

AIMS K-12 Board Policy: Short-term Independent Study Policy

(Adopted: August 12, 2021)

AIMS K12 College Prep (“AIMS” or “Charter School”) may offer independent study to meet the short-term educational needs of pupils enrolled in the Charter School. Independent study is an optional educational alternative and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. AIMS shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete their independent study successfully. Short-term Independent Study (“STIS”) is an alternative educational process that allows a student to remain continuously enrolled in school when the student cannot attend school on a daily basis. The length of STIS may be from five (5) days to no more than twenty (20) consecutive school days. For the 2021-2022 school year only, the length of STIS may last the entirety of the school year. 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.

The following written policies have been adopted by the AIMS K-12 Board of Directors for implementation at Charter School:

1. For pupils in all grade levels for the STIS offered by AIMS, 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 during STIS, shall be no more than twenty (20) school days.
2. AIMS 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 15% or more of the assignments made during any period of STIS.
 - b. In the event Student’s educational progress falls below satisfactory. A satisfactory level is determined by ALL of the following indicators:
 1. Pupil’s attendance and participation in synchronous instruction

2. Completing greater than 90% of assignments or assessments.
3. Learning required concepts, as determined by a passing score of 80% on benchmark assessments given by the supervising Independent Study Teacher.
4. Maintenance of a grade of C or higher in the STIS course or courses.

b. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy 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.

3. AIMS shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge 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 all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three (3) school days or 60% of the instructional days in a school week, or who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g). These procedures are as follows:

- a. Verify the current contact information for each enrolled student
- b. Notify the parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation.
- c. Staff will conduct outreach to determine student needs, including a connection with health, social services, or other community resources as needed.
- d. When the evaluation described above is triggered to consider whether remaining in independent study is in the best interest of the pupil, conduct a student, parent/guardian, educator conference to review the student's written agreement and consider the Independent Study Program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being. All parties who signed the Independent Study Agreement will attend this meeting.¹

5. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for synchronous instruction and live interaction: For pupils in kindergarten through grade 12, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction and live interaction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's assigned supervising teacher shall be provided through offering pupils the opportunity to participate in synchronous crew daily.²

6. AIMS shall transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days from receipt of parent written request to return to in-person instruction.³

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 used 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 before 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 the 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 support.

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 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. Each written agreement shall be signed 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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" one who has legal educational rights of the pupil.

8. AIMS shall comply with the Education Code sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.

9. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to establish procedures as necessary to implement these policies in accordance with the law.

10. AIMS Shall comply with the requirements of AB130.

a. Grades 1 to 3: daily synchronous instruction for all students throughout the school year.

b. Grades 4 to 8: opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all students throughout the school year.

- c. Grades 9 to 12: opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all students throughout the school year.

¹ The tiered re engagement strategies shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year.

² The plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

³ The plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

⁴ As defined in the new law, “synchronous instruction” means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communications, and involving live two-way communication between the teacher and the student. Synchronous instruction must be provided by the teacher of record for each student.

⁵ As defined in the new law, “Live interaction” means interaction between the student and charter school classified or certificated staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including, but not limited to, wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. This interaction may take place in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

