

Independent Study Board Policy

Bullis Charter School (“Charter School”) may offer a virtual independent study program to meet the educational needs of students enrolled in the Charter School, in accordance with applicable law.

The Executive Director retains discretion to approve or terminate independent study written agreements for students. Families interested in independent study should contact independentstudy@bullischarterschool.com for more information.

The 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. Charter School will assign each student in independent study a certificated employee of the LEA to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student’s independent study instruction. (EC § 51749.5(a)(3).)
2. For students in independent study in any grade level, all independent study coursework must be completed within a timeframe equivalent to the number of days of absence. (EC § 51747(a).)
3. When any student fails to complete ten percent (10%) of assignments during any period of fifteen (15) schooldays 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 interest 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).)
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 his or her goals as set forth in an individualized education program (“IEP”). The Executive Director is responsible for making this determination, taking into account some or all of the following factors:
 - 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 daily. A pupil who does not participate in scheduled live interaction or synchronous instruction on a school day shall be documented as non-participatory for that school day for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered reengagement. (EC § 51747.5(c).)
 - c. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - d. Progressing in a timely fashion toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher. (EC § 51747(b)(2).)
- 5. The Charter School will provide content to students aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. All coursework will be assigned and submitted online. (EC § 51747(c).)
- 6. For students who participate in independent study at Charter School for at least sixteen (16) school days per year:
 - 6.1. If a student does not generate attendance for more than 10 percent (10%) of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the school's approved instructional calendar, students found not participatory in synchronous instruction pursuant to EC § 51747.5 for more than 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 the student's current contact information;
 - b. Notify the student's parent or guardian of the student's lack of participation within one school day of the student's subsequent absence or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
 - c. Reach out to the student directly and/or parent(s) or guardian(s), as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine the student's needs for reengagement;
 - d. If the student has failed to complete ten percent (10%) of assignments during any period of fifteen (15) school days or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 4 herein, the Charter School will schedule a pupil-parent-teacher 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, Charter School will offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth in subsections a-b 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. 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 of record, and involving live two-way communication. (EC § 51745.5.)

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

Charter School will document each pupil's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which live interaction or synchronous instruction is provided as part of the independent study program. (EC § 51747.5(c).)

6.3 A student's parent or guardian may request the student return to in-person instruction from independent study by making a written request to the Executive Director or the assigned teacher(s) of record. If there is capacity in Charter School's in-person program at the student's grade level, Charter School will transition the student within five (5) school days. If there is no capacity in Charter School's in-person program at the student's grade level, Charter School will offer to help the student enroll in the in-person program offered by the student's district of residence and offer the student an opportunity to join Charter School's waitlist, within five (5) schooldays. (EC § 51747(f).)

6.4 Sections 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 of this policy do not apply to students who participate in independent study for fewer than 16 school days in a school year or are 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. 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 and the completion of a student's assigned work, 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 special 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 support.
 - 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 signature requirements for independent study written agreements set forth in EC § 51747(g)(9), including:
 - For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for fifteen (15) or fewer schooldays: Each written agreement shall be signed during the school year in which the independent study takes place, 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 paragraph, "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
 - 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 care giver, 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 paragraph, "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-teacher 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 their parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated student of the school district, or to the student's 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 Santa Clara County or who are residents of a county immediately adjacent to Santa Clara County. (EC § 51747.3(c).)
- 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 employed by Charter School, and the combined time value of student work product and student participation in synchronous instruction. (EC § 51747.5(b).)
- 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. To determine the average daily attendance, the Charter School adds the combined equivalent daily time value of student work products, as personally judged by a certificated employee of the Charter School. Student work products may include the daily time value spent by a student engaged in asynchronous instruction, including work completed on an online or computer based activity, regardless of whether student work products are produced. The Charter School shall maintain documentation of hours or fraction of an hour of both student work products and the time that the student engaged in asynchronous instruction. (EC § 51747.5(b)(2).)
- g. 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, documentation of hours or fraction of an hour of student work products and the time the student engaged in asynchronous instruction, and a signed acknowledgement by the supervising teacher indicating that they have personally evaluated the work or have 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.
 - v. Any other documents charter schools are required to maintain as required by law. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)
 - h. Charter School will comply with all applicable law regarding independent study, including ADA-to-certificated teacher ratio requirements. (EC § 51744 et seq.; 5 C.C.R. § 11700 et seq.)
9. Independent Study Plan Due to School Closure or Material Decrease in Attendance for 15 Days or Less for Affected Students:
- a. For any student impacted by fire, flood, impassable roads, epidemic, earthquake, the imminence of a major safety hazard as determined by the local law enforcement agency, a strike involving transportation services to pupils provided by a non-school entity or an order provided for in Education Code section 41422, the School shall offer those students independent study within 10 instructional days of the first day of a school closure or material decrease in attendance. Students with exceptional needs shall receive the services identified in their individualized education programs and may participate in independent study.
 - b. As soon as possible, unless prohibited under the direction of the local or state health officer, the School shall reopen for in-person instruction.