

**Three Rivers Charter School**

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**Three Rivers Charter School
Independent Policy #TRCS-P-6.5**

These policies apply to all pupils participating in independent study at Three Rivers Charter School (the "School"). Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Special assignments extending the content of regular courses of instruction.
- (2) Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum.
- (3) Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. Independent study shall not be provided as an alternative curriculum.
- (4) Continuing and special study during travel.
- (5) Volunteer community service activities and leadership opportunities that support and strengthen pupil achievement.
- (6) Individualized study for a pupil whose health would be put at risk by in-person instruction, as determined by the parent or guardian of the pupil, or a pupil who is unable to attend in-person instruction due to a quarantine due to exposure to, or infection with, COVID-19, pursuant to local or state public health guidance.

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees.

No individual with exceptional needs as defined in EC section 56026 may participate in independent study unless their individualized education program ("IEP") specifically provides for that participation.

For students in all programs of independent study, 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) days.

When special or extenuating circumstances justify a longer time for individual students, the director or their designee may approve a period not to exceed five (5) school days.

Missed Assignments and Level of Satisfactory Progress: When any student fails to complete three (3) missed assignments during the school year or fails to make satisfactory progress (as defined below) the school will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study or to return to the regular school program. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record and 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 based on all of the following indicators, as applicable:

- Statewide assessments that are part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (a.k.a., "CAASPP", or any other subsequent assessment as certified by the state board of education),
- The percentage of English learner pupils who make progress toward English proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California ("ELPAC" or subsequent assessments of English proficiency certified by the state board),
- The English learner reclassification rate,
- The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments,
- Learning requirement 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,
- School attendance,
- Chronic absenteeism.

Academic Content: Independent study shall include the provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

Tiered Reengagement: The School will follow procedures for tiered reengagement strategies for all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three (3) schooldays or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week, or 10 percent of required minimum

instructional time over four (4) continuous weeks of the School's approved instructional calendar, pupils found not participatory pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than the greater of three schooldays or 60 percent of the scheduled days of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or pupils who are in violation of the written agreement.

These procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following:

- Verifying current contact information for the pupil,
- Notifying parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation,
- A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including a connection with health and social services, as necessary,
- 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.

For the purposes of this policy, "pupil-parent-educator conference" means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's written independent study agreement.

Opportunities for Live Interaction and Synchronous Instruction: The School shall plan to provide opportunities for live interaction and synchronous instruction as follows for all pupils engaged in independent study:

- For pupils in grades 1 to 3 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year.
- For pupils in grades 4 to 8 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year.

"Live interaction" means interaction between the pupil and the 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.

For the purposes of this policy, "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 pupil. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record for that pupil or the certificated employee of the School providing instruction for course-based independent study.

Failure to participate in synchronous instruction or daily live interaction will be considered non-participation for that day.

Return to In-Person Instruction: For pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study, the School shall allow the student to return expeditiously, and in no case later than five (5) instructional days,

Written Agreements: (5 C.C.R. § 11702) A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. Each agreement shall be signed and dated. The independent study agreement for a student will require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in the classroom and be consistent with the School curriculum and course of study of students participating in the regular classroom setting.

Agreement Content: Each independent study written agreement shall contain at least all of the following provisions:

- 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 academic progress.
- The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
- The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil. These resources shall include confirming or providing access for all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the academic program and complete assigned work.
- A statement of the policies adopted 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. The level of satisfactory educational progress and missed assignments shall conform to the requirements specified above in this policy.
- The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for participating in independent study, recognizing that no independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.

- A statement of the number of course credits, or for elementary grades pupils, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
- 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 as needed to be consistent with the student's IEP or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care, pupils experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health supports.
- 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.

Each written agreement shall be signed, before the commencement of 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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil. 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.

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.

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.

Either an original document or an electronic file of the original document is allowable documentation for auditing purposes.

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.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, for the 2021–22 school year only, the School shall obtain a signed written agreement for an independent study program of any length of time from the pupil, or the pupil’s parent or legal guardian 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 no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction in an independent study program or October 15, whichever date comes later.

Before signing a written agreement pursuant to this section, and upon the request of the parent or guardian of a pupil, the School shall conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the pupil, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the pupil or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning.

Adopted: August 17, 2021

Amended: October 19, 2021