



INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

WISH Charter Schools, which operates WISH Community Elementary School, WISH Community Middle School, and WISH Academy High School (collectively, the "Charter School"), may offer independent study to meet the short or long-term 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 the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. Whenever possible, families should request independent study at least five (5) school days in advance of the anticipated absence from in-person instruction. Independent Study is at the discretion of the Executive Director, depending on the student's specific circumstances. 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 WISH Board of Directors for implementation at Charter School:

Section 1: Duration and Completion Requirements

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 pupil must complete the assigned work is 10 school days.

Section 2: Evaluation Requirements and Record-Keeping

The Principal 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:

1. **Assignment Completion Thresholds:** When any pupil fails to complete at least 60% of the assignments during independent study over 10 days or upon return from independent study, the appropriateness of continuing independent study will be reviewed.
2. **Educational Progress Evaluation:** When a student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's Student Study and Progress Team ("SSPT") policy, considering ALL of the following indicators:
 - a. The pupil's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by performance on applicable pupil-level measures set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5)

- b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators evidencing that the pupil 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

Mandatory Record-Keeping Requirements:

- Written evaluation records shall be treated as mandatory interim pupil records
- Retention period: Records maintained for at least three (3) years from the date of evaluation
- Transfer requirement: If pupil transfers to another California public school, records shall be forwarded to that school
- Documentation: All evaluation findings must be documented in writing

Section 3: Content Standards Alignment

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 courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria.

Section 4: Digital Agreement Process and CDE Compliance

Independent Study Agreement Requirements

COMPLIANCE NOTE: While WISH utilizes annual digital signature agreements for administrative efficiency, all CDE signature timing requirements must be met:

a. Signature Timing Requirements (per AB 181):

- For programs ≤15 days: Agreements must be signed during the school year in which the independent study program takes place, consistent with Education Code Section 51747(g)(2)(D)
- For programs >15 days: Agreements must be signed before commencement of independent study

b. Required Signatories: Each written agreement shall be signed by:

- The pupil
- Parent/legal guardian/caregiver (if pupil is under 18). For purposes of this section, “caregiver” means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of Division 11 of the Family Code.
- Certificated employee designated for general supervision of independent study
- Certificated employee designated for special education programming (as applicable)

c. Electronic Signature Compliance: 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.

d. Written Agreement Components (Education Code Section 51747(g)): Each agreement must include:

1. 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.
2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
3. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
4. 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 student's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether or not the student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
5. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
6. 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.
7. 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 individualized education program 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.
8. 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 Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall 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.

Section 5: Technology-Enhanced Processes by Grade Level

Grades TK-5 Process:

- a. Attendance Monitoring: Office staff shall prepare and distribute weekly attendance reports to teachers every Monday, identifying students absent from in-person instruction for full days during the previous week.
- b. Work Packets: Teachers shall provide printed work packets for students absent from in-person instruction, with due dates clearly marked at the top of each packet.
- c. Completion Tracking: Teachers shall complete the Independent Study Learning Log Cover Sheet for each participating student and submit completed work packets to the office for entry into the ISP Tracker.

Grades 6-8 Process:

- a. Students shall complete work assigned on Canvas, via online platforms (iReady, Aleks, etc.), written or otherwise created on the days they are absent.
- b. The Advisory teacher will establish a Canvas ISP class to record and maintain documentation of student Independent Studies work submissions.
- c. Attendance Monitoring: Students shall report to the Advisory teacher immediately upon their return to in-person instruction.
 - i. The Advisory teacher will verify work completed by the student on the date(s) of independent study as submitted to the Canvas ISP class (via screenshot submission or otherwise).
 - ii. The Advisory teacher will assess the time value of the work completed by the student on the date(s) of independent study.
 - iii. The Office Manager will record attendance/work completion in Infinite Campus and preserve the record of student work.

