



VIBRANT MINDS CHARTER SCHOOL

TK-6 Grade, Free, Public Education

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BOARD POLICY INDEPENDENT STUDY

Definitions

The following definitions for independent study programs are incorporated herein by reference (EC 51745.5)

- “Live interaction” means interaction between the scholar and local educational agency 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.
- “Local educational agency” means the charter school.
- “Scholar-parent-educator conference” means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the scholar’s written independent study agreement pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 51747 or the written learning agreement pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 51749.6.
- “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 scholar. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record for that scholar pursuant to Section 51747.5.

Policies

Independent Study is a voluntary, educational alternative in which no scholar may be required to participate. (EC 51747). Vibrant Minds Charter School supports short-term Independent Study, which is limited to a maximum of 15 days per school year.

Enrollment in Independent Study includes a dated, signed Written Learning Agreement between the scholar, parent/guardian, certificated employee, and all other persons who have direct assistance to the scholar. This Written Learning Agreement, with the required components, will be on file for each Independent Study scholar. (EC51747; EC 51749.6)

In the case of a scholar who is referred or assigned to Independent Study pursuant to Section 48915 or 48917 (expulsion), the Written Learning Agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the scholar through Independent Study only if the scholar is offered the alternative of classroom instruction. (EC 51747(g)(8))

Independent Study provides that all scholars enrolled in the program must have the same access to existing services and resources as scholars in a traditional school setting. (EC51746)

The Executive Director shall establish administrative regulations to implement Independent Study in accordance with the law. These regulations will be included in the Written Learning Agreement. The Executive Director must approve each Independent Study Master Agreement, and no guarantee is provided that Independent Study will be approved.

The maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an Independent Study assignment is due and the date by which the scholar must complete the assigned work is five school days. (EC 51747). However, no more than ten school days will elapse between the scholar/parent and teacher meeting at the conclusion of the Independent Study Agreement.

The number of missed assignments that will result in an evaluation being conducted to determine whether it is in the best interest of the scholar to remain in Independent Study shall be five consecutive days of assignments. A written record of this evaluation will be kept in the scholar's permanent record and treated as a mandatory interim scholar record. The record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and, if the scholar transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

Satisfactory educational progress in independent shall be determined based on all of the following indicators:

- The scholar's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the scholar's performance on applicable scholar-level measures of scholar achievement and scholar engagement set forth in [EC 52060\(d\)\(4\) and \(5\)](#).
- The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the scholar is working on assignments.
- Learning required 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.

No scholar shall be prohibited from participating in Independent Study solely on the basis that the scholar does not have the materials, equipment, or internet access that are necessary to participate in Independent Study. The school shall provide access to connectivity and local educational agency-owned devices adequate to participate in an Independent Study program and complete assigned work or to participate in an independent study course. Such materials shall not be considered funds or other things of value.

No scholar with an individualized education program (as defined in EC 56026) shall participate in independent study unless the scholar's individualized education program specifically provides for that participation.

No scholar participating in independent study shall be assessed a fee prohibited by EC 49011.

Annual Board Certification

Content in independent study shall be aligned to grade level standards and provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

The local educational agency shall certify this requirement annually by board review and approval. This certification shall, at a minimum, include the duration, number of equivalent daily instructional minutes for each school day that a scholar is enrolled, number of equivalent total instructional minutes, number of course credits for each course, and the Grade Span Requirements as stated herein. This information shall be consistent with that of equivalent classroom-based courses.

Parent-Parent-Educator Conference

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

Supervision/Time Value

- The Independent Study by each scholar shall be coordinated, evaluated, and under the general supervision of an employee of the local educational agency who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to EC 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to EC 44300.
- A local educational agency may claim apportionment credit for Independent Study only to the extent of the time value of scholar work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. Teachers may be given access to digital assignment tracking systems to reduce workload associated with evaluating and accounting for scholar work.
- The local educational agency is not required to sign and date scholar work products when assessing the time value of scholar work products for apportionment purposes.

Attendance Documentation

- The local educational agency shall document each scholar's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction on each school day, in whole or in part, for

which Independent Study is provided.

- A scholar who does not participate in Independent Study on a school day shall be documented as non-participatory for that school day.
- A local educational agency shall maintain written or computer-based evidence of scholar 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.

Review of Policy

This policy may be reviewed periodically by the VMCS Board.

Adopted: August 4, 2021

Amended: