

3200 Independent Study Policy

Approved: September 13, 2000

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The Board of Directors of Altus Schools San Diego ("ASSD") hereby adopts this Independent Study Policy to apply to Altus Schools Charter School of San Diego, hereafter referred to as "Charter School." ASSD shall offer independent study to meet the educational needs of pupils enrolled in the Charter School. Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate and is 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 following written policies have been adopted by the Charter School Board of Directors for implementation at Charter School:

1. For students in all grades (Transitional Kindergarten through 12) in independent study at the Charter School the maximum length of time that may elapse between when an assignment is made and when that assignment is due shall be 20 school days.
2. The Deputy Superintendent School Services and Founding Director 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 student in grades K-12 **misses two or more** assignments during any period of 20 school days,
 - b. In the event a student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), 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.

Teachers and certificated staff use MTSS to enhance student comprehension of content by providing remediation strategies. MTSS that focuses on aligning initiatives and resources to address the needs of all students. It is a comprehensive framework that aligns academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning in a fully integrated system of support for the benefit of all students. MTSS offers the potential to create systematic change through intentional integration of services and supports to quickly identify and meet the needs of all students. The

Charter School utilizes a Response to Intervention (RTI2) Model to determine how individual students are responding to strategies, interventions, and supports within the multi-tiered system. In an RTI2 Model, instructional staff identify at-risk students, regularly monitor student learning, provide research-based interventions, and utilize a systematic approach to ensuring academic success for all students. This problem-solving approach continually examines student response and adjusts based on data and a documented feedback system.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision 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 substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school grade levels this shall include access to all courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as credible under the A-G admissions criteria.
4. The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies for the following pupils:
 - a. all pupils 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;
 - b. pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 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. pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

These procedures shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least, 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 school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation;
- c. A plan for outreach from the Charter School to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary. The Charter School developed trauma informed crisis response systems which are sensitive to the emotional needs of students and family members. A key component of the crisis response system is forging strong school-to-home relationships, centered on trust and two-way communication. Charter School staff, including administrators, teachers, education specialists, counselors, nurses and school psychologists remain connected with students and their families through in-person meetings, home visits, secure texts, emails, video conferences, and phone calls to conduct informal conversations focused on health and social-emotional needs. The Charter School continues to provide information to families in both English and

Spanish regarding community-based resources for health and wellness, food options, distance learning tools, and other basic needs;

- 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.
 - e. When the evaluation described above under paragraph 2.b. is triggered to consider whether remaining in independent study is in the best interest of the pupil, a pupil-parent-educator conference shall be required to review a pupil's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being. This conference shall be a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's written independent study agreement.
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 teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows:
 - i. Synchronous instruction in Grades TK-3: Students have one or more daily opportunities for synchronous instruction in the following ways:
 - (1) In-person one-one-one tutoring from the teacher or teachers of record. This one-on-one support is focused on meeting the individual learning needs of the student. Teachers personalize conversations and assignments, adapt to the student's communication style, and gauge student's progress and mastery.
 - (2) In-person small group tutoring sessions from the teacher or teachers of record. Small group tutoring sessions consist of the teacher or teachers of record leading direct instruction, presentations, guided student practice, assessments and discussion periods.
 - (3) Virtual tutoring sessions from the teacher or teachers of record. Virtual tutoring sessions that incorporate interactive components such as; chat rooms, polls, surveys and shared documents. Students participate through live video, audio and meeting chats.
 - ii. Live interaction for Grades TK-3: General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Certificated Teacher Resource, Counselors, and school health staff will interact with students through in-person meetings, virtual conferences, home visits, and telephonically to discuss academic progress and achievement, and educational needs. Live interactions also include social-emotional and behavior needs and availability of services and resources.

