

Sebastopol Independent Charter School

Independent Study Policy

(Approved by SICS Board on January 12, 2015)

While Sebastopol Independent Charter School (SICS) is primarily dedicated to offering a classroom based program, circumstances may arise for the option of short-term independent study. Because of these special circumstances, the Board of SICS authorizes Independent Study as an instructional strategy for students enrolled in Kindergarten through Eighth Grades. Independent Study provides a means for students in certain circumstances to pursue curriculum objectives outside the regular classroom.

The length of an independent study program shall be a minimum of 1 day and not more than 45 school days. Approval must be obtained from the student's regular classroom teacher and administrator in writing at least five (5) days before the commencement of the absence. Independent study is conducted solely for the educational benefit for the students attending SICS as a means to encourage daily engagement in school work even during times of extended absence

The SICS Board has adopted the following policies in accordance with California Education Code Section 51747:

- a) The independent study program shall allow a maximum of five (5) school days for grades K-8 from the time an assignment is made until the assignment must be completed and returned to the teacher for evaluation.
- b) The School shall not provide independent study students or their parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students and their parents/guardians.
- c) A written independent study master agreement for each student shall be maintained on file. Each agreement shall be signed and dated and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. The agreement shall include the following:
 1. A statement regarding the maximum length of time allotted between the assignment and the completion of a student's assigned work (5 days).
 2. The expected 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 45 school days.
 3. An evaluation by a committee made up of the student's teacher and the Administrator as to whether it is in the student's best interest to participate in the independent study program at SICS during an extended absence whenever the student is missing three (3) or more independent study assignments. A written record of the findings of this evaluation shall be placed in the student's permanent record and shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation. If the student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.
 4. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate.

5. Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or 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 all other persons who have direct responsibility for providing instructional assistance to the student.

d) Attendance Accounting:

SICS recognizes that families may not evenly distribute student's work assignments over weekdays. However, due to strict State law requirements for charter school attendance, SICS expects each student to be engaged in an educational activity required of them in the assignment on each weekday that SICS is in session, and asks that this "daily engagement" be done on a daily basis. This should not be read to prohibit schoolwork on weekends and should not be read to dictate the manner in which a family distributes the assignments over the independent study period.

Administration of Independent Study

1. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee.
2. The responsibilities of the independent study administrator shall be to:
 - a. Ensure that the School's independent study option is operated in accordance with law and SICS Board Policy.
 - b. Facilitate the completion of independent study written agreements.
 - c. Complete or coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
 - d. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by law and SICS Board policy.
 - e. Monitor enrollment in independent study to stay within prescribed limits and to ensure the educational quality of independent study.
 - f. Assure a smooth transition into and out of the independent study mode of instruction.

Independent Study Records

1. School records shall identify all students participating in independent study, and records shall be maintained at the School.
2. Records shall be maintained for audit purposes and shall include the following:
 - a. A copy of the SICS Board policy and procedures related to independent study.
 - b. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products bearing signed or initialed and dated notations by the supervising teacher indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work.