



Pupil Services and Attendance

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Guide to In School Independent Study Program For Elementary and Secondary Schools



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Introduction to In School Independent Study Program

We encounter many instances where a student or their parents tell us that they will be out of school for a while because of family emergencies, trips that cannot be cancelled, and other personal reasons. These absences greatly affect our attendance rate and disrupt the student's academic progress. The Independent Study Program was developed to allow students who are motivated and parents who are responsible and willing, to explore and research new possibilities that are outside of the regular classroom setting.

The In School Independent Study Program provides an alternative to classroom instruction for students when in seat attendance is not possible. There is a master agreement for Independent Study that must be signed and agreed to by the parent/guardian, student, and school staff prior to commencing the program. This ensures that everyone's cooperation, roles, and responsibilities are clearly defined.

This manual is designed to make accessing Independent Study simple and not as intimidating as some people may think. This procedure is based on Bulletin No. M-128 published May 31, 2001 and the School Administrative Assistant/Office Manager Reference Handbook, Section 10 published in 2003-2004.

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Quiz

1. Student is going away to Canada for 3 weeks and the teacher demands that she be enrolled in independent study. Can the teacher do this?
Yes No
2. A child with an IEP will be out of town during the month of December. Her mother is requesting independent study. Can she get it? **Yes No**
3. A student in 5th grade was recommended for straight expulsion (expulsion without suspended enforcement) and the parents do not like the county school recommended by the expulsion review team. Parents are requesting independent study for the remaining school year while he serves the term of his expulsion. Can the child get independent study? **Yes No**
4. A parent demands that the school must provide independent study for their child. The school does not have this option currently available. Is the school obligated to provide independent study? **Yes No**
5. A student wants to use a paper he wrote a month prior to the start of his independent study for credit. Can the teacher give him credit?
Yes No
6. A student turned in assignments representing more attendance days than what is required for the current independent study contract and wants to "bank" this for future credit. Can she do this? **Yes No**
7. A 5th grader is asking a diploma be issued since she completed her required credits. The school did not feel comfortable issuing a diploma that bears the name of the school but instead wants to issue to her a diploma bearing only the LAUSD name and Logo. Is this correct? **Yes No**
8. A parent is requesting independent study since they will be out of town 3 weeks and was already warned by the PSA counselor and SARB chair that they cannot take vacations in the middle of the school year. The child has a long history of poor attendance and the teacher comments that homework is never turned in. Is the school obligated to provide independent study? **Yes No**
9. The maximum number of students allowed to participate in an independent study program is limited to 10 percent of the students enrolled in the school. **Yes No**
10. Most subjects offered in the Secondary Schools, especially English and Math, can be offered to students doing IS? **Yes No**
11. Students in IS in the Secondary school use a different kind of textbook than students in a regular classroom. **Yes No**

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12. You do NOT need a gate keeper who will screen referrals to IS.

Yes No

13. ISIS attendance is taken in the secondary level for students who are in Independent Studies. **Yes No**

14. It is important to issue a sort of badge or ID for kids in IS so they can come to school on their designated time without the risk of being ticketed by LAPD or School Police. **Yes No**

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

1. **No** – Independent study is a voluntary instructional strategy. No student shall be required to participate in an independent study program.
2. **No** – A child with exceptional needs may not be enrolled in independent study unless his/her IEP specifically provides for such enrollment.
3. **No** – Students who are under straight expulsion from the District may not be enrolled in independent study . Only students whose expulsions are in suspended enforcement and given at least one viable classroom option may participate in independent studies. The classroom option must always be available
4. **No** – Enrollment in In School Independent Study is contingent upon the program availability at the school.
5. **No** – Enrollment in independent study does not take place until a valid Master Agreement is on file. Therefore, credits cannot be given to any work dated prior to the master agreement.
6. **No** – A student who turns in completed assignments representing more attendance days in a reporting period than the number of school days in that same reporting period does not earn any surplus or bankable attendance credits in the future or applicable against past absences.
7. **No** – The diploma must be issued by and must bear the name of the school in which the independent study student is enrolled. Schools providing In School Independent Study will issue diplomas bearing the school name. Diplomas bearing only the name of the District may not be issued to students graduating through independent study.
8. **No** – Prior to signing the master agreement, a certificated employee representing the district will implement appropriate screening procedures to ensure that the necessary level of understanding and preparation exist to meet the conditions of the Master Agreement for Independent Study. If the school feels that the parent and student will not meet the criteria of the

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master agreement, the school does not have to provide independent study.

