



## INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY

Richmond College Preparatory (“Charter School”) may offer independent study to meet the short term educational needs of pupils enrolled in the Charter School, as outlined below:

- Short term independent study may be permitted, upon request, at the sole discretion of the Director of Lower Elementary or designee for students in grades TK-3, who will be absent for a period of a minimum of one (1) to a maximum of fourteen (14) cumulative school days. A student may not participate in short-term independent study pursuant to this policy for more than fourteen (14) cumulative school days in a school year.
- Short term independent study may be permitted, upon request, at the sole discretion of the Director of Upper Elementary or designee for students in grades 4-8 who will be absent for a period of a minimum of one (1) to a maximum of fourteen (14) cumulative school days. A student may not participate in short-term independent study pursuant to this policy for more than fourteen (14) cumulative school days in a school year.

Further 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. The Director of Lower Elementary and the Director of Upper Elementary or their designees’ considerations may include, but are not limited to, the student’s current academic standing, the student’s grade level, the timing during the grading period, the purpose of the absence for which independent study is requested, previous participation in independent study, and input from teachers, MTSS team or IEP team as applicable. The Director of Lower Elementary and the Director of Upper Elementary or their designees shall not deny a request for independent study on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, gender, mental or physical disability or on the basis of any other protected characteristic, either actual or perceived.

In exceptional circumstances, long term independent study may be permitted for more than fourteen (14) cumulative school days in a school year (“long-term independent study”), to students in grades TK-8 with a documented<sup>1</sup> health restriction which would prevent the pupil from attending in-person instruction, but which would not prevent the pupil from engaging in the equivalent amount of work that would be required of the pupil at the schoolsite.

- Participation in long-term independent study for students in grades TK-3 shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Director of Lower Elementary or designee.
- Participation in long-term independent study for students in grades 4-8 shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Director of Upper Elementary or designee.

The Director of Lower Elementary and the Director of Upper Elementary, or their designees, shall not deny a request for year-long independent study on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, gender, mental or physical disability or on the basis of any other protected characteristic, either actual or perceived.

Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil 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 pupils to complete their independent study successfully.

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<sup>1</sup> Supported by a note from a physician.



The Governing Board of the Charter School has adopted all of the following independent study policies for implementation at the Charter School:

1. For pupils 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 will be twenty (20) school days.
2. The Director of Upper and Lower Elementary or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study upon the following triggers:
  - a. When any pupil fails to complete three (3) missed assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days.
  - b. In the event Student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School, which considers ALL of the following indicators:
    - i. The pupil's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the pupil's performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil record. The record shall be maintained 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.

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 re-engagement strategies for the following pupils:
  - a. all pupils 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 schooldays 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 pupil.
  - 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 school to determine pupil needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
  - d. A clear standard for requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference to review a pupil's written agreement, and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747.<sup>2</sup>
5. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for synchronous instruction and live interaction:
- a. For pupils in transitional kindergarten through grade 3, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows:
    - i. The assigned supervising teacher shall provide daily synchronous instruction through the internet or telephonic communications, which may include the use of video conferencing tools.
  - b. For pupils in grades 4-8, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily live interaction between the pupil and a certificated or non-certificated employee of the Charter School and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows:
    - i. The assigned supervising teacher shall provide weekly synchronous instruction through internet or telephonic communications, which may include the use of video conferencing tools.
    - ii. A certificated or non-certificated employee of the Charter School shall provide daily live interaction through internet or telephonic communications, which may include the use of video conferencing tools.<sup>3</sup>
6. The following plan shall be utilized to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days:
- a. Following a parent/guardian request to return their student to in-person instruction from independent study, the Charter School shall ensure that the student is returned to

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.



their regular classroom for in-person instruction expeditiously, and in no case, later than five instructional days following the request.<sup>4</sup>

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 pupil's assignments, for reporting the pupil's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding a pupil's academic progress.
  - b. The objectives and methods of study for the pupil'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 pupil. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all pupils 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 subdivisions (a) and (b) of Education Code Section 51747 regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
  - e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the pupil'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 pupil upon completion.
  - g. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of pupils 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 pupil's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and pupils 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 pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Education Code sections 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
  - i. Each written agreement shall be signed, before the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the pupil is less than

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<sup>4</sup> 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.



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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 pupil. 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.

- 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.
  - 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. No student who qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (“IDEA”) shall participate in independent study unless the student’s IEP specifically provides for participation in independent study.
  10. The CEO may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.

Adopted this 29<sup>th</sup> day of October in the year 2021

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Signature of Chair to the Richmond College Prep Board of Trustees