



La Habra City School District Short-Term Independent Study Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Short-Term Independent Study (STIS)?

- a. When a family knows in advance that a child will miss three or more days of school due to family responsibilities, long-term illness or emergency travel, parents and guardians have the option of requesting Short-Term Independent Study so that they do not fall behind in work. Completing Short-Term Independent Study also prevents your school from losing funding, since the state provides money to our schools based on student attendance.

2. What are the rules for Independent Study?

- a. According to Education Code 46300(e):
 - i. The Independent Study Master Agreement must be completely filled out and signed by the student, parent, teacher and principal with beginning and ending dates completed before the work begins.
 - ii. A pupil's work must be reviewed by a certificated teacher upon return from the student's absence. The teacher, in some reasonable manner, must: document the assignments made; the manner, time and due date of the work; and the time value of academic work performed.
 - iii. The work must be turned in on the first school day after the Master Agreement ends or it is invalid (unless previously agreed upon to extend the deadline).

3. Is there a minimum number of days absent required to complete an Independent Study Master Agreement?

- a. The student must be absent for three consecutive days but no more than 15 days.

4. Is Short-Term Independent Study required if my child is going to miss school for three days or more?

- a. Short-Term Independent Study is completely voluntary, but we strongly encourage parents to request for Independent Study when they know at least 5 days in advance that their students will miss school. Students, parent/guardian, teacher and principal all must sign the Master Agreement in advance for the Short-Term Independent Study Master Agreement to be valid.

5. Why is it important for students to complete Independent Study when they must miss school for personal reasons?

- a. There are two very important reasons students should complete Independent Study packets when they must miss school:
 - i. **Keeping up with school work is important for academic success.** Teachers report that every day a student misses class puts him or her about two days behind. This is because students must make up missed work and complete new assignments in a shorter amount of time.
 - ii. **When your student completes an Independent Study packet, it prevents your school and the school district from losing money.** The state provides about \$55 per day for each student who attends school. This is often referred to as Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding. The state does NOT provide any funding when students are absent, EVEN if the absence is excused for health or personal reasons.

- 6. What does Short-Term Independent Study look like?**
 - a. Once the Short-Term Independent Study Master Agreement is signed, your child's teacher will assign work for him/her to complete. Independent Study assignments are designed to prevent your child from falling behind. They may contain reading assignments, worksheets, or a writing assignment. Your child's teacher decides what to include based on work being completed in class.

- 7. How do we arrange for Short-Term Independent Study?**
 - a. Request a Master Agreement for Independent Study from your school office at least 5 days in advance of the pending absence.
 - b. The principal will determine if your child is eligible for STIS. If eligible, a Master Agreement must be signed by the student, parent, teacher and principal, and turned in to your school office prior to the pending absence.

- 8. If your student misses three days of school and does not complete the Short-Term Independent Study Master Agreement in its entirety, does my child receive partial credit?**
 - a. The student will receive credit for the work completed. For example, if the student completes two days of work, the student will receive credit for two days and will be marked as "Unexcused" for the other day.

- 9. Can the child be placed on Independent Study if the parent notifies the school that the student is already out of town or out of the country?**
 - a. No, an STIS Master Agreement must be signed by the student, parent and teacher BEFORE the child can be placed on Independent Study. Without a signed Master Agreement, the District loses ADA for the student for the time that he/she is not in school.

- 10. Can a Master Agreement be extended if the absence is longer than expected?**
 - a. The Master Agreement can be extended only if the family has access to a FAX machine or email so that documents can be signed by the student, parent, teacher and principal.