9. **Yes** – The maximum number of students eligible for independent study is limited to 10 percent of the pupils enrolled in the school, center, or program.
10. **Yes** – Most subjects especially English and Math must be offered to secondary students taking IS.
11. **No** – Students enrolled in IS should be using the same textbooks as any regular students on campus. It is highly advisable that the curriculum be same for IS students.
12. **No** – It is **MUST** to have a gatekeeper who will screen the appropriate students who will participate in IS. Gatekeeper can be the APSSS, a certain school counselor assigned to IS classes, or the PSA counselor. Only the gate keeper can make the final referral to IS.
13. **Yes** – ISIS attendance is taken just like any other regular classes.
14. **Yes** – Students in IS must have some form of identification that tells they are in IS so if they are stopped by LAPD or school police while enroute to school on their assigned day to come to school, they will not be ticketed. However, it is important that all IS students understand that they can only leave the house and go to the school on their designated day. If they are caught on campus on their unassigned day, it can be considered trespassing. If they are stopped by LAPD or school police on their unassigned day, they can be ticketed. (see sample ID)

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Independent Study Procedures

It is assumed that for ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

1. The Master Agreement is signed before the student is enrolled in Independent Study
2. The Master Agreement can be in effect from one day to one semester, terminating on the last day of the current semester. If the student asked for 3 weeks of independent study and it would start at the end of the Fall semester and last until the 2nd week of the Spring Semester, then the student would need 2 Master Agreements to cover both semesters. For year round schools the limit is 6 months of Independent Study. It is strongly suggested that the student participate for 5 consecutive days in independent studies at a minimum.
3. Assignment and work record forms and/or Regular Work Assignment forms are used to support attendance claims.
4. Work is submitted by the student for evaluation by the certificated employee on the due date
5. The maximum possible number of actual attendance days the student is eligible to receive is equal to the number of instructional days that the students were enrolled in short term independent study, as indicated on the contract.
6. The school site maintains at least three registers for students enrolled in Independent Study based on the following grade level breakdown:
 - Kindergarten
 - Grades 1-3
 - Grades 4-6
 - Special Ed. ClassesIf the school is on a year round schedule, there should be at least 3 different registers per track. Example: 3 Kindergarten registers should be maintained if the school has 3 tracks.
7. The attendance for students enrolled in independent study is not reported on a separate line of the statistical report. It is combined with the appropriate grade level (K, 1-3, 4-6, Special Education Classes), and reported on the appropriate line of the Statistical Report.

Register marking practice to be used by elementary schools

Roll Book marking practice

E1 – date entered

L1 – date left

I - mark used on the Daily Attendance Record when the student is enrolled in independent studies and received the credit from work submitted to a certificated employee

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It is assumed that for Secondary:

1. The Master Agreement is signed before the student is enrolled in Independent Study.
2. The Master Agreement can be in effect from one day to one semester, terminating on the last day of the current semester. If the student asked for 3 weeks of independent study and it would start at the end of the Fall semester and last until the 2nd week of the Spring Semester, then the student would need 2 Master Agreements to cover both semesters. For year round schools the limit is 6 months of Independent Study. It is strongly suggested that the student participate for 5 consecutive days in independent studies at a minimum.
3. There is a separate classroom assigned as the IS classroom with a dedicated teacher doing IS work.
4. The IS class is part of the master program (this is usually done at the beginning of the school year)
5. Students will be using the same textbook and enrolled in the same curriculum as their non IS peers.
6. The gate keeper properly screens who can be in IS. Below are examples of proper referrals to IS:
 - A. Enrolled in the middle of the term or late in the term. The student may not have enough time to complete and pass their classes on a short periods of time but in IS, they can register just for 2 classes (probably English and Math).
 - B. Not academically successful and on their way to something else. IS in secondary is perfect to be used a transition class. For example, a student is on the waiting to be accepted at a trade school or equivalent, they can complete the rest of their subjects in IS up until they get accepted in their new academic options.
 - c. Medical (short term) that are not accepted by Berenice Carlson or a medical situation by a parent that affects their ability to send a child to school. Again – this must be a on a short term basis and must have a definite end in sight. Recommended not to exceed 18 weeks.
 - d. Socio adjustment problems with a referral for counseling to better the situation. Gatekeeper must be very careful with this one. There must be a desire to come back to the regular classroom. Gatekeeper must get agreement from the student and the parent that placement in IS is very temporary and concurrently, while the student is in IS, the student must be receiving therapy and counseling services.
 - e. Financial consequences – if the student has to work and is on the waiting list for other education options, the student may participate in IS.
8. Students in IS must be mainstreamed back to the regular classroom as quickly as possible. Long term IS should be referred to City of Angels.
9. The school must respect the gatekeepers final decision.

