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**INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY**

Pathways Academy Adult Education (“PAAE” or the “Charter School”) provides a non-classroom-based instructional program that utilizes an independent study model. Independent study is an optional alternative education program in which no student may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. The Charter School shall provide appropriate services and resources to enable students to complete their education through independent study successfully.

The following policies have been adopted by the Board of Directors for implementation at the Charter School:

1. The Charter School shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school grade levels, this shall include access to all courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the University of California or California State University as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria.
2. For all students at the Charter School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is five (5) school days; except, when special or extenuating circumstances justify a longer time, a period not to exceed twenty (20) school days / four (4) weeks may be approved by the Executive Director or designee pursuant to a written request, with justification, for individual students.

Regular attendance is critical to the success of all students. Attendance at the Charter School’s calculated based on the work completed by the student and submitted by the due dates established in the Independent Study Master Agreement and on time in accordance with this policy. The assigned teacher assesses the student’s work to determine whether the work completed constitutes a full day of attendance. When determining the time value of a student’s work, the teacher will consider each student individually and may adjust the assignments accordingly.

3. The Executive Director or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study under either or both of the following circumstances:
  - a. When the student fails to complete a minimum of five assignments per week.
  - b. In the event that a student’s educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by PAAE’s Attendance, Missed Assignments, Satisfactory Educational Progress, and Involuntary Removal Policy and procedure which considers ALL of the

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following indicators:

- i. The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d)(4)-(5).
  - ii. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments.
  - iii. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
  - iv. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.
4. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be 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 student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.
5. The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies as outlined in its PAAE's Attendance, Missed Assignments, Satisfactory Educational Progress, and Involuntary Removal Policy for the following students:
- a. Students who are not generating attendance for more than ten (10) percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
  - b. Students found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than fifty (50) percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span; or
  - c. Students who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

These procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following:

- a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student;
- b. Notification to parents/guardians or adult students of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation;
- c. Reaching out to the student directly and/or parents/guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine the student's needs for reengagement;

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- d. If the student has failed to complete the minimum number of independent study assignments per week as defined above, or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined above, the Charter School will schedule a conference involving, at minimum, all parties who signed the student's written independent study agreement to review the student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted herein.
  - e. Implementation of any Charter School programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable.
  - f. A plan to evaluate the student's achievement and necessary support through the Charter School's Tiered Reengagement process.
6. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e):
- a. For students in grades 9-12, inclusive, the supervising teacher will provide weekly synchronous activity in the online classroom with group or one-to-one instruction throughout the school year.
7. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study student, including but not limited to, all of the following:
- a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, for reporting the student's academic progress, and for communicating with a student's parent/guardian or with an adult student regarding the student's academic progress.
  - b. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
  - c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
  - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein, pursuant to Education Code Section 57147(a)-(b), regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student'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 student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
  - e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement.
    1. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than two semesters, or one year for a school on a year-round calendar.

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- f. A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the student upon completion.
  - g. The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
  - h. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs in order to be consistent with the student's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health supports.
  - i. Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent/guardian/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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of Division 11 of the Family Code.
    - 1. Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education, that may be a marking that is either computer generated or produced by electronic means and is intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature. The use of an electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature if the requirements for digital signatures and their acceptable technology, as provided in Section 16.5 of the Government Code and in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22000) of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, are satisfied.
8. When any student or family notifies the Charter School in writing of their wish to return to in-person instruction, the Charter School will support the transition of the student from

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independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days by providing the student and/or family with a list of schools in the school district of residence and the surrounding area with options for in-person instruction.

9. For each student in independent study, the Charter School will assign a certificated employee to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student's independent study instruction.

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable laws regarding independent study, as may be updated from time to time, including but not limited to Education Code Section 51744 et seq., 5 C.C.R. Section 11700 et seq., the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, and the State Board of Education regulations adopted thereunder.

The Executive Director may establish procedures to implement these policies in accordance with the law.