

Da Vinci Schools

Board Policy

INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY

The charter schools operated by Da Vinci Schools (hereinafter “Charter School”) may offer independent study to meet the educational needs of students enrolled in the Charter School in accordance with applicable law.

The CEO/Superintendent or designee retains discretion to approve independent study written agreements for students. Charter School will provide appropriate services, supports, technology and resources to enable students to complete their independent study program successfully. The following independent study policies have been established by Charter School in alignment with Education Code (“EC”) § 51744 et seq. and adopted pursuant to EC § 51747 and 5 C.C.R. § 11701:

1. For each student in independent study, Charter School will assign a certificated employee to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student’s independent study instruction. (EC § 51747.5(a).)
2. For students in independent study in any grade level, the maximum length of time that may lapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is fifty (50) schooldays. (EC § 51747(a).)
3. When any student fails to complete three (3) assignments or misses two (2) mandatory meetings during a thirty-five (35) schoolday period or fails to make satisfactory educational progress (defined below in Section 4), the Charter School will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study, or whether the student should return to or otherwise be placed in a regular in-person school program. A written record of the findings of any evaluation will be maintained in the student’s permanent record. This record will be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record will be forwarded to that school. (EC § 51747(b).)
 - a. Charter School may use supportive strategies to assist students who are having attendance and assignment submission concerns such as – holding meetings with parent/guardian and student, increasing one-on-one instructor time with student, and modifying deadlines and assignments to meet student’s educational needs.
4. For purposes of conducting the evaluation in Section 3, a student is deemed to be making satisfactory educational progress if the student is on track to enter the next grade level at the completion of the current school year and/or progressing toward their goals pursuant to their individualized education program (“IEP”). The CEO/Superintendent or designee is responsible for making this determination based on all of the following indicators:

- a. The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in EC § 52060(d)(4)-(5).
 - b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student 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. (EC § 51747(b)(2).)
5. Charter School will provide content to students aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school students, this includes access to all courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. (EC § 51747(c).)
6. For students who participate in independent study at Charter School for at least fifteen (15) schooldays per year:
 - 6.1. If a student does not generate attendance for more than ten (10) percent of required minimum instructional time over four (4) continuous weeks of the approved instructional calendar, students found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to EC § 51747.5 for more than fifty (50) percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or for students who are in violation of their independent study written agreement, Charter School shall:
 - a. Verify current contact information for each enrolled student;
 - b. Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one schoolday of the student's absence or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
 - c. Reach out to the student directly and/or parents or guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine student's needs for reengagement;
 - d. If the student has failed to complete three (3) assignments or misses two (2) mandatory meetings during a thirty-five (35) schoolday period or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 4 herein, Charter School will schedule a pupil-parent-educator conference (a meeting involving all individuals who signed the student's written agreement) to review the student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being; and

- e. Implement any Charter School programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable. (EC § 51747(d).)

6.2 Based on each student’s grade level, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth in subsections a-c below. (EC § 51747(e).)

“Live interaction” means interaction between the student and Charter School staff, and may include peers, to maintain school connectedness. Examples of live interaction include check-ins, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction, and live interaction can be in-person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

“Synchronous instruction” means classroom-style instruction, designated small-group instruction, or one-on-one instruction delivered in person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication by the student’s assigned teacher(s) of record, and involving live two-way communication. (EC § 51745.5.)

- a. For students in grades TK-3, inclusive, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for daily synchronous instruction.
- b. For students in grades 4-8, inclusive, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction and the Charter School will schedule and offer opportunities for daily live interaction.
- c. For students in grades 9-12, inclusive, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction.

Charter School will “document each pupil’s participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction pursuant to Section 51747 on each schoolday, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which independent study is provided. A pupil who does not participate in independent study on a schoolday shall be documented as nonparticipatory for that schoolday.” (EC § 51747.5(c).)

6.3 A student’s parent or guardian may request their student return to in-person instruction from independent study by making a written request to CEO/Superintendent or designee or their assigned teacher(s) of record. If there is capacity in Charter School’s in-person program at the student’s grade level or the student retains a right to enroll in Charter School under the charter or agreement with Charter School’s authorizer, Charter School will transition the student within five schooldays. If there is not capacity in Charter School’s in-person program at the student’s grade level and the student otherwise does not have a right of enrollment under the charter or by agreement with Charter School’s authorizer, Charter School will offer to help the student enroll in the in-person program offered by their district of residence and offer the student an opportunity to join Charter School’s waitlist within five schooldays. (EC § 51747(f).)

6.4 Sections 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 of this policy do not apply to students 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. Charter School shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for students to participate in independent study pursuant to this section 6.4. (EC § 51747(i).)

7. A current written independent study agreement for each independent study student will be maintained on file. Written agreements may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Each written agreement will contain 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 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 used to evaluate that work.
 - c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, which will be made available to the student. These resources will 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, 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 will 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 students 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 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 EC § 48915 or 48917, the agreement also will 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. (EC § 51747(g).)

- i. Charter School will comply with the written independent study agreement signature requirements set forth in EC § 51747(g)(9), including:
 - i. For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for fourteen (14) or less schooldays (must obtain signatures within ten (10) schooldays): Charter School will obtain a signed written agreement from 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, within ten (10) schooldays of the commencement of the first day of the student’s participation in independent study.
 - ii. For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for fifteen (15) or more schooldays (must obtain signatures before independent study instruction): Each independent study agreement will 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. 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.
- j. Before signing a written agreement, the parent or guardian of a student may request that the Charter School conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the student, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the student or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the student in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning. (EC § 51747(h)(2).)

8. Additional Independent Study Requirements:

- a. Charter School will not provide any funds or other thing of value to the student or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated student of the school district, or to his or her parent or guardian. (EC § 51747.3(a).)

- b. Charter School may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to students who are residents of Los Angeles County or who are residents of a county immediately adjacent to Los Angeles County. (EC § 51747.3(b).)
- c. A student with exceptional needs, as defined in EC § 56026, may participate in independent study if the student's IEP specifically provides for that participation. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study, the student's IEP team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the student can receive a free appropriate public education in an independent study placement. (EC § 51745(c).)
- d. Charter School may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher, or the combined time value of student work product and student participation in synchronous instruction. (EC § 51747.5(b)(1).)
- e. Charter School will maintain written or computer-based evidence of student engagement that includes, but is not limited to, a grade book or summary document that, for each class, lists all assignments, assessments, and associated grades. (EC § 51747.5(d).)
- f. Records of the independent study program will be maintained for audit purposes and shall include the following:
 - i. A copy of the independent study board policies.
 - ii. A separate listing of the students, by grade level who have participated in independent study identifying units of the curriculum attempted (also known as the "course of study") and units of the curriculum completed by students, as specified in their written agreements.
 - iii. A file of all written agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products and a signed acknowledgement by the supervising teacher indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that he/she has personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher.
 - iv. A daily attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are enrolled, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different individuals.
 - v. Any other documents charter schools are required to maintain as required by law. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)

- g. Charter School will comply with all applicable law regarding independent study, including ADA-to-certificated teacher ratio requirements and course-based independent study requirements (if applicable). (EC § 51744 et seq.; 5 C.C.R. § 11700 et seq.)

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