily live interaction (by a Charter School employee) and at least weekly synchronous instruction (by their teacher or teachers of record) will be provided for all pupils throughout the school year.
- d. For pupils in grades 9-12, inclusive, opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction will be provided for all pupils throughout the school year by their teacher or teachers of record.

6. The following plan shall be utilized to transition pupils whose families wish to return to

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in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days: the Charter School will assist the student and family with enrollment in the school district of residence.

7. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study student, including but not limited to, all of the following:

- 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 pupil's parent or guardian regarding a pupil'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, which will be made available to the student. 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 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 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, for the elementary grades, 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 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

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independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. The student will always be eligible to return to his/her school district. The Charter School will assist with the transition of pupils whose families wish to return to in person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days.

- i. 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.
- j. For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 school days, each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent/guardian 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 pupil, as applicable. Beginning in the 2022–23 school year, for a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for less than 15 school days, each written agreement shall be signed within 10 school days of the commencement of the first day of the pupil's enrollment in independent study, by 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.
 - i. 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

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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.

The Charter School shall comply with the Education Code Sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter School's Act and the State Board of Education regulations adopted thereunder.

The Executive Director may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.