Grades 9-12 Process:

- a. Students shall complete work assigned on Canvas, via online platforms (iReady, Aleks, etc.), written or otherwise created on the days of independent study.
- b. The Independent Studies teacher will establish a Canvas ISP class to record and maintain documentation of student Independent Studies work submissions.
- c. Attendance Monitoring: short-term students shall report to the Independent Studies teacher immediately upon their return to in-person instruction.
 - iv. The independent studies teacher will verify work completed by the student on the date(s) of independent study as submitted to the Canvas ISP class (via screenshot submission or otherwise).
 - v. The independent studies teacher will assess the time value of the work completed by the student on the date(s) of independent study.
 - vi. The independent studies teacher will record the attendance/work completion in Infinite Campus and preserve the record of student work.

Section 6: Learning Log Cover Sheet Requirements

For grade levels TK-8, teachers shall complete an Independent Study Learning Log Cover Sheet for each student participating in independent study, which includes:

- Section 1: Teacher completes basic information for each day of the independent study term.
- Section 2: Student and teacher document dates and initials for each school day work was completed (excluding weekends).
- Section 3: Teacher completes Certification of Work Completed section.

For grades 9-12 the independent studies teacher will collect evidence of work done via Canvas for all students (or support the student to preserve evidence of work done on paper or by other means in Canvas) and will track all requests for independent study requests in the Independent Studies tracking spreadsheet.

Section 7: Attendance and ADA Compliance

- a. Initial Marking: Students shall be marked as Independent Study Pending “ISP” for attendance purposes during the duration of independent study.
- b. Attendance Correction: Upon submission and teacher review of all assigned work within the 10-day assignment period, student attendance shall be rectified and marked as Independent Study Complete “ISC” for ADA (Average Daily Attendance) purposes.
- c. Contract Requirement: Independent Study does not count towards attendance unless the annual contract has been signed, students have completed all work assigned for that day, and their attendance is adjusted to ISC.

Section 8: Administrative and Staff Responsibilities

Office Staff Responsibilities:

- Follow up on digital Independent Study Annual Agreements sent via a digital signature service
- Prepare attendance reports with Learning Log Cover Sheets
- Notify Special Education Department of IS requests for students with special services
- Update Infinite Campus attendance upon work completion
- Maintain Independent Study files by month for audit purposes
- Track completion in ISP Tracker system
- Obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for pupils to participate in independent study for medical/mental health treatment purposes if students are on independent study for this purpose

Teacher Responsibilities:

- Review attendance reports and meet with absent students 1:1 to review required assignments
- Sign Learning Log Cover Sheets for each absence
- For TK-5: The homeroom teacher will provide printed work packets with due dates

- For 6-8: The advisory teacher will guide students through the Canvas tile
- For 9-12: The HS Independent Studies teacher will guide students through work submission to the Canvas ISP tile, approve time value of work, and update attendance on Infinite Campus
- Submit completed documentation to the office folder within the required timelines

SECTION 9: LONG-TERM INDEPENDENT STUDY REQUIREMENTS (>15 SCHOOL DAYS)

For students requiring independent study exceeding 15 cumulative days in a school year, the following additional requirements apply:

Synchronous Instruction and Daily Live Interaction Requirements:

The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for synchronous instruction and live interaction

Grades TK-3:

- a. Daily Synchronous Instruction: Direct contact with either (1) WISH teacher(s) of record for LTIS, (2) online teacher through ISP contracted program, or (3) other identified certificated teacher

Grades 4-8:

- a. Weekly Synchronous Instruction: Direct contact with either (1) WISH teacher(s) of record for LTIS, (2) online teacher through ISP contracted program, or (3) other identified certificated teacher
- b. Daily Live Interaction: with the independent study coordinator (school VP, counselor, or other certificated or non-certificated site designee as indicated by principal)

Grades 9-12:

- a. Weekly Synchronous Instruction: Direct contact with either (1) WISH teacher(s) of record for LTIS, (2) online teacher through ISP contracted program, or (3) other identified certificated teacher

Tiered Re-engagement Strategies :

The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies for students who are:

- Not generating attendance for more than 10% of the required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
- Not participating in synchronous instruction offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than 50% of scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month (as applicable by grade span)
- In violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

Re-engagement procedures include:

- a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil.
- b. Notification to parents/guardians within one (1) school day of the recording of a nonattendance day or lack of participation.
- c. Outreach to determine pupil needs, including health and social services connections.
- d. Pupil-parent-educator conference to review the written agreement and program impact, and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747.