- 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 teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows:
 - i. Synchronous instruction in Grades 4-8: Students have one or more weekly opportunities for synchronous instruction in the following ways;
 - (1) In-person one-one-one tutoring from the teacher or teachers of record. This one-on-one support is focused on meeting the individual learning needs of the student. Teachers personalize conversations and assignments, adapt to the student's communication style, and gauge student's progress and mastery.
 - (2) In-person small group tutoring sessions from the teacher or teachers of record. Small group tutoring sessions consist of the teacher or teachers of record leading direct instruction, presentations, guided student practice, assessments and discussion periods.
 - (3) Virtual tutoring sessions from the teacher or teachers of record. Virtual tutoring sessions that incorporate interactive components such as; chat rooms, polls, surveys and shared documents. Students participate through live video, audio and meeting chats.
 - ii. Live interaction for Grades 4-8: General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Certificated Teacher Resource, Counselors, and school health staff will interact with students through in-person meetings, virtual conferences, home visits, and telephonically to discuss academic progress and achievement, educational needs, and college/career planning. Teachers and certificated staff use these interactions to enhance student comprehension of content by providing remediation strategies. Live interactions also include social-emotional and behavior needs and availability of services and resources.
- c. For pupils in grades 9-12, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows:
 - i. Synchronous instruction in Grades 9-12: Students have one or more weekly opportunities for synchronous instruction in the following ways;
 - (1) In-person one-one-one tutoring from the teacher or teachers of record. This one-on-one support is focused on meeting the individual learning needs of the student. Teachers personalize conversations and assignments, adapt to the student's communication style, and gauge student's progress and mastery.
 - (2) In-person small group tutoring sessions from the teacher or teachers of record. Small group tutoring sessions consist of the teacher or teachers

of record leading direct instruction, presentations, guided student practice, assessments and discussion periods.

- (3) Virtual tutoring sessions from the teacher or teachers of record. Virtual tutoring sessions that incorporate interactive components such as; chat rooms, polls, surveys and shared documents. Students participate through live video, audio and meeting chats.

6. Live interaction for Grades 9-12: General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Certificated Teacher Resource, Counselors, and school health staff will interact with students through in-person meetings, virtual conferences, home visits, and telephonically to discuss academic progress and achievement, educational needs, and college/career planning. Teachers and certificated staff use these interactions to enhance student comprehension of content by providing remediation strategies. Live interactions also include social-emotional and behavior needs and availability of services and resources. 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: For parents who choose to return their student to a traditional school setting for more in-person instruction the school's student services department, including the school counselors, will assist parents in obtaining student records and contacting the new school to help with the transition.
7. A current written agreement/Master Agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study pupil, including but not limited to, all of the following:
- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments, for reporting his or her progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding a pupil's academic progress.
 - The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
 - 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.
 - A statement of the policies adopted pursuant to Education Code Section 51747 subdivisions (a) and (b) 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 prior to an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
 - The duration of the independent study agreement, including 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.

- 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. Students in grades K-5 are expected to complete work assigned in each core subject area, providing for at least one year's academic growth per year. Students in grades 6-12 are expected to earn one credit per month or 12 credits per year. Students choosing to graduate from the Charter School shall have earned 42 credits in specified courses for graduation.
- 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 Section 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.
- 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.
- Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, if the pupil 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 pupil, 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.
 - a. 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.
- If a new teacher takes over the supervising teacher, he or she shall sign an addendum. Any changes to the Master Agreement will be noted in an addendum agreement.
- The Master Agreement shall include subsidiary agreements such as the Assignment and Work Records. The independent study agreement for a student shall include a study plan that

represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in the classroom for the student's grade level for every school day covered by the agreement.

The Superintendent School Services and Founder or designee may establish regulations to implement this policy in accordance with the law.

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.

Students engaging in independent study must be residents of the county where the Charter School is authorized or an adjacent county.

Students who are 19 -22 years of age may engage in independent study through the regular high school program, apart from Adult Education, only if they have been continuously enrolled in public school upon turning 19 and without a break in enrollment since that time, and making satisfactory progress toward a high school diploma (or, if a student in special education, satisfactory progress in keeping with an IEP).

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee.