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Accounting Procedures for elementary:

1. L the student out of the teacher's register on the last day of attendance.
2. E the student in the Independent Study Register on the first day of absence.
3. Fill out the "pink slip", also called NOTICE OF ENTRANCE OR WITHDRAWAL to reflect the E and L movement of the student. (See attached sample) You may need to make 4 pink slips (one for the teacher, one for the nurse, one for the office, one for the cafeteria manager)
4. One certificated person may monitor and sign the Independent Study register monthly. This is usually signed by the Principal or Assistant Principal.
5. Control cards or worksheets are also needed for these registers. See control card sample
6. The end of the month classification report will show a separate line for Independent Study students who are still on contract (line 16).
7. On the statistical report, include the attendance in the grade level of the student, not on line 12.
8. The cum record should also reflect the E and L movement of the student. Enter and/or Close the cum attendance history record as if the child has moved to a different classroom.
9. Once the student is E'd into the Independent Study register and while the student is gone, the school waits for the student to come back and turn in his work.
10. After the student submits the assigned work and the teacher evaluates it, the register will then reflect the number of days ADA can be claimed.
Example: child was enrolled in Independent Studies for 11 days but only submitted 6 days worth of work, then the school claims for 6 days ADA instead of 11. (See attached register sample for a child named Alejandro P. He was L'd out of the class register on 2/24/06 and E'd in Independent Study (IS) register on 2/25/06. He was in IS for 11 days until 3/10/06 but only received 6 days of credit for the work he turned in).
11. Seat time is awarded if the student has done 4 hours of work for each day of absence.
12. After the seat time is awarded, the Independent Student register is adjusted.
13. The control card or worksheet and the statistical report are then made to reflect the actual attendance adjustments.
14. If the statistical report has already been submitted to Pupil Statistics, it should be revised to include the actual attendance of the Independent Study student and the revision must be resubmitted to Pupil Statistics.
15. When the student returns, "L" the student out of the independent study register and "E" back into the regular classroom register. (See Alejandro P. register sample. He left IS on 3/10/06 Friday and was E'd back in to the regular classroom register on 3/13/06 – Monday.)

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16. The student's regular attendance card should also reflect that he E'd back in on 3/13/06. Again, the teacher or office staff fills out the "pink slip" to reflect the L and E movement of the student.

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ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES FOR SECONDARY:

1. L the student out of the teacher's register on the last day of attendance.
2. E the student in the Independent Study Register on the first day of absence.
3. Gatekeeper fills out the referral/routing sheet for IS and gives copies to the clerk in charge of making program changes in ISIS, the Record Room teaches, counselor for the student, and classroom teachers.
4. Clerk in charge of making program changes in ISIS changes the student to the IS class for however many periods agreed upon by the gatekeeper and the parents/students.
5. Student and parent meets with the IS teacher in charge, signs agreement, and discuss the curriculum involved.
6. Student and teacher makes a weekly appointment on when the student can show up and turn in completed work and/or complete work. This consultation time can also be used to ask questions on current assignments etc. While the student is at home doing the IS work, depending on the set up of the school, they can call the IS classroom and ask for help on whatever work they are doing.
7. Student gets 5 days credit if the IS teacher accepts the work turned in weekly as complete. IS teacher takes ISIS attendance (see sample)
8. After the student completes all the necessary work to pass the class (usually done within the time agreed upon the Master Agreement), the IS teacher fills out a Certification of Completed Course Work. This is forwarded to the APSSS for signature. After the APSSS agreed and signed that the student passed his/her classes, the form is turned in to the credit clerk.
9. The credit clerk enters the grade earned using the correct class codes. The class codes are listed in the master program. See sample of a student who completed work in IS and was given a grade. Notice that the class codes contain the "ISP" which means that the student earned this credit while in the Independent Study Program (ISP).
10. At the end of the month, the attendance clerk attaches a supplementary report with the statistical report that tells how many students are in independent studies. See sample

Another type of accounting procedure for students taking IS for classes they either failed and currently failing.

