



Environmental Charter Middle School (ECMS) Independent Study Policy

- A. This Policy shall apply to all pupils participating in independent study.
- B. Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
1. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum.
 2. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum.
- C. ECMS shall comply with all state and federal laws regarding independent instruction.
1. For ADA purposes in grades 6-12, the IS pupil to teacher ratio must not exceed the pupil to teacher ratio for all other instructional programs in ECMS. (Education Code 51745.6)
 2. Class size reduction funding is not available for any student enrolled in IS. (Education Code 52123)
 3. Special education students (individuals with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code 56026) must have an IEP that specifically provides for participation in IS. (Education Code 51745 (c))
 4. No funds or other items of value may be provided to IS students that are not provided to other students in the school. (Education Code 46300.6, Education Code 51747.3 (a))
 5. A certificated ECMS teacher must generally supervise, coordinate, and evaluate the work of each student engaged in IS. Apportionment credit for IS may be claimed only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. (Education Code 51747.5)
 6. Students engaged in IS must be residents of Los Angeles County or an immediately adjacent county. Any student whose residence status is based solely on their parent/guardian/caregiver's employment within district boundaries may not be enrolled in IS. (Education Code 46300.2)
 7. No temporarily disabled student may use IS as a means of individual instruction in a pupil's home, a hospital, or a residential health facility. (Education Code 51745 (4)(d))
 8. The IS option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction. IS students shall have the same access to existing services and resources as other students in their school of enrollment. IS students shall have equal rights and privileges as other students. (Education Code 51746, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 5 Section 11701.5)
 9. The curriculum specified in the written IS Master Agreement, Form No. 305-572 and subsidiary agreement(s) shall be consistent with the ECS Board's policies, Administrative Regulations, and Procedures for curriculum and instruction. (CCR, Title 5, Section 11702)
 10. The IS curriculum must meet ECMS and state content standards to ensure students are prepared to successfully master mandated state testing.
- D. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees. This includes assigning and receiving work, communication, and grading of IS student-work.

E. 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 as follows:

- For pupils in grades four through eight, **two weeks**

F. After three missed assignments an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interest of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record. 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.

G. A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. Each agreement shall be signed, dated and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. 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 all of the following provisions:

The independent study agreement for a student must require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in the classroom. Written agreements may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Also each agreement shall contain the following:

- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her progress.
- The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
- The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the pupil.
- 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, 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 duration of the independent study agreement, recognizing that no independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester.
- A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
- 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.

H. ECMS shall not provide any funds or other thing of value to the pupil or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated pupil of the school district, or to his or her parent or guardian.

I. ECMS may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to pupils who are residents of Los Angeles County or who are residents of a county immediately adjacent to Los Angeles County.

J. ECMS must comply with Education Code Section 51745.6 and California Code of Regulations Section 11704 regarding teacher to ADA limits.

K. Each enrolled student will be assigned a credentialed teacher, who will serve as teacher to the student and mentor to the home-schooling parent (if applicable). The teacher will meet with the student(s) and parent(s) on a regular basis (as provided by the written independent study agreement) to provide lesson planning, consultation, and resource check-out.

L. If applicable, ECMS teachers will work with the parents and students to ensure that students are participating in enrichment activities beyond the instruction at home. ECMS shall facilitate enriched educational opportunities beyond the standard curriculum such as educational opportunities for students at other institutions of learning when available, shared instruction amongst charter school families, field trips, internships, outdoor education, shared social events for charter school students, and community service.

M. On a regular basis, consistent with the written independent study agreement, the assigned teacher and the parent and student shall evaluate the education program of the student and modify as necessary to maximize student success. The assigned credentialed teacher will have the final authority with regard to the education program of the student, necessary assessments, and outcomes with the exception of students who qualify for special education services whose services and outcomes will be determined by an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”) team pursuant to law.

N. It is understood that no student who qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (“IDEA”) shall participate in independent study unless it is specifically authorized under his or her IEP.

O. For students in grades 6-8, students interested in temporary independent study (IS) must be approved by administrative personnel in order to participate. Administrators will procure and assign student work. Students in IS are responsible for completing work and submitting it upon their return.

