



**INLAND LEADERS
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**Independent Study
Program**

HANDBOOK

Independent Study Handbook

Motto: “Beyond the limits at home”

Mission Statement: Inland Leaders Independent Study is committed to providing a challenging, sound education for a 21st century learner, within the flexibility of the home environment. The ILCS Independent Study program is dedicated to:

- Providing a structured learning environment
- Maintaining the same high expectation as in the site based program
- Incorporating rigorous activities and lessons in character training
- Creating partnerships with family, site based program, and the community

Welcome Inland Leaders Independent Study welcomes your family to our school. ILCS is a school based on the belief that families are their child’s first and most important teacher, and we look forward to working, learning, and teaching with you. We deeply value the commitment you have made to partner with our unique program and be a part of the ILCS family!

Handbook Use and Purpose This handbook is created to bring understanding and clarity to our unique program at ILCS. You will find our school’s policies and procedures including enrollment, curriculum, classroom involvement, and site based programs. We hope this will serve as a useful reference to you.

What is Independent Study? Independent Study at ILCS is an option for families that want the rigor and innovation in education that Inland Leaders offers, but the flexibility of being at home. You can be sure that by participating in our program, your student will meet all the requirements set by the state in curriculum standards, lesson plans, attendance, and testing while being overseen by a California credentialed teacher.

Definition of Independent Study by the State’s Department of Education “Independent study (California Education Code [EC] sections 51745–51749.3) is provided as an alternative instructional strategy, not an alternative curriculum. Independent study students work independently, according to a written agreement and under the general supervision of a credentialed teacher or teachers. While independent study students follow the district-adopted curriculum and meet the district graduation requirements, independent study offers flexibility to meet individual student needs, interests, and styles of learning.”

Will my child be as successful as the classroom students? The answer to this question is entirely up to the effort that you put in as your student’s everyday teacher. They are looking to you for guidance. No student, in the K-8 grade levels, is 100% self-sufficient. Teachers work very hard in the classroom to make sure their students understand the material and master it. That is what it takes in Independent Study as well. You have a great opportunity to explore how your child learns best and cater to those needs. Your IST (Independent Study Teacher) will be there to guide and advise you as well. You are not doing this alone. It is very “do-able”, but will take effort and discipline.

Enrollment State law requires that charter schools be open to students in the sponsoring district and adjacent districts. Inland Leaders requires no assessment as a prerequisite to enter into our program. We do not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, or disability. We are a free program that is state funded, and enrollment is based on completing the admission process through the site based school. Parents must complete an enrollment packet providing birth certificate, proof of immunization, and current utility bill for proof of residency.

Once enrollment is processed, each independent study student will be assigned to an Independent Study Teacher (IST). The IST will assist the family in completing a yearly contract, acknowledgement of responsibilities form, and reviewing policies and procedures for meetings (every 3 weeks). **Please note:** A student CANNOT be dual enrolled in two schools. Your child cannot simultaneously be enrolled in independent study through ILCS and attend/enrolled in another school. This is against California Education Codes.

Forms and Learning Logs There are a few forms throughout the year documenting student learning and academic progress that are required to maintain enrollment. Your teacher will instruct parents on filling out forms when necessary.

Missing Assignment Reports ILCS is a charter school, which means it is a school of choice. As a parent, you choose to enroll in our independent study program. As a program, we have an open enrollment policy. However, if your child receives three Missing Assignment Reports (MAR), he/she can be asked to attend a School Contract Accountability Team (SCAT) meeting to determine if ILCS Independent Study is proper academic placement for your child.

A Missing Assignment Report (MAR) can be given if:

- The student does not complete a minimum of 80% of all assignments given in the learning session.
- Repeated missed meetings and rescheduling.
- No call, no show to meetings.
- Not completing an entire subject in a three week period.

One MAR will result in a warning. Two MARs will result in a meeting with the teacher and director. Three MAR's will result in SCAT meeting and possible removal from the school.

Electives What makes Inland Leaders unique is our elective program. We provide a wide range of after school electives that are open to all ILCS students, both site based and independent study. These classes include tutoring, cooking, music, journalism, art, various sports, and many more. Classes offered vary from trimester to trimester and the cost varies from class to class. Some classes are offered for free, and the cost for other electives could be subsidized if your child qualifies for assistance. Independent Study students are not limited to the amount of electives they would like to take per trimester.

An email will be sent to every family in order to sign up for electives each trimester. After the sign up window closes, a list will be posted at both CSC and BSC with the names of the students enrolled in each class. If there is a high demand in an elective and there are not enough seats available, the students will be entered into a lottery system where names are drawn per elective.

