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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

Pathways Academy Adult Education (“PAAE” or the “Charter School”) provides a non-classroom-based instructional program that utilizes an independent study model. Independent study is an optional alternative education program in which no student may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. The Charter School shall provide appropriate services and resources to enable students to complete their education through independent study successfully.

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

1. 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 University of California or California State University as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria.
2. For all students at the Charter School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is five (5) school days; except, when special or extenuating circumstances justify a longer time, a period not to exceed twenty (20) school days / four (4) weeks may be approved by the Executive Director or designee pursuant to a written request, with justification, for individual students.

Regular attendance is critical to the success of all students. Attendance at the Charter School is calculated based on the work completed by the student and submitted by the due dates established in the Independent Study Master Agreement and on time in accordance with this policy. The assigned teacher assesses the student’s work to determine whether the work completed constitutes a full day of attendance. When determining the time value of a student’s work, the teacher will consider each student individually and may adjust the assignments accordingly.

3. When a student fails to complete a minimum of five (5) assignments per week or fails to make satisfactory educational progress (defined below), the Executive Director and/or designee and supervising teacher will conduct an evaluation (“Evaluation”) to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain enrolled in independent study, or whether the student should return to a regular in-person school program.

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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

- Satisfactory educational progress is determined by the Executive Director or designee and is based on all of the following indicators:
  - 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).
  - The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
  - Learning required 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.
  
- The Evaluation may include, but is not limited to, the review of any of the following:
  1. Attendance based on completion of assignments, daily LMS engagement, and synchronous instruction participation as quantified by the assigned supervising teacher;
  2. Demonstration of skills on assignments;
  3. Standardized test scores;
  4. Written tests and reports if appropriate;
  5. Oral or written presentations;
  6. Student's attitude toward learning and achievement;
  7. Punctual attendance at scheduled appointments;
  8. Ability to meet during scheduled appointments;
  9. Preparedness for scheduled appointments;
  10. Student demonstration of adequate and appropriate progress toward State Standards;
  11. Appropriate learning environment;
  12. Parent(s) ability to support student learning in the home.
  
- 4. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to Paragraph 3 of 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 student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.
  
- 5. The Charter School has adopted procedures for tiered reengagement strategies as outlined in its PAAE's Attendance, Missed Assignments, Satisfactory Educational Progress, and Involuntary Removal Policy for the following students:
  - a. Students who are not generating attendance for more than ten (10) percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
  
  - b. Students found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to

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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than fifty (50) percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span; or

- c. Students who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

These procedures shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

- a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student;
- b. Notification to parents/guardians or adult students of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation;
- c. Reaching out to the student directly and/or parents/guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine the student's needs for reengagement;
- d. If the student has failed to complete the minimum number of independent study assignments per week as defined above, or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined above, PAAE will schedule a conference involving, at minimum, all parties who signed the student's written independent study agreement to review the student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted herein.
- e. Implementation of any PAAE programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable and/or if any.

Continued school attendance and participation issues will result in the evaluation discussed in Section 3. If, following the Evaluation, it is determined that it is not in the best interest of the student to remain enrolled in independent study, the student may be involuntarily removed from the program. Student removal from the school will be in accordance with applicable law, including Education Code section 47605(c)(5)(J)(iii). If a student is removed from the Charter School, a notice will be sent to the district of residence within 30 days and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including report cards or a transcript of grades, and health information.

6. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e):
  - a. For students in grades 9-12, inclusive, the supervising teacher will provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous activity in the online classroom with group or one-to-one instruction throughout the school year.
  - b. Charter School shall document each student's participation in synchronous instruction on each school day, in whole or in part, for which synchronous instruction is provided as part of the independent study program. A student who does not participate in scheduled synchronous instruction shall be documented as non-participatory for that

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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

school day for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered reengagement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.

7. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study student. Written agreements may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignments and work records. Each written agreement will contain all of the following:
  - a. 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/guardian or with an adult student regarding the student's academic progress.
  - b. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
  - c. 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.
  - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein, pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(a)-(b), 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 prior to an evaluation of whether or not the student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
  - e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement.
    1. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than two semesters, or one year for a school on a year-round calendar.
  - f. A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the student upon completion.
  - g. 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 Education Code 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.
  - h. 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

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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

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.

- i. Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student’s parent/guardian/caregiver if the student 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 student, 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 Division 11 of the Family Code.
    1. 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.
  - j. Before signing a written agreement pursuant to this section, the parent/guardian or adult student may request that the Charter School conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the student, parent/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.
8. When any student or family notifies the Charter School in writing of their wish to return to in-person instruction, the Charter School will support the transition of the student from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days by providing the student and/or family with a list of schools in the school district of residence and the surrounding area with options for in-person instruction.
  9. For each student in independent study, the Charter School will assign a certificated employee

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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student's independent study instruction.

10. The Charter School may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher employed by Charter School, or the combined time value of student work product and student participation in synchronous instruction.
  - a. For purposes of this section, "student work products" may include the daily time value spent by a student engaged in asynchronous instruction, including work completed on an online or computer-based instructional activity, regardless of whether student work products are produced, if the computer program documents student participation. Charter School shall maintain documentation of each hour or fraction of an hour of both student work products (e.g., by assigning a time value to student work products) and the time the student engaged in asynchronous instruction (e.g., tracking of time spent in asynchronous instruction).
  - b. For purposes of this section, "student participation in synchronous instruction" may include, but is not limited to, student work produced or performed, or documentation that the student participated in an instructional period either visually or verbally, as verified by a certificated employee and maintained by Charter School for each hour or fraction thereof of the synchronous instructional offering.

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable laws regarding independent study, as may be updated from time to time, including, but not limited to, Education Code Section 51744 et seq., 5 C.C.R. Section 11700 et seq., the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, and the State Board of Education regulations adopted thereunder.

The Executive Director or designee is authorized to take any necessary actions to implement these policies in accordance with the law.