

**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**  
(Approved by the Board of Trustees October 13, 2021)

These policies apply to all pupils participating in independent study at Golden Valley Charter Schools (the “School”).

Each student’s independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees.

For students in all programs of independent study, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be as follows:

- For pupils in kindergarten and grades one through three, 15 days
- For pupils in grades four through eight, 15 days

***Missed Assignments and Level of Satisfactory Progress:*** When any student fails to complete 4 missed assignments during any period of 15 days or fails to make satisfactory progress (as defined below) the school will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study or to return to the regular school program. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record and 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.

Satisfactory educational progress shall be based on all of the following indicators, as applicable:

- 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),
  - The percentage of English learner pupils who make 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 English learner reclassification rate,
- Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:
  - School attendance rates,

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- Chronic absenteeism rates, and
- Middle school dropout rates.
- The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
- Learning requirement concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
- Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher,

**Academic Content:** Independent study shall include the provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

**Tiered Reengagement:** For all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three schooldays or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week or 10 percent of required instructional time for over four continuous weeks of the school's approved instructional calendar, who are not participatory in mandated live interaction or synchronous instruction for more than three school days or for more than 60 percent of the scheduled days of synchronous instruction in a school month, and/or who are in violation of their written agreement, the school shall have procedures including the following reengagement strategies:

- Verifying current contact information for the pupil,
- Notifying parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of absence or lack of participation,
- A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including a connection with health and social services, as necessary,
- A clear standard requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference, as defined below, to review the pupil's written agreement, reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being, consistent with the school's policies regarding the maximum amount of time allowed between the assignment and completion of pupil's assigned work, satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in independent study,

For the purposes of this policy, "pupil-parent-educator conference" means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's written independent study agreement.

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**Opportunities for Live Interaction and Synchronous Instruction:** The School shall plan to provide opportunities for live interaction and synchronous instruction as follows for all pupils engaged in independent study:

- For pupils in transitional kindergarten through grades 1 to 3 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year,
- For pupils in grades 4 to 8 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year,

For the purposes of this policy, “live interaction” means interaction between the pupil and certificated or non-certificated staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including but not limited to wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. This live interaction may take place in-person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

For the purposes of this policy, “synchronous instruction” means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communications, and involving live two-way communication between the teacher of record and the pupil.

**Return to In-Person Instruction:** For pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study, the School shall allow the student to return expeditiously, and in no case later than five instructional days.

**Written Agreements:** (5 C.C.R. § 11702) A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. Each agreement shall be signed, dated, and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. The independent study agreement for a student will require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in the classroom and be consistent with the School curriculum and course of study of students participating in the regular classroom setting.

**Agreement Content:** Each independent study written agreement shall contain at least all of the following provisions:

- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments, for reporting the pupil's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding academic progress.

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- The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods used 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 for all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the academic program and complete assigned work.
- A statement of the policies adopted 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 level of satisfactory educational progress and missed assignments shall conform to the requirements specified above in this policy.
- The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for participating in independent study, recognizing that 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 elementary grades pupils, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
- 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 as needed to be consistent with the student's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care, pupils experiencing homelessness, and pupils 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 pupil may be required to participate.

Written agreements shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent/guardian/caregiver if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil. Written agreements may be maintained electronically along with and may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Written agreements may be signed using electronic signatures that comply with applicable state and federal standards and are intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature.

Before signing a written agreement pursuant to this section, and upon the request of the parent or guardian of a pupil, the School shall conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-



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parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the pupil, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the pupil or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning.

For the 2021-22 school year only, written agreements may be completed and signed as provided above no later than 30 days after the first day a pupil commences independent study.