1. Gatekeeper deemed that Independent Study is the only option for this student and send the necessary paperwork to the IS teacher.
2. The student, parent, and grade counselor determine which IS class the student should make up (if they failed some the last semester or currently failing one in the current semester) and an agreement is made with the IS teacher.
3. The student completes the work and if determined that the student has passed the class, the IS teacher can: a. tell the current teacher of the

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passing grade and student is given that passing grade in class or b. the IS teacher tells the clerk in charge of programming to register this student for the particular class they enrolled in IS and then given a grade. Letter B approach means that should the student never complete the independent study, nothing will be reflected in their grade report (as if they never took the class). If the student gets a passing mark, they are registered for the class and given the appropriate grade. IS teacher fills the Independent Study Student Cover sheet (see sample)

4. If a student stops coming to IS and/or stops turning in work, it is the grade or track counselor's responsibility to find this student and determine whether he should be dropped from Independent Studies.
5. Notice that if a student has a current class that they are failing and will continue with IS instead, the student is NOT L'd out of this class. Student continues to attend the class if he can and in addition, takes in more work through the IS teacher in order to make up whatever class work needed to pass the class. The IS teacher constantly communicates with the current teacher the progress of the student.
- 6.

ATTACHMENTS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Bulletin No. M-128

May 31, 2001

Student Agreement: I understand and agree that:

- Independent Study is an alternative to classroom instruction provided by _____ Elementary School. It is individualized instruction based on this agreement, called the Master Agreement, between me, my teacher, and my parent, guardian, caregiver, and other persons if applicable.
- I am enrolling voluntarily. I understand that a regular classroom option will always be available at my home school or agreed upon site. If I am referred or assigned pursuant to EC 48917-EC51747 (c) (7) an alternative classroom option has been offered and will always be available.
- If I have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the IEP must specifically provide for my enrollment in independent study.
- All visits I may wish to make to any other school campus require the prior approval of my teacher and the school.
- All coursework will be consistent with the Los Angeles Unified School District Elementary School Course of Study.
- In order to receive academic grade credit, I must complete the major objectives of each curricular area I undertake as outlined in the Elementary School Course of Study. These objectives are made part of this Master Agreement.
- I will have the resources of school personnel; state authorized textbooks, supplementary instructional materials, and community resources, as described on my assignment sheets prepared by my teacher and which are a part of this Master Agreement.
- The instructional activities will include, but are not limited to the following: listening, speaking, reading, writing, computation, and thinking. Specific activities and instructional materials will be described on my assignment sheets, which are part of this Master Agreement.
- The methods used by my teacher to evaluate my work and my performance will include grading, measuring, and/or appraising written, oral, audio, visual, and/or performed assignments and tests to determine my grade in each course.
- I am expected to complete all the assignments. If I fail to complete four consecutive assignments, my teacher will determine if it best for me to remain in independent study or to transfer to another type of educational program. The maximum time allowed between assignment date and the due date shall be six weeks or 30 consecutive school days.
- My parents and I are liable for the cost of replacement or repair of lost or damaged books or other materials that are checked out to me.
- Subsidiary attachments such as Course Agreements, Assignment Sheets, and other necessary papers are a part of this Master Agreement.
- I plan to complete the Elementary School Course of Study objectives for grade _____ in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Science, Science/Health, Art/Music, and Physical Education during the effective dates of this Master Agreement.
- My parent or I may contact my teacher at any time to ask for assistance or check on my progress.

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Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Duration: One Semester Beginning Date: _____ Ending date: _____

This Master Agreement is in effect for the FALL ____ SPRING ____ semester of the _____ school year. The student will complete the courses listed below during the semester as they are outlined in the Los Angeles Unified School District course descriptions. All course objectives will be consistent with the established district guidelines. Additional descriptions of the major objectives, activities, and the methods for evaluating student work will accompany Course Agreements and Assignments Sheets.

Students need to spend as much time in the completion of school work as is required in the regular school of attendance if they expect to earn 30 credits per semester. The following subjects will be attempted while this Master Agreement is in effect:



My continued enrollment in Independent Studies in _____ Elementary School will be based upon my compliance with all the terms and conditions of this Master Agreement.

I will meet with my teacher as follows:

Day: M T W Th F (Circle one)

Location: _____ Time: _____

Teacher's Phone: _____ Frequency: _____
Manner: _____

Parent/Guardian Agreement: I understand and accept all of the foregoing agreements made by this student. In addition, I specifically agree that:

- ☐ My Child and I will meet _____ with the supervising teacher/certificated staff to develop an appropriate educational plan for my child.
- ☐ I am responsible for the supervision of my child while she/he is participating in Independent Study. I will provide instruction and assistance and an appropriate environment for study.
- ☐ I understand that _____ Elementary School will retain original samples of student work for documentation.
- ☐ I will provide transportation for my child to keep appointments and will supervise my child when she/he participates in workshops or activities planned by _____ Elementary Schools.

We have read all items on the Master Agreement and will comply with all the conditions set forth within.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

PSA Counselor

Date

Other (if applicable)

Date

Other (if applicable)

Date

ATTACHMENTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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7. Bulletin No. M-128

May 31, 2001

Student Agreement: I understand and agree that:

- Independent Study is an alternative to classroom instruction provided by _____ High/Middle School. It is individualized instruction based on this agreement, called the Master Agreement, between me, my teacher, and my parent, guardian, caregiver, and other persons if applicable.
- I am enrolling voluntarily. I understand that a regular classroom option will always be available at my home school or agreed upon site. If I am referred or assigned pursuant to EC 48917-EC51747 (c) (7) an alternative classroom option has been offered and will always be available.
- If I have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the IEP must specifically provide for my enrollment in independent study.
- All visits I may wish to make to any other school campus require the prior approval of my teacher and the school.
- All coursework will be consistent with the Los Angeles Unified School District Secondary School Course of Study.
- In order to receive academic grade credit, I must complete the major objectives of each curricular area I undertake as outlined in the Secondary School Course of Study. These objectives are made part of this Master Agreement.
- I will have the resources of school personnel; state authorized textbooks, supplementary instructional materials, and community resources, as described on my assignment sheets prepared by my teacher and which are a part of this Master Agreement.
- The instructional activities will include, but are not limited to the following: listening, speaking, reading, writing, computation, and thinking. Specific activities and instructional materials will be described on my assignment sheets, which are part of this Master Agreement.
- The methods used by my teacher to evaluate my work and my performance will include grading, measuring, and/or appraising written, oral, audio, visual, and/or performed assignments and tests to determine my grade in each course.
- I am expected to complete all the assignments. If I fail to complete four consecutive assignments, my teacher will determine if it best for me to remain in independent study or to transfer to another type of educational program. The maximum time allowed between assignment date and the due date shall be six weeks or 30 consecutive school days.
- My parents and I are liable for the cost of replacement or repair of lost or damaged books or other materials that are checked out to me.
- Subsidiary attachments such as Course Agreements, Assignment Sheets, and other necessary papers are a part of this Master Agreement.
- I plan to complete the Secondary School Course of Study objectives for grade ____ in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Science, Science/Health, Art/Music, and Physical Education during the effective dates of this Master Agreement.
- My parent or I may contact my teacher at any time to ask for assistance or check on my progress.

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Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Duration: One Semester Beginning Date: _____ Ending date: _____

This Master Agreement is in effect for the FALL ____ SPRING ____ semester of the _____ school year. The student will complete the courses listed below during the semester as they are outlined in the Los Angeles Unified School District course descriptions. All course objectives will be consistent with the established district guidelines. Additional descriptions of the major objectives, activities, and the methods for evaluating student work will accompany Course Agreements and Assignments Sheets.

Students need to spend as much time in the completion of school work as is required in the regular school of attendance if they expect to earn 30 credits per semester. The following subjects will be attempted while this Master Agreement is in effect:



My continued enrollment in Independent Studies in _____ Middle/High School will be based upon my compliance with all the terms and conditions of this Master Agreement.

I will meet with my teacher as follows:

Day: M T W Th F (Circle one)
Location: _____ Time: _____
Teacher's Phone: _____ Frequency: _____
Manner: _____

Parent/Guardian Agreement: I understand and accept all of the foregoing agreements made by this student. In addition, I specifically agree that:

- ☐ My Child and I will meet _____ with the supervising teacher/certificated staff to develop an appropriate educational plan for my child.
- ☐ I am responsible for the supervision of my child while she/he is participating in Independent Study. I will provide instruction and assistance and an appropriate environment for study.
- ☐ I understand that _____ Middle/High School will retain original samples of student work for documentation.
- ☐ I will provide transportation for my child to keep appointments and will supervise my child when she/he participates in workshops or activities planned by _____ Middle/High Schools.

We have read all items on the Master Agreement and will comply with all the conditions set forth within.

_____ Student Signature	_____ Date	_____ Parent Signature	_____ Date
_____ Teacher Signature	_____ Date	_____ PSA Counselor	_____ Date
_____ Other (if applicable)	_____ Date	_____ Other (if applicable)	_____ Date

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