TRADITIONAL HOME SCHOOL INDEPENDENT STUDY

Traditional Home School Independent Study is available for students Kindergarten through 8th grade. It allows the flexibility of schooling at home during hours that work best for the family, but with help and guidance from their assigned credentialed teacher. Lesson plans and curriculum are provided to ensure that the student is successful while schooling at home. Assignments vary from textbook work, worksheets, projects, and online assignments. Parents will lead the daily instruction for their child and the assigned independent study teacher is available for questions and clarification at any time during school hours. The Independent Study Teacher will work together with the family to assign benchmark assessments, progress monitoring, and report cards.

Meetings Every family will meet their assigned IST every **THREE** weeks. Parents and IST will agree upon a day and time that will be set for the rest of the school year. The IST is there to support the parents and give advice and ideas of how to personalize learning for each student.

What does a typical appointment look like?

- Students are required to bring all finished work to every meeting for the IST to look through and discuss.
- Discussion will take place on what is working or not working, and how things can be adapted to work better.
- New lesson plans are given. Occasionally there will be assessments during meetings to keep the IST informed on student progress.

Curriculum

Independent Study uses curriculum and materials based on California's Common Core Standards. Our curriculum is handpicked by credentialed teachers to ensure that it fulfills the state standards, but is also conducive to the independent study model.

*Math: Pearson Envision 2.0 (grades K-6), Edgenuity Online (grades 7-8) *Social Studies: Houghton Mifflin (grades 1-6), Edgenuity Online (grades 7-8) *Science: Harcourt CA Science (grades 1-6), Edgenuity Online (grades 7-8) *Language Arts: Sing, Spell, Read and Write Level 1 (Kinder only) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys Common Core (grades 1-6) Edgenuity Online (grades 7-8)

***In addition to curriculum**, the lesson plans will include projects and supplemental activities that are outside of standard textbooks. For example, community service, science, or history projects. **Parents will be given Teacher's Editions in order to teach the lessons and correct work. All work should be corrected on a weekly basis. This will allow the parent and the student to evaluate student progress and determine if there are any academic holes developing.

Community Service

Community service is part of the expectation for every student that attends ILCS. Each student will need to complete the minimum amount of hours below for their grade level. Students will present their community service project to their teacher at the end of the school year. Check with your teacher regarding the projects and have fun serving!

Community service hours:

Kindergarten – 2nd grades = 6 – 8 hours

3rd – 4th grades = 8 hours

5th-6th grades = 10 hours

7th-8th grades = 15 hours

Required Attendance

- All parents and students are required to attend the learning period meetings.
 - All 3rd through 8th grade students are required to attend CAASPP testing on campus.
 - All 5th and 7th grades are required to attend PE testing on campus.
 - All 5th and 8th grades are required to attend CAST Science testing on campus.
- **Various grades are required to attend a nurse visit at the school office, to conduct hearing, vision, and scoliosis testing once a year.

Classroom Attendance for Traditional Home School Independent Study: Being an independent study program that is a part of a seat based school, takes our program to the next level. Independent study students are given the opportunity to take part in a classroom environment on a weekly basis. This is an optional privilege and is given on a first come, first serve basis. Consistent attendance is required to allow for classroom continuity. Students can lose these privileges if they are a disruption to the class or show inconsistent attendance.

Two independent study students are assigned per classroom. If there are more independent students then classroom availability, the students will be chosen upon their enrollment date. Priority will be given to those that enrolled first.

*Please note: Amidst the COVID 19 pandemic, this opportunity can be paused and disallowed during situations beyond our control to maintain a safe environment for all students. Our hope is to always resume the offering of independent study students in the classroom as safety concerns are lifted.

Classroom Time Allowance Kindergarten and 3rd grade: Inland Leaders offers a great opportunity (as space available) for all Kinder thru 3rd grade Independent Study students called Cub Squad. This is a class offered once a week for two and a half hours that includes academic instruction, as well as recess, craft and story time.

Since it can be challenging for young students to adjust and adapt to site based class' routines and centers that take place daily, students will be offered non-core academic opportunities to attend the school for socialization purposes. For example, students will have an opportunity to attend Spanish class and recess and PE times. Parents will work with the assigned classroom teacher to design appropriate blocks of time for students to attend during the week.

Classroom parties are culminating activities that take days and sometimes weeks to build up to, consequently, independent study students will not be allowed to participate in classroom parties. Instead, the independent study program will provide opportunities for students to participate in seasonal celebrations during Cub Squad (i.e. fall, winter, and spring time activities).

