



## Independent Study Board Policy

Feather River Charter School (hereinafter “Charter School”) 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 in accordance with applicable law.

The purpose of the Charter School Governing Board approving this Independent Study Policy is to accomplish the following:

1. Establish the Time in Which an Assignment Must Be Completed
2. Establish the Procedure for Conducting an Evaluation of Whether Independent Study is in the Student’s Best Interests
3. Outline What Must Be Included in a Current Written Agreement
4. Outline How Average Daily Attendance Will Be Calculated
5. Establish Compliance with the Education Code

The Executive Director or designee retains discretion to approve independent study written agreements for students. 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. The following policies are effective as of the start of Charter School’s 2023-24 school year:

- 1) For each student in independent study, Charter School will assign a certificated employee to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student’s independent study instruction. (EC § 51747.5(a).)
- 2) For students in independent study in any grade level, the maximum length of time that may lapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is twenty (20) school days (one “Learning Period”). (EC § 51747(a).)
- 3) When any student fails to complete two (2) assignments during any Learning Period or fails to make satisfactory educational progress, the Charter School (e.g., Director of Academic Program) will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study, or whether the student should return to a regular in-person school program. For purposes of conducting the evaluation in this 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 their goals pursuant to their individualized education program (“IEP”). The Executive Director or designee is responsible for making this determination of satisfactory educational progress 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 set forth in EC § 52060(d)(4)-(5) (as described below):
- Pupil achievement and engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:
  - Statewide assessments that are part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (a.k.a., “CAASPP”, or any other subsequent assessment as certified by the state board of education), or an alternative assessment (NWEA-MAP).
  - Completion of courses that satisfy the requirements for entrance to the University of California and California State University;
  - Completion of courses that satisfy the requirements for career technical education sequences or programs that align with state board-approved career technical education standards and frameworks;
  - Completion of both the university entrance and career technical courses specified above;
  - For English learner pupils, progress toward English proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (“ELPAC” or subsequent assessments of English proficiency certified by the state board).
  - The student’s English learner reclassification rate, if applicable.
  - Passage of an advanced placement exam with a score of “3” or higher; and
  - Demonstration of college preparedness pursuant to the Early Assessment Program (or any subsequent assessment of college preparedness).
- Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:
  - School attendance rates.
  - Chronic absenteeism, if applicable.
  - High school graduation progress.
  - Attendance at scheduled Learning Period meetings.
  - Communication with the student’s teacher.

- b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student is working on assignments (e.g. completion of Student Activity Logs and Work Samples).
- 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. (EC § 51747(b)(2).)

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. § 51747(b.)

- 4. Charter School will provide content to students aligned to grade-level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high schools, this shall include access to all courses offered by the local educational agency for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria. (EC § 51747(c).)
- 5. The Charter School has adopted Tiered Reengagement Strategies for the following pupils:
  - a. All students who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar (i.e. missing one or more Student Activity Logs);
  - b. Students found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings 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
  - c. students who are in violation of their independent study written agreement pursuant to EC § 51747(g).

The Tiered Reengagement Strategies include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least all of the following:

- Verify the student's current contact information.
- Notify the student's parent or guardian of the student's lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a nonattendance day or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
- 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;
- If the student has failed to complete two (2) assignments during any Learning Period or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 3 herein, the 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.
- Implement any Charter School programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable. (EC § 51747(d)).

6. Based on each student's grade level, Charter School will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth in subsections a-c 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, 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, a teacher or teachers of record employed by the local educational agency and involving live two-way communication. (EC § 51745.5.)

- a. For students in grades TK-3, inclusive, the Charter School will offer opportunities for daily synchronous instruction
- b. For students in grades 4-8, inclusive, the Charter School will offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction and for daily live interaction.
- c. For students in grades 9-12, inclusive, the Charter School will offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction.

Charter School will document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction pursuant to EC § 51747 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. A student 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 pursuant to EC § 51747. (EC § 51747.5(c).)

7. A student's parent or guardian may request their student return to in-person instruction from independent study by making a written request to their assigned teacher of record. If there is such a request, Charter School will offer to help the student enroll in the in-person program offered by their district of residence within five (5) school days. (EC § 51747(f).)

8. A current written independent study master 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, 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 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. (EC § 51747(g).)
- h. Charter School will comply with the signature requirements for independent study agreement set forth in EC § 51747(g)(9), including:

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 personal responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. For purposes of this paragraph, "care giver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) Division 11 of the Family Code.

Before signing a independent study agreement, the parent or guardian of student may request that the Charter School conduct a telephone, 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. (EC § 51747(h)(2).)

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.

Additional Independent Study Requirements:

- a. Charter School will not provide any funds or other thing of value to the student or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated student of the school district, or to his or her parent or guardian. (EC § 51747.3(a).)
- b. An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Section 56026, may participate in independent study, if the pupil's individualized education program developed pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 56340) of Chapter 4 of Part 30 specifically provides for that participation. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (a), the pupil's individualized education program team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the pupil can receive a free appropriate public education in an independent study placement. A pupil's inability to work independently, the pupil's need for adult support, or the pupil's need for special education or related services shall not preclude the individualized education program team from determining that the pupil can receive a free appropriate education in an independent study placement. (EC § 51745(c).)
- c. A local educational agency may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of pupil work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher employed by the local educational agency, or the combined time value of pupil work product and pupil participation in synchronous instruction as set forth in EC § 51747.5(b).
- d. 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).)
- e. 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
  - 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 as time values of student work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different individuals.

v. Any other documents charter schools are required to maintain as required by law. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)

Charter School will comply with all applicable law regarding independent study, including ADA-to-certificated teacher ratio requirements. (EC § 51745.6 ; 5 C.C.R. § 11704)

1. 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:
  - a. Students will complete the “Student Activity Log” for each Learning Period for the school days where they have completed school work Monday through Fridays that are not school holidays. Parents/guardians will sign the log under the following statement: “By signing this log, I verify that my student completed school work on these days.”