



Independent Study Policy

Monarch River Academy may offer independent study to meet the educational needs of pupils enrolled in the charter school. Independent study is an alternative education designed to teach 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.

The Charter School will provide appropriate services, supports, technology, and resources to enable students to complete their independent study program successfully.

- 1. Time in Which an Assignment Must Be Completed:** For pupils in all grade levels offered by the School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be twenty (20) school days.
- 2. Evaluation of Independent:** When any student fails to complete two (2) assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days or fails to make satisfactory progress (defined in section 3 below), the Charter School will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study. In addition, a pupil will be required to produce evidence of a body of work for all 4 core subjects (English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) for each learning period. A body of work must reflect at least 85% of each school day, showing engagement in learning. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. This 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. Satisfactory Educational Progress: For purposes of conducting the evaluation in Section 2, 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 their goals pursuant to their individualized education program (“IEP”). A Charter School Administrator, in collaboration with the Homeschool teacher, is responsible for making this determination based on all of the following indicators:

- 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.
 - Pupil-level measures include, as applicable:
 - Statewide assessments
 - Whether the student has successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for entrance to the University of California and the California State University
 - Whether the student has successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for career technical education sequences or programs of study that align with state board-approved career technical education standards and frameworks
 - If an English learner, whether the student is making progress toward English proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California or any subsequent assessment of English proficiency
 - If an English learner, whether the student is reclassified
 - Whether the student has passed an advanced placement examination with a score of 3 or higher
 - Whether the student demonstrates college preparedness pursuant to the Early Assessment Program or any subsequent assessment of college preparedness
 - Student engagement includes, as applicable:
 - School attendance
 - Chronic absenteeism
 - Middle school drop out status
 - High school dropout status
 - High school graduation status
- b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student is working on assignments.
- c. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
- d. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

4. **Content of Independent Study:** Charter School will provide content to students aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school students, this includes access to all courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria.
5. **Tiered Reengagement Strategies:** If a student does not generate attendance for more than three schooldays or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week, or for students who are in violation of their independent study written agreement, Charter School shall:
 - a. Verify current contact information for each enrolled student;
 - b. Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the student’s absence or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.)
 - c. Reach out to the student directly and/or parents or guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine student’s needs for reengagement; and
 - d. If the student has failed to complete two (2) assignments during any period of twenty (20) schooldays or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 3 herein, Charter School will schedule a pupil-parent-educator 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.
6. **Synchronous Instruction and Live Interaction:** Based on each student’s grade level, their assigned teacher of record will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth in subsections a-c below.

“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, and 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.

- a. For students in grades TK-3, inclusive, their assigned teacher of record will schedule and offer opportunities for daily synchronous instruction [**add in detail about the plan to make this happen**]
- b. For students in grades 4-8, inclusive, their assigned teacher of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction and daily live interaction. [**same here**]

- c. For students in grades 9-12, inclusive, their assigned teacher of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction. **[same here]**

Charter School will document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which independent study is provided. A student who does not participate in independent study on a school day will be documented as non participatory for that school day.

- 7. Request to Attend In-Person Program:** A student's parent or guardian may request their student return to in-person instruction from independent study by making a written request to Administration or their assigned teacher of record. If a family makes such a request, Charter School will offer to help the student transition to enrollment in the in-person program offered by their district of residence within five schooldays.
- 8. Current Written Independent Study Agreement:** A current written independent study agreement for each independent study student will be maintained on file. Written agreements may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Each written agreement will contain the following:
 - 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.
 - The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
 - 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.
 - A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment, 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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 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 supports.

- 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.
 - Pupil and parent/guardian acknowledgement of understanding that the pupil will participate in local benchmark assessments at minimum 3 times each school year and all applicable state assessments each school year.
 - Charter School will comply with the written independent study agreement signature requirements set forth in EC § 51747(g)(9), including:
 1. For the 2021-2022 School Year Only (Must Obtain Signatures Within 30 Days of First Day of Independent Study Instruction): Charter School will obtain a signed written agreement from the student, or the student's parent or legal guardian 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 no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction.
 2. For School Years After 2021-2022 (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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. For purposes of this paragraph, "care giver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
- 9. Option to Request Meeting:** Before signing a written agreement, and upon the request of the parent or guardian of a student, the Charter School will conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator 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.
- 10. Average Daily Attendance:** It is the policy of this Board that each student is, at a minimum, expected to accomplish the following in order for the student to be counted as present/attending for Average Daily Attendance (ADA) purposes:

- Students will electronically mark “Monthly Independent Study Log” on the school days where they have completed school work Monday through Fridays that are not school holidays.
- Parents/guardians will sign the monthly log under the following statement: “By signing this log, I verify that my student completed school work on these days” and electronically submit the log using the School’s Parent Portal.

11. Compliance with the Education Code: The Charter School shall comply with the Education Code Sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provision of the Charter School's Act and the State Board of Education regulation adopted there under.

12. Implementation of Independent Study Policy: The Board and School Staff shall establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.

