


Bridges Charter School 	Board Policy- Independent Study Policy		
Policy Number: 6158	Adopted: 12/09/2013	Revised: 11/08/2021 08/08/2022 05/09/2022 04/03/2023	Replaced: 10/23/17 08/16/21

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY


Bridges Charter School (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. The Charter School shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete their independent study successfully. As necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full- time basis or on a part-time basis in conjunction with part-time classroom study.

Bridges Charter School operates: (1) a traditional classroom-based program for which occasional, short-term independent study may be permitted; and (2) Bridges Homeschool, which offers a personalized learning program to families who wish to homeschool their children under the guidance of a credentialed supervising teacher.

Students enrolled in the classroom-based program may be permitted to participate in short-term independent study, upon request, at the sole discretion of the Director or designee. Short- term independent study may be permitted for students who will be absent for a period of a minimum of one (1) to a maximum of fourteen (14) cumulative school days in one school year. The Director’s or designee’s considerations for approving independent study may include, but are not limited to, the student’s current academic standing, the student’s grade level, the timing during the grading period, the purpose of the absence for which independent study is requested, previous participation in independent study, and input from teachers, MTSS team or IEP team as applicable. The Director or designee shall not deny a request for independent study on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, gender, mental or physical disability or on the basis of any other protected characteristic, either actual or perceived. In exceptional circumstances, the Director or designee may approve independent study for fifteen (15) or more cumulative school days per school year for students enrolled in the classroom-based program, based upon extraordinary circumstances, such as illness, injury, mandatory quarantine, or documented health restriction.

Students enrolled in Bridges Homeschool shall participate in long-term independent study for the duration of the school year, upon enrollment into Bridges Homeschool. Students participating in Bridges Homeschool have selected this program at enrollment and are not eligible to enter the classroom-based program during the school year.

¹ Supported by a note from a physician.


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The following written policies have been adopted by the Bridges Charter School Board of Directors for implementation at Charter School:

1. For pupils in all grade levels and programs offered by the Charter School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the times an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be twenty (20) school days.
2. Students engaging in independent study must be residents of Ventura County or an adjacent county and must be made available on site for state standardized testing during the months of April and May. If a family declines participation, students must be made available on site during April and May to complete an alternative assessment.
3. The 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 pupil fails to complete three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) School days.
 - b. In the event a student’s educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School’s Common Assessments such as NWEA, iReady, and CAASPP interim assessments 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.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy 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.

4. The Charter School shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.
5. Students engaging in independent study must be residents of Ventura County or an adjacent county and must be made available on site for standardized testing during the months of April and May.

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6. The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies for the following pupils:
 - a. All pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three (3) school days or 60% of the instructional days in a school week, or 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% 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).

7. These procedure 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;
 - 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 51747.²

8. 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 assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows:

Bridges credentialed teachers will provide “Synchronous instruction” using a blend of classroom instruction, designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, via the internet, and via telephonic communications that involves live two-

² The tiered reengagement strategies shall not apply to pupils who participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year. The tiered reengagement strategies shall not apply to independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.


Bridges Charter School 	Board Policy- <h3 style="text-align: center;">Independent Study Policy</h3>		
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way communication between the teacher and pupil. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record for that pupil pursuant to Section 51747.5.

- a. For pupils in grades 4-8, inclusive Bridges credentialed teachers and classified staff will provide opportunities for daily live instruction and will use a blend of synchronous instruction in the classroom, designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, via the internet, and via telephonic communications that involves live two-way communication between the teacher and pupil. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record for that pupil pursuant to Section 51747.5.³
9. 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:
- a. Students enrolled in the classroom-based program participating in independent study, whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study must submit a written request to the Charter School office. The student will be offered a spot in the classroom-based program within five (5) instructional days of the written request.
 - b. Students enrolled in Bridges Homeschool have selected this program at enrollment and are not eligible to enter the classroom-based program through the transition to in-person instruction during the school year. Families who wish to return to in-person instruction from Bridges Homeschool may submit an application to the classroom-based program, and shall be provided with other options for in-person instruction within their district of residence or the surrounding areas within five (5) instructional days of a written request to transition to in-person instruction from Bridges Homeschool.⁴


³ The plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year. The plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction shall not apply to independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

⁴ The plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to pupils who participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year. The plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

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10. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study pupil, including but not limited to, all of the following:

- a. 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 a pupil’s academic progress.
- b. The objectives and methods of study for the pupil’s work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 before an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
- e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the 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.
- 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 pupil upon completion.
- g. 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.
- h. 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 Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include

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the statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

i. For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 days, each written agreement shall be signed, before the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil’s parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, 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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil. For purposes of this paragraph “caregiver” means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of Division 11 of the Family Code, the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. Beginning in the 2022–23 school year, for a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for less than 15 school days, each written agreement shall be signed within 10 school days of the commencement of the first day of the pupil’s enrollment in independent study, by the pupil, the pupil’s parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, 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

- 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.

11. In the event that a school district or an individual school of the school district experiences a school closure or material decrease in attendance pursuant to Education Code (EC) Section 46393 (i.e. Wildfire, public safety power shutoff, unforeseen inclement weather, impassible roads, earthquake, epidemic, imminence of a major safety hazard, etc.) the District Superintendent (or Director) will certify the following requirements were met in regard to independent study:

- a. Pursuant to Education Code (EC) Section 46393, for Form J-13A submissions due to a school closure and/or material decrease in attendance occurring after September 1, 2021, a school district, county office of education, or charter school that provides a Form J-13A affidavit to the Superintendent, or Director pursuant to EC Section 41422

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(school closure) or EC Section 46392 (material decrease), shall certify that it has a plan for independent study will be offered to students, pursuant to Article 5.5 (commencing with EC Section 51745) of Chapter 5 of Part 28 of Division 4. The independent study plan shall comply with all the following:

- i. Independent study is offered to any student impacted by any of the conditions listed in EC Section 46392 within 10 days of the first day of a school closure or material decrease in attendance. Students who are individuals with exceptional needs shall receive the services identified in their individualized education programs pursuant to paragraph (9) of subdivision (a) of EC Section 56345 and may participate in an independent study program.
 - ii. Require reopening for in-person instruction as soon as possible unless prohibited under the direction of the local or state health officer.
 - iii. Notwithstanding subdivision (c) of EC Section 51745 or subparagraph (F) of paragraph (9) of subdivision (g) of Section 51747, include information regarding establishing independent study master agreements in a reasonable amount of time.
11. The Charter School shall comply with 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.
 12. The Director may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.