

AUSD SHORT-TERM CONTRACTED INDEPENDENT STUDY INFORMATION/PROCEDURES

What it is:

Short-Term Independent Study Contracted Study is an option for students who must miss school for unavoidable reasons and will be absent for **at least five (5) and up to fourteen (14) consecutive days**. Per AB 101, the number of cumulative days in a school year that a student can use Short Term Contracted Independent Study CANNOT exceed 14 days in the school year.

The reason for the necessity of the contract is typically due to emergency, illness, funeral, religious purposes, extended illness, student safety issues, family vacation, etc.

Students do not have a right to participate in Independent Study. Independent study is made available to students on a case-by-case basis, considering the length of the absence, the student's academic history, and other factors. Students, who are not on independent study and are otherwise absent for an unexcused reason, will not receive attendance or coursework credit. Such students may also be considered truant.

Short-Term Independent Study is not offered during the first and last three weeks of the school year.

- Reasoning for not offering it during the first three weeks: Class loads are not balanced until the 20th day of school. It would cause an unreasonable burden for teachers to create short-term assignments during this time. Additionally, the contract would be void if not adhered to by the individuals that entered into the agreement.
- Reasoning for not offering it during the last three weeks of the year: All assignments must be returned and graded prior to the end of school for the contract to be valid. Teachers cannot be expected to close the year while grading additional assignments during this time.

How Students Apply:

Eligible students may have their parent apply for Short Term Independent Study at the school attendance office at least five days before the student absence begins. The written request must include the dates of the absence and the reason(s) for the absence.

There can be no more than two (2) Contracted Study agreements granted per student per school year. The parent will complete the application and return it to the school site for administrative approval.

If a student requires more than two Short-Term Independent Study Contracted agreements, then a Student Success/Study Team meeting should be held to determine how best to support the student so they remain in school.

How Attendance is Recorded:

All contracted work must be submitted to the school on the day of the student's return and will be kept on file for audit records. If all the contracted work is returned with satisfactory progress, the student will maintain a clear attendance record. If the student's work is unsatisfactory, or incomplete, the school can only grant excused days of absence for the amount of satisfactory work returned. The additional days of absence will be considered unexcused, marked as '**pending contracted study**', and will count towards truancy limits. If a student fails to complete work on an initial Short-Term Independent Contracted Study, a second Contracted Study agreement will not be granted for that school year.

Students will receive credit based on the number of hours of schoolwork and completion of assignments

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- Elementary School (Kindergarten - 5th grade):
 - 20 hours of work completed will yield 5 days of classroom attendance. (approximately 4 hours a day)
- Middle School (6th - 8th grade), High School (9th - 12th grade):
 - In secondary schools that provide 6 one-hour class periods each day, 30 hours of acceptable school work is required for one (1) week of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and cumulative academic credit for regular school programs.
 - In secondary schools that provide 7 one-hour class periods each day, 35 hours of acceptable school work is required for one (1) week of ADA and cumulative academic credit for regular school programs.

Below are the guidelines and policy for requesting an Independent Study Contract:

- Parents must notify administration at their student's school at least 5 school days prior to the absences.
- Students whose achievement level is below grade level standards may not be eligible. (There should be evidence that the student can work independently to complete the program.)
- Students who attempted a Short Term Contracted Independent Study Contract in the past and did not successfully complete it are not eligible for a new contract.
- Students who do not return before the 15th day will be marked unexcused and the absences will be counted towards truancy. Students must turn in work on the first day of return for absences to be cleared.
- Contracts may not be faxed or emailed. Original work must be submitted to the school upon the contracted return.
- A student with disabilities, as defined in Ed Code 56026, may be eligible for Independent Study if their individualized education program specifically provides for such participation (Assembly Bill 181).