

Homebound Instruction: Q & A for Families

The Springfield School District receives many inquiries from parents, guardians, and others regarding Homebound Instruction. This brochure will help to clarify what parents/guardians can expect when requesting Homebound Instruction for their child.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. My child can't attend school at this time due to an illness/injury/surgery. Is my school district required to provide Homebound Instruction?

No. There is no law that specifically requires a school district to provide homebound instruction to a student who is unable to attend school. The legal language in PA states "may" provide Homebound Instruction. However, different requirements apply to special education students, i.e., students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In some situations, federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may impact a school district's obligation to provide Homebound Instruction.

This document does not address these standards but does provide sources for additional information. See Question #3 for more information.

2. If my child's physician writes a prescription for Homebound Instruction, isn't the school required to provide it?

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2. (cont.) ...No. The school is required to consider the request, but may or may not choose to provide the instruction.

3. How do I request Homebound Instruction?

The actual procedure for requesting Homebound Instruction begins with speaking to the child's guidance counselor. The counselor will take general information regarding the student's ailment and the reasons as to why s/he is unable to attend school. The counselor may request medical documentation including physician / psychiatrist treatment plans, medical discharge papers, or a release to speak with the child's doctor. It is important to understand that for Homebound Instruction to be approved, the district requires that the documentation support the claim that the child is unable to access education in school. Reduced day schedules for transitional purposes from medical treatment should always be the first effort at maintaining the child's educational services.

4. What if my child is in Special Education? How do I request Homebound?

If your child currently has an IEP, you should request that the IEP Team reconvene for...

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4. (cont.) ... your child as part of your request for Homebound Instruction. Homebound Instruction for a special education student can only be granted for a short duration of time for a medical reason that cannot be attributed or associated with the child's disability, i.e., a broken leg or surgery. If the child is unable to access education at a school and needs to be at home, this may require the team to determine a change in placement and consider "Instruction in the Home" as part of the continuum of services for a child with an IEP.

5. My child isn't in special education now, but I wonder if this illness could change that?

If you feel your child's condition may be a disability requiring special education, you can request that your child be evaluated by the district and considered for special education services. Please keep in mind that regardless of the outcome of this process, this is not a guarantee that Homebound Instruction will be provided. You will be highly involved in this process and are a member of the IEP team. If you believe that your child may qualify as having a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, you should make that clear in your request to the school.

HOMEBOUND



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Please direct questions regarding Homebound Instruction to your child's Guidance Counselor. The district reserves the right to provide Homebound Instruction along a continuum of services which may include certified instructors in the home or a cyber / computer based learning experience. Provision of instruction will only occur in increments of 30 days upon which time services must be renewed through new medical authorization. Per Board Policy, Homebound Instruction will extend for no more than sixty (60) school days unless approved for an extension by the PA Department of Education.

Homebound Instruction: Q & A for Families (Continued from Front)

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Frequently Asked Questions (continued):

6. How long does the district have to determine eligibility and begin providing Homebound Instruction?

The state does not prescribe a timeline for districts to respond to requests for Homebound Instruction. Generally, requests can be processed and if approved, can begin in 15 days; however, gathering the necessary information to make a determination of eligibility can take up to a month. Homebound Instruction will only be granted to students that are expected to be out for more than two weeks so please plan accordingly when making a request.

7. My daughter is pregnant. May I request Homebound Instruction for her?

All efforts should be made to ensure that the pregnant student is enrolled and attending school. Following the birth of the infant, a female student requires a period of time to recuperate from child birth and arrange for child care. The student should submit a statement from the attending physician stating the birth date of the infant.

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7. (cont.) ...Homebound Instruction may be provided up to six weeks following the birth. In the case of any complications associated with the pregnancy, Homebound Instruction may be extended or provided in advance of the birth.

8. My child is having mental health issues. May I request Homebound Instruction for this type of illness?

Yes. Mental illnesses or concerns can be a legitimate reason to request Homebound Instruction. However, the application must be signed by either a medical doctor or psychiatrist. A psychologist or social worker may not sign the Homebound Application. (Please refer to #2 & #3 for more guidance)

9. If the district does provide Homebound Instruction, how much do they need to provide?

Because Homebound Instruction is not required, there are no state standards as to the amount of instruction, the time of day it is delivered, or the classes offered. Even in the best of circumstances, Homebound Instruction cannot completely replace the experiences your child would get by attending school. If a child is found eligible for Homebound Instruction, the district will provide the equivalent of 5 hours of instruction a week for a maximum of 30 days. (Continued in next column)

9. (cont.)...If the child requires more than 30 days, a new request and application will have to be filled out and approved. Updated documentation will be required for approval of continued service. Homebound Instruction will occur along a continuum of services which may include instructors in the home or a cyber / computer based learning experience.

10. Isn't this standard different for high school students, due to graduation requirements?

No. There are no additional hours provided for high school aged students. Also, although students may be enrolled in a number of courses, the Homebound Instruction will only focus on core content area classes (English, math, science, social studies). Parents and students will need to follow-up with elective teachers to address missed work

11. If the district denies my request for Homebound Instruction, may I request other changes in my child's schedule, such as a shortened schedule?

Yes, in fact, this is preferable to Homebound Instruction as a child is able to maintain peer relationships and be exposed to the direct instruction, class interaction, and social aspects of learning as provided by the classroom teachers. As with Homebound...

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11. (cont.) ...Instruction, the district may or may not choose to modify your child's program. It is best to meet with your child's guidance counselor to discuss what is best for your child.

12. Is Homebound Instruction the same as "home schooling"?

No. In a home-based Home Education Program, or "home schooling," parents are responsible for their child's education. They must register their home schooled child with Dr. Gary Mattei at District Office to avoid their child being considered truant. The PDE website along with the text of 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 offers more guidance on the process of "home schooling" your child.



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