Transition Plan for Return to In-Person Instruction:

The Charter School shall transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days.

Process:

- a. Family notifies independent study coordinator OR coordinator contacts family if pupil not progressing
- b. Meeting scheduled to support return to in-person learning on campus
- c. Transition plan created with course alignment and completion discussion to ensure full course credits
- d. Principals, counselors, and teachers are notified to capture and account for independent study progress

Exemptions from Long-Term Requirements:

The tiered reengagement strategies, synchronous instruction, and transition plans described above shall NOT apply to pupils who:

- Participate in independent study for fewer than 15 school days per year
- Those who are enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom-based instruction (i.e. WISH) who are participating in independent study under the care of appropriately licensed professionals for medical treatments or inpatient mental health/substance abuse treatment.
- Independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected students under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 41422 and/or 46392 and 46393, for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

SECTION 11: RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- a. Geographic Restrictions: The Charter School shall not offer independent study to students who:
 - i. Will be residing or traveling outside the State of California and/or the United States during all or part of the proposed Independent Study period
- b. Staffing Limitations: Independent study shall not be available for students:

- i. For whom the retention of additional staff or outside providers is necessary
- ii. Whose program requires the provision of services by providers not licensed in the State of California
- c. Professional Documentation Required: Local educational agencies shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for pupils to participate in independent study for medical/mental health treatment purposes.

SECTION 12: LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Statutory Compliance:

The Charter School shall comply with:

- Education Code sections 51744 through 51749.3
- The Charter Schools Act of 1992 and State Board of Education regulations adopted thereunder

Emergency Independent Study Offering:

In the event of emergency conditions described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 (e.g., fire, flood, impassable roads, epidemic, earthquake, war, or an imminent safety hazard determined by local law enforcement), the Charter School shall offer independent study to any pupil impacted by the emergency condition within ten (10) days of the first day of the school closure or material decrease in attendance. Where instruction or services, or both, cannot be provided to a pupil either at school or in person for more than ten (10) school days due to such emergency conditions, a pupil who is an individual with exceptional needs shall receive the services identified in the pupil's IEP for emergency conditions and may participate in independent study pursuant to this policy.

Implementation Authority:

The Executive Director may establish additional regulations to implement these policies in accordance with law, provided such regulations do not conflict with CDE requirements or statutory mandates.

Annual Policy Review:

This policy shall be reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance with evolving CDE guidance and legislative requirements.

CDE Compliance Verification: This policy incorporates all required elements of AB 181 and Education Code Sections 51744-51749.3 while integrating operational efficiency tools including PandaDoc, Canvas, Google Forms, and ISP Tracker systems.

SECTION 13: AMENDMENTS TO THE INDEPENDENT STUDY WRITTEN AGREEMENT DURING TERM OF AGREEMENT

If a material change to a pupil's independent study program occurs during the term of the independent study written agreement, the Charter School shall provide written notification of the change. A "material change" may include but is not limited to the following: change of course(s); change of teacher or teachers of record; change of certificated employee responsible for special education programming; or change of grade level.

Required Notification: Written notification shall be provided to (1) all individuals who signed the original independent study written agreement, (2) any newly assigned teacher or teachers of record, and (3) any newly assigned certificated employee responsible for the pupil's special education programming, if applicable. Such written notification shall be in electronic form and shall describe the change and the effective date of the modification.

No Requirement for Re-Execution: Unless otherwise required by law or regulation, a material change to a pupil's independent study program during the term of an agreement shall not require the execution of a new independent study written agreement, nor an addendum to the agreement. The written notification described above shall serve to document the modification.

Maintenance of Records: The Charter School shall maintain documentation of any written notifications of modifications to the independent study written agreement in the pupil's educational record.