



SANTA MONICA HIGH SCHOOL

601 Pico Boulevard . Santa Monica CA 90405 . 310-395-3204

Short Term Independent Study: Information Sheet

What is Short Term Independent Study (STIS)

- If a student is going to be absent for 5+ consecutive days, and no more than 20 days in a school year, he/she might qualify for IS.
- A student on STIS completes the work that he/she would have done at school on the days missed.
- A student is in school for about 6 hours each day; so, 5 days x 6 hours daily = 30 hours of classwork to be completed for 5 days of STIS.

When Short Term Independent Study is Appropriate

- Out of state or out of country emergency
- Catastrophic family situation
- Legal or government situation
- Severe health issue
- Special circumstances

Situations Not Eligible for Short Term Independent Study: When STIS will be DENIED

- Extending the length of school holidays – Winter Break, Spring Break, Thanksgiving Break
- Vacation or trips
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Student who has already exceeded the maximum allowed 20 days of STIS for the school year.

Rules about Independent Study

- The parent must request IS from the teacher at least **2 weeks before** the absences.
- *It is completely at the school's discretion as to whether or not to approve an IS request.*
- If the teacher/school approves the IS, the parent must pick up an IS Contract/Agreement form from the office, complete it, and submit it to the teacher at least **1 week before** the start of the absences.
- Assigned IS work is due to the teacher by 8:30 a.m. the day of the student's return to school. If the work is not returned at this time, the IS Contract/Agreement will be deemed void, and the absences will be considered "unexcused".
- If the work is not completed in its entirety, the student will not receive full credit for the days missed. (Example; if a student only completed 2 days of work, the rest of the IS days will be considered "unexcused absences".)

Why Independent Study Should be Used Sparingly and Only in Case of Emergency

- Regular attendance is vital to a student's success in school. A student who is frequently absent misses social interaction and direct instruction from his/her teachers even though written work can be made up. And day or hour absent is a missed learning opportunity.
- Research shows that in the long term, students who attend school are less likely to drop out of school, and are more likely to attend college and earn higher salaries. Consistent attendance also allows students to develop strong relationships with the peers and school staff.
- Students with high rates of absenteeism often have lower grades, miss critical learning experiences that could help them master academic material, struggle in classes and need intervention, and are more likely to drop out of school.

