

## **Ocean Charter School Independent Study Policy**

In the interest of maintaining a student's academic progress and minimizing disruption to the educational program, Ocean Charter School ("OCS" or the "Charter School") may offer independent study to meet the short (fourteen school days or less cumulatively in a school year) or long-term (more than a cumulative total of fourteen (14) school days in a school year) educational needs of students enrolled in the Charter School. Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. The Charter School shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully.

Long-term independent study is only available for students who are unable to participate in classroom instruction due to parent or guardian determination that the student's health would be put at risk by in-person instruction or pursuant to a local, state, or federal health order. Requests for independent study must be submitted to Angela Baas via email at [msangela@oceancs.org](mailto:msangela@oceancs.org) at least ten (10) school days before the requested independent study and must be approved by the teacher and Executive Director or Designee before a student can begin independent study. In extenuating circumstances, independent study can be approved by the Executive Director or Designee with less than ten (10) school days notice.

All requests for independent study will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any use of independent study shall be restricted to occasional, incidental instances of extended absences, and shall fully comply with all applicable independent study laws and regulations. Students' attendance records and overall performance records will be considered in granting independent study applications. In addition, during the state mandated testing window, no independent study requests will be granted for students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> unless the student is prevented from attending in-person instruction due to local, state, or federal health order. 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.

Although independent study will be provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction, it is impossible to fully substitute for a missed classroom experience.

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

1. For students in all grade levels and programs 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 five (5) school days.
2. The Executive Director or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study upon the following triggers:
  - a. When any student fails to complete four (4) assignments during any period of ten (10) school days.

- b. In the event Student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's Charter School teacher evaluation using grade level standards which considers ALL of the following indicators:
  - i. The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
  - ii. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments.
  - iii. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
  - iv. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record. The record shall 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 shall be forwarded to that school.

3. The Charter School 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.
4. The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies for all students 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. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student;
  - b. Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation;
  - c. Outreach from the Charter School to determine student needs including connection with health and social services as necessary; and
  - d. When the evaluation described above under paragraph 2.b. is triggered to consider whether remaining in independent study is in the best interest of the student, a student-parent-education conference shall be required to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being. This conference shall be a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the student's written independent study agreement.<sup>1</sup>
5. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for opportunities for synchronous instruction and live interaction:
  - a. For students in **transitional kindergarten through grade 3**, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all students throughout the school year by each student's assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The tired reengagement strategies described in paragraph 4, the plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction opportunities described in paragraph 5, and the plan to transition a pupil wishing to return to in-person instruction as described in paragraph 6, shall not apply to independent study of less than 15 cumulative school days in a school year.

Each student will be assigned a credentialed supervising teacher who will offer daily classroom style, small group, or one on one synchronous instruction opportunities each school day through a virtual platform.

- b. For students in **grades 4-8**, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily live interaction between the student and a certificated or non-certificated employee of the Charter School and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all students throughout the school year by each student's assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows: Each student will be assigned a credentialed supervising teacher who will offer weekly classroom style, small group, or one on one synchronous instruction opportunities each school week through a virtual platform. Students will be provided daily live interaction on each school day by the supervising teacher or alternative school staff for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness.
6. The following plan shall be utilized to transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five (5) instructional days: For all students on independent study, OCS will hold a seat open for the student's return to classroom instruction. Upon written receipt of a family's wish to return to in-person instruction, Charter School staff shall inform the family of their right to return and include a planned return date. OCS will promptly notify school staff of this return to ensure a smooth transition.
  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 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, 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 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 student's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before 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, 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 individualized education program or

Adopted/Ratified: [INSERT]

Revision Date: [INSERT]

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 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. Each written agreement shall be signed, before 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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. 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.
8. The Charter School 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 Executive Director shall establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.