



While students are highly discouraged from missing school for reasons other than illness and family emergencies, we understand that from time to time and due to unforeseen circumstances, students and families may need to leave the area and create an independent study contract. **At MLA, specifically, we have developed the following set of guidelines to support students, families and teachers so that independent study can be successful.**

Independent Study

- According to [OUSD Policy](#), families may request short-term independent study consisting of school work for each school day missed, **for a maximum of 15 days per school year upon Site Leader approval**.
- After 15 days, all other absences will be considered Unexcused.

Important Info for Independent Study to be Granted at Melrose Leadership Academy:

1. **Independent study is to support any student who needs to miss school for an extended time.**
2. Requests for Independent Study contracts must be given to the attendance specialist **at least 10 school days prior to the first day of the absence** (in the event of a proven emergency, contact the principal or vice principal and an exception can be made).
3. **All parties should sign and date the I.S. agreement, prior to the start of Independent Study**
 - a. Special circumstances approved by the principal or vice principal will have 10 days within the span of the student being out for Independent Study for all parties to sign and have Independent Study approved.
 - i. The parent and student are responsible for requesting and signing the Independent Study Contract digitally or verbally over the phone within the first 10 days.
 - b. Signatures for an Independent Study Contract include the following: Student (regardless of grade), a caregiver/parent, principal or vice principal, AND Teacher(s) must all sign & date
 - c. When you sign the contract, **you are committing to complete and return all assignments**, failure to do so will result in unexcused absences.
4. As a rule, no Independent Study agreements are allowed for the first 10 days of school of the year, nor the last 15 school days of the year. (Again, there may be an unusual situation and the principal or vice principal will have to look at specific cases if they come up.)
5. **Please turn in all assigned work on the day upon which the student is scheduled to return** to the classroom and shall be graded by appropriately credentialed teachers. No work will be accepted after 2 weeks from the date of the students return to school as outlined in the initial independent study contract.

FAQ

Q. I had a serious family emergency and was not able to request Independent Study for my child in advance. Can I still request one so their absences can be excused?

A Yes! Starting in Fall of 2024, families have **within 10 days of the day they left** to sign an independent study contract. The student has a **maximum of 2 weeks *after* the day they return to school to submit work** for completion.

Q. I had an Independent Study Contract signed on time and received the work, how come the absences still show up as unexcused?

A Please make sure your students' work was done thoroughly and correctly. Independent Study is contingent upon work completion as approved by the teacher. If a student did not complete all the required assignments for each day of their independent study it will not count. **We highly recommend parents to support their child by reviewing and turning in their completed work for them at the main office on the day they return.**

Q. If a student is absent for 20 or more days due to hospitalization, can the student be on I.S for this reason?

A. No! Students that will be out for 15+ days due to hospitalization, may qualify for Home & Hospital - Email: rachel.friedman@ousd.org, Home & Hospital Coordinator.

Q. Can a student be on I.S. for 10 school days and return to school, then be out on another I.S. for 5 days?

A. Yes, the IS can be broken into multiple increments, not to exceed 15 days **per school year**.

Q. Can I bring my child back to school before the dates specified in the contract?

A. Yes, if you return early from your trip or if your family emergency has been resolved, you can bring your student to school and the contract days will be adjusted accordingly.