4th-8th grades: Students are welcome to attend up to 5 hours a week(as space available) in his or her assigned classroom **outside of the protected math or English blocks of time** (i.e. science, social studies, or leadership times). The classroom teacher will work with each student and their parent(s) to schedule the most appropriate blocks of time for students to attend. This can be split up through the

week in various ways.

Field Trips Field trips are a great way to make learning come alive. Field trip opportunities will be available with classroom students(as space available) for 4th through 8th grade students. Classroom field trips are set up through the classroom the student is assigned. However, if the field trip bus has reached maximum capacity, the independent study parent is responsible for transportation to the field trip. We ask that parents attend field trips with students when necessary. However, if the class reserved limited seating such as Theater type activities, the parents may not be able to participate if the occupancy has reached maximum capacity with students.

***Kinder through 3rd grade students will have field trip opportunities through our Independent Study Cub Squad program. Parents must transport their child to the field trip destination and attend the field trip with their child. This policy is to ensure that all independent study children are safe and accounted for at all times.

Immunizations According to SB 277, students attending the classroom are required to have their immunizations current. For those families choosing independent study, you are welcome to participate in our program if you do not have current immunizations. However, all classroom opportunities ie. classroom participation, field trips, after school electives will not be an option for attendance.

Priority in Lottery Students that complete an entire year of independent study with ILCS will have sibling status according to the district you reside for the following year. Parents must sign their child up in the lottery in January/February in order to use this priority. Siblings of the independent student will not be granted a "sibling(s)" preference until they are formally enrolled in the seat-based program.

Supplies: Most independent study parents want to know what supplies they should have at home to successfully teach their child. With experience, your supply lists will grow. Some ideas that will help you get started are traditional supplies like construction paper, pencils, glue, stapler, lined paper, ruler, index cards, notebooks, crayons, markers, timer etc.

Try to find an area that is quiet and consistent. This will allow your child to focus and develop a routine. If you have an area where you can hang visual aids, this is always great. Consistency is key in creating a learning environment both in the classroom and at home. Develop a daily routine by creating areas to turn completed work in and an area where the student knows to find his or her daily lesson. A timer is always helpful to help your child stay on task and complete lessons in a timely fashion, however this is not required. Your IST is there to help with management ideas to keep your child focused, engaged, and organized.

Contact Inland Leaders provides many opportunities for your independent study student, and oftentimes, different questions/concerns arise. Here is a list of who to contact in any given situation:

- Contact your assigned teacher for all curriculum questions/concerns, student progress, meetings, testing, etc.

- Contact your classroom teacher via email for any classroom questions/concerns, (ie. Classroom field trips, classroom times, extended days, etc.)
- Contact the main office at CSC or BSC for questions about electives, times for school activities, enrollment, etc.

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INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICIES

These policies apply to all pupils participating in independent study at the Inland Leaders Charter School (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, **20 days**
- For pupils in grades four through eight, **20 days**

When special or extenuating circumstances justify a longer time for individual students, the director or their designee may approve a period not to exceed **30 days**.

Missed Assignments and Level of Satisfactory Progress: When any student fails to complete **3** missed assignments during any period of **20 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 pupils that have successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for entrance to the University of California and California State University,
 - The percentage of pupils who have successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for career technical education sequences or programs that align with state board-approved career technical education standards and frameworks,

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- The percentage of pupils who have successfully completed both the university entrance and career technical courses specified above,
 - The percentage of English learner pupils who make progress towards 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,
 - The percentage of pupils who have passed an advanced placement exam with a score of “3” or higher, and
 - The percentage of pupils who demonstrate college preparedness pursuant to the Early Assessment Program (or any subsequent assessment of college preparedness).
- Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:
- School attendance rates,
 - Chronic absenteeism rates,
 - Middle school dropout rates,
 - High school dropout rates, and
 - High school graduation 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 substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

Independent study shall include access to all courses offered by the School for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A-G admission criteria.

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Tiered Reengagement: For all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of the required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the School's approved instructional calendar, found not participatory in required -synchronous instructional offerings for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable to the student's grade span, or who are in violation of their written agreement, the School shall have local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, including at least 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 nonattendance day 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.

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 pupils in grades 9-12 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for 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

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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 a 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. This only applies to students who were enrolled for the in-person program and transitioned into the independent study program.

Exceptions for Pupils Under Professional Care: Pupils enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom-based instruction who, under the care of appropriately licensed professionals, participate in independent study due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse, are not subject to the tiered reengagement, live interaction, synchronous instruction, nor return to in-person instruction provisions described above. The School shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for pupils to participate in independent study pursuant to this subdivision.

Written Agreements: A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student.

For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 school 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable.

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 designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable.

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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.
- 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.

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Amended:

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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.

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

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Adopted: 8-8-22

Amended: