



# Forest Ranch Charter School

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## Board Policy – Independent Study

### 1. Purpose

- a. The governing board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy by which students in grades K-8 may reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for students whose needs may temporarily be met best through study outside of the regular classroom setting.
- b. Forest Ranch Charter School's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students enrolled in independent study to complete the schools' adopted course of study within the customary timeframe. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources as is available to other students in the school.

### 2. Responsibilities

- a. The Executive Director or designee shall determine that the prospective independent study student understands and is prepared to meet the schools' requirements for independent study.
- b. Parents/guardians should recognize that independent study at the elementary level must emphasize a commitment primarily from the parent/guardian and secondarily from the student.
- c. Independent study may only be offered to students who can achieve in this program as well or better than they would in the regular classroom.
- d. The Executive Director or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating students. Each agreement shall contain 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 independent study agreement, recognizing that no

independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester, or one-half year for when considering pupils on a year-round calendar.

- ◆ A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, 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.

### **3. Timeframe for Submission of Work/ Missed Assignments Prior to Evaluation**

- a. To foster each student's success in independent study, the Board establishes that the following maximum lengths of time which may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete and submit the assigned work to the supervising certificated employee shall be as follows:
  - i. For students in grades K – 3:                    20 school days
  - ii. For students in grades 4 – 8:                    20 school days
- b. When circumstances justify a longer period of time, the Executive Director or designee may extend the maximum length of an assignment to a period not to exceed eight weeks, pursuant to a written request with justification.
- c. If a student fails to complete one independent study assignment during the trimester, the Executive Director or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. Evaluation findings shall be kept in the student's mandatory interim pupil record.

### **4. Home Schooling Through Independent Study**

- a. The board acknowledges that at a future date Forest Ranch Charter School may offer a Home Schooling option. At such time, the Executive Director or designee shall encourage parents/guardians desiring to teach their children at home to enroll their children in independent study. Such enrollment allows continued contact and cooperation between the school and home-based student.

### **5. Adoption**

- a. This board policy was adopted by the Forest Ranch Charter School governing board on September 22, 2009.
- b. The next annual review will occur on or before September 9, 2011.