

Independent Study Policy

- A. This policy shall apply to all pupils enrolled in Connecting Waters Charter School (CWCS); an independent study charter school serving pupils in grades K-12.
- B. Students who attend CWCS will be educated through individually designed curricula, which may include, but are not limited to; non-classroom based learning programs, cooperative school programs and classes, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, community-based educational programs, group seminars, distance learning via current technology, and supplemental learning projects.
- C. The Charter School shall comply with all state and federal Charter School laws regarding independent study instruction.
- D. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees of the Charter School.
- E. The maximum length of time that may elapse between the times an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be no more than twenty (20) school days, or as modified by an assigned credentialed teacher at the time the work is assigned to the pupil.
- F. Students who fail to demonstrate adequate and appropriate monthly progress toward the student standards, as determined by the professional judgment of the credentialed teacher assigned to that student will be subject to **dismissal or expulsion in accordance with the terms of this Charter.**
(The above section in "red" is Pending Parent Council Board Approval)

After one (1) missed assignment a review shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any review made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record. The review may consist of some or all of the following:

- Monthly review of work
- Annual portfolios
- Parent, student, and Education Specialist observation
- Norm and criterion referenced tests
- Student demonstrations
- Student grades
- Student work samples
- Student self-evaluation

The role of the credentialed teacher is critical to the success of charter school independent study students. The teacher's observations, discussions with parents/guardians and students, and examinations of written work are the key to quality control.

- G. A current written student agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. Each written student agreement shall be signed and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. Students must meet all elements of the written student agreement in order for continued enrollment in this charter school. The independent study agreement for the student must require a plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in a classroom, and must require that the student has the ability to complete the study plan assignments in an independent study setting. Written agreements will include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignments, work records, and testing requirements. Each agreement shall also include the following:
 - The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her progress.
 - The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
 - The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil.

- 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, 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 duration of the written student agreement, recognizing that no written student agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester.
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.
- The inclusion of a statement in each written student agreement that attendance at this charter school is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate.
- Each written student agreement shall be signed, prior to 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.

If a parent or student knowingly provides any false information on the student application, the student shall be immediately dismissed from the Charter School.

- H. The Charter School shall not provide any funds or other things of value to the pupil or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated pupil of the school district, or to his or her parents or guardian.
- I. The Charter School may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to pupils who are residents of Stanislaus County or who are residents of a county contiguous to Stanislaus County.
- J. The Charter School must comply with Education Code Section 51745.6 and California Code of Regulations Section 11704 regarding teacher to ADA limits.

Each enrolled student will be assigned to a credentialed teacher. Student participates with the credentialed teacher and parents or guardian in the design of an individualized learning plan that incorporates all aspects of his or her educational program and that serves as the student's learning contract with CWCS.

- K. On a regular basis, consistent with the written student agreement, the assigned credentialed teacher and the parent or guardian shall evaluate the education program of the student and modify as necessary to maximize student success. The assigned credentialed teacher will have the final authority with regard to the education program of the student, and outcomes with the exception of students who qualify for special education services whose services and outcomes will be determined by an Individual Education Plan ("IEP") team pursuant to the law. Each student is expected to access and meet the same grade level standards and curriculum that their grade level, general education counterparts are afforded through access to special services, supports, accommodations, and modifications provided to them and outlined on their Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- L. Each student who qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA") shall be provided free and appropriate public education services as specified by law following a careful review of their current IEP. As a public school, CWCS does not discriminate against identified special education students, or students guaranteed protections under a 504 Accommodation Plan regardless of their disability. Following enrollment in Connecting Waters Charter School each identified special education student shall attend all scheduled tutorials, unless unable to do so due to illness or family emergency, to assist the student in meeting the student's identified goals and objectives specified in his or her Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and to insure that the student's charter school placement promotes his or her educational benefit. Two unexcused absences or missing more than 50% of a student's special education services in a month will result in the student being designated truant. Parents/guardians will be invited to an IEP meeting to review their student's educational progress, and to insure that this charter school remains the least restrictive environment in which to promote educational benefit. If the student is twice designated to be truant in the current academic year he/she will immediately be dismissed from the charter school.

M. Acceptance into Connecting Waters Charter School:

A student may be accepted into the charter school upon the following terms and conditions:

- The student demonstrates the ability to work within the home based, independent study model.
- The student and parent/guardian understand and agree to follow and meet independent study guidelines requirements.
- The student and parent/guardian agree to enter into and meet the requirements of a student agreement.
- The student demonstrates an age appropriate ability and willingness to work independently under the supervision of adults.

Parents who enroll their children in CWCS shall, through specific enrollment and curriculum contracts, accept responsibility for their children's education. CWCS will support its students and parents both with appropriate educational materials, and with a team of Highly Qualified (as required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) California teacher credentialed Education Specialists, ES Advisors, and school administrators. CWCS Education Specialists and ES Advisors shall advise and assist parents and students in all aspects of student education pursuant to relevant contracts.

Any parent or legally responsible entity may legally designate an alternate party to act in place of the parents. CWCS adult students do not require parental participation in educational or admission contracts, or performance evaluations.

N. Independent Study Roles

The credentialed teacher will:

- Ensure that independent study occurs in accordance with state law and charter policy and regulations.
- Facilitate the completion of written student agreements.
- Supervise and assess approved coursework.
- Assign all grades and credits earned and report the information for inclusion in student's permanent record.
- Establish, complete, and maintain necessary reports and records, including, but not limited to, learning records and attendance record.
- Personally judge the time value of student assignments or work products before ADA is earned.
- Assess the student's level of education, modifying the curriculum as necessary to meet charter guidelines.
- Administer school and state mandated tests as required.
- Select and save representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments.

The parents/guardians will:

- Understand that attendance at this school is entirely voluntary on the part of the students who enroll.
- Participate with the credentialed teacher in the development of the student's educational plan.
- Meet face to face with their Education Specialists at least once every 20 school days to review and document attendance and the learning that occurs in that learning period.
- Transport their student to each school or state mandated assessment location
- Understand that all items supplied and/or obtained through a school purchase are the property of the school. Under the direction of the credentialed teacher, **the parent/guardian shall** assume responsibility for all items supplied and/or obtained through the school including, but not limited to books, materials, supplies, and equipment and will reimburse the school for lost, stolen, or damaged items. **The parent/guardian shall** return all school provided/owed items to the school upon school request. Parents not returning requested items will be required to pay for those items.

The student will:

- Be responsible to fulfilling the written student agreement components.