P. Independent Study Roles:

The Credentialed Teacher will:

- Be responsible for completing designated portions of the written agreement for independent study, and add additional information when appropriate. ● Supervise and approve course work.
- Design all lesson plans.
- Write assignments for students.
- Assess the student’s work, either orally or in written form.
- Suggest reinforcement of content when needed or requested.
- Personally judge the time value of student assignments or work products before ADA is earned.
- Assess the child’s level of education, modifying the curriculum as necessary to meet district or county guidelines, and administer state mandated tests as required.
- If applicable, inform parents of or offer workshops that will enhance the teaching techniques.
- If applicable, arrange educational field trips and visits from professional speakers on subjects in which parents and students express an interest.
- Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the student’s completed and evaluated assignments on at least a monthly basis.
- Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his or her objectives or the agreement is terminated.
- Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.
- Determine and assign grades or other approved measures of student achievement when appropriate.

Parents will:

- Be committed to understand and use the independent study strategy appropriately.
- Provide an appropriate environment for the student’s study.
- Participate with the assigned credentialed teacher in the development of the student’s educational plan, including goals, objectives, and assignments. (While the assigned teacher is responsible for the educational design, the parent must be concerned about his or her role and the student’s needs and interests.)
- Along with the student, prepare a study schedule that incorporates family and educational responsibilities.

- Facilitate and enable, as much as possible, the student's effective and successful study under the written agreement. This would include avoiding disturbances during study such as phone calls, TV watching, and conflicting family duties.
- Supervise the student while following the plan as the student is working on assignments, making sure that the student's effort at least meets the minimum requirement set forth in the written agreement.
- Take steps to ensure the timely submission to the assigned teacher of all student work, completed assignments, and accurate records that will be needed for the assessment of student progress and attendance accounting as specified in the written agreement.
- Participate in a supportive role in regularly scheduled teacher/student meetings.
- Under the direction of the supervising teacher and with the assistance of any other assigned ECMS staff, participate in the student's instruction and assessment of learning and skills mastery. This may include the following:
 - Assuming responsibility for supplied textbooks, instructional materials and supplies, and equipment
 - Making intermediate assignments •Introducing curricular elements •Reinforcing learning
 - Promptly checking student work for errors, which the student should then correct and return to the Education Coordinator
 - Whenever possible, attend workshops that provide instruction and guidance that will make independent study a satisfying and beneficial experience for the participating child and parents.
 - Ensure the student's voluntary participation in and understanding of independent study and facilitate the student's transfer to traditional instruction when ready or when the student is unwilling to continue in independent study.

Students will:

- Have the right to all existing services and resources of ECMS as do all other students enrolled in the school and engaged in regular classroom study.
- Make regular, scheduled contact with the assigned credentialed teacher as specified in the written agreement.
- Complete at least the assigned work by the due date.
- Have all possible assignments available at meetings with the assigned credentialed teacher.
- Make an effort to participate in pertinent public or private extracurricular activities, including social activities with other children and adults.
- Be responsible for other tasks that may be required to fulfill the written agreement.

The Administrative Designee will:

- Administer the use of independent study by pupils.
- Ensure that independent study occurs in accordance with state law and district policy and regulation.
- Facilitate the completion of independent study agreements.
- Authorize the selection of all staff who are assigned to supervise independent study.
- Supervise any staff assigned to independent study functions.
- Complete or coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
- Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by state regulations for an audit trail of average daily attendance attributed to independent study and reported by the district.
- Monitor enrollment in independent study and the pupil to teacher ratio.

P. To Succeed in Independent Study There Must Exist:

- An understanding of independent study by all concerned
- A positive attitude by both the parents and the student about independent study and its
- The parents' ability to encourage and support their child
- The students' agreement to meet the requirements in the written agreement
- The students' ability and willingness to work with limited supervision by a certificated teacher
- Availability of certificated staff to supervise students' study effectively

Q. Attendance Rules

- ECMS shall maintain records identifying all students' grade levels of students participating in independent study.
- ECMS shall maintain a file of all agreements with representative samples of completed and evaluated student assignments, with notations on the work samples that indicate the supervising teacher's determination of the time value of the student's work.
- ECMS shall maintain a list showing the credits attempted by and awarded to each student along with a record of grade and other evaluations of independent study assignments issued to the students participating in independent study according to the agreement.

R. Missed Appointments - The Director shall incorporate in program procedures the appropriate use of the following strategies to deal with missed student appointments. The aim is to increase the student's achievement as well as to reduce and prevent the student's failure to meet the terms and conditions of the written agreement. If a student misses two or more appointments, the Director shall:

- Immediately telephone or contact the student and/or parent or have the teacher do so.
- Send a letter of concern to the student and parent, if appropriate.
- Schedule a special appointment.

(END OF POLICY)

Adopted: 1/28/2019