

Adopted/Ratified:

Revision Date:

Jan. 20, 2022

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-term (for a minimum of three (3) school days up to a maximum of fourteen (14) cumulative school days in a school year) or long-term (for 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.

Independent study is only available for students unable to participate in classroom instruction based on temporary quarantine orders pursuant to local, county or state public health guidance, or based on a physician's note that the student's health (or the health of an immediate family member (Mother, Father, Sibling, or Step Mother, Step Father, or Step Sibling) residing in the same household) 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@oceans.org at least ten (10) school days before the requested independent study and must be approved by the teacher and Executive Director 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. 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 -8 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 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 the following pupils:
 - a. 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 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
 - b. Pupils found not participatory pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than the greater of three school days or 60 percent of the scheduled days of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span; or
 - c. Pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

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

- a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student;
 - b. Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one (1) school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation;
 - c. A plan for outreach from the Charter School to determine student needs including connection with health and social services as necessary; and
 - d. A clear standard for requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747. This conference shall be a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the student's written independent study agreement.¹
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: 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.²
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

¹ The tiered reengagement strategies shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year. The tiered reengagement strategies shall not apply to independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

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 schooldays in a school year. The plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction shall not apply to independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

(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 that includes a time for any required Covid-19 testing and receipt of results. OCS will promptly notify school staff of this return to ensure a smooth transition.³

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 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.

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 schooldays in a school year. The plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

- 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.
 - 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 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.
 - ii. For the 2021–22 school year only, the Charter School shall obtain a signed written agreement for an independent study program of any length of time no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction in an independent study program or October 15, whichever date comes later.
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 may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.