

Home Education Programs

Home education programs (also known as homeschooling) are programs where the education of the student is directed by the parent or guardian or such person having legal custody of the child or children.

Restrictions include:

1. The supervisor of the home education program must have a high school diploma or its equivalent.
2. All adults living in the home and persons having legal custody of a child or children must not have been convicted of the criminal offenses itemized in [24 P.S. §1-111 \(e\)](#) within five years immediately preceding the date of the affidavit.

Timeline for submitting documents

Homeschool parents must submit this information before starting a home education program and by August 1 for subsequent years of the home education program, along with the affidavit and other required documentation, such as a medical certificate (known as the red and white form), which sets out a schedule of any remaining doses of immunizations.

Beginning the Program: The Affidavit

A home education program is commenced by the submission of a notarized affidavit to the superintendent's office, in the student's district of residence, by the home education supervisor (parent, guardian or person having legal custody of the child). The affidavit covers the school year (July 1 – June 30) and must be submitted to the superintendent's office no later than August 1 of each school year a child is homeschooled. Without this documentation, a home education program does not legally exist.

Age of Enrollment and Attendance

Effective with the 2020-21 school year, a child must comply with compulsory attendance requirements from age six (6) to age eighteen (18). Specifically, a child who has attained the age of six (6) on or before September 1 must enroll and attend school or begin a home education program that year. A home education program must be documented and evaluated to account for all schooling during that time. Students may participate in a home education program as long as they are of school age.

The Affidavit

The components of the affidavit are stipulated in [24 P.S. § 13-1327.1\(b\)\(1\)](#), including:

1. The name of the supervisor of the home education program,
2. The name and age of the student,
3. The address and telephone number of the home education program site,
4. A statement that the mandatory subjects will be taught in the English language,
5. An outline of proposed education objectives by subject area,
6. Evidence that the child has been immunized in accordance with [section 1303\(a\)](#),
7. Evidence that the child has received the health and medical services required for students of the child's age or grade level in [Article XIV](#),
8. Assurance that the home education program will comply with the law, and

9. A certification that the supervisor, all adults living in the home and persons having legal custody of the student have not been convicted of the criminal offenses enumerated in [subsection \(e\) of section 111](#) within five years preceding the date of the affidavit.

Mandatory Courses

The courses to be taken must be included in the objectives.

Elementary school level (grades K-6), mandatory courses: English, to include spelling, reading and writing; arithmetic; science; geography; history of the United States and Pennsylvania; civics; safety education, including regular and continuous instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires; health and physiology; physical education; music; and art.

Secondary school level (grades 7-12), mandatory courses: English, to include language, literature, speech, and composition; science; geography; social studies, to include civics, world history, history of the United States and Pennsylvania; mathematics, to include general mathematics, algebra and geometry; art; music; physical education; health; and safety education, including regular and continuous instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires. Such courses of study may include, at the discretion of the supervisor of the home education program, economics; biology; chemistry; foreign languages; trigonometry; or other age-appropriate courses as contained in Chapter 5 (Curriculum Requirements) of the State Board of Education.

Health Screenings, Physicals, and Dental Exams

All public, private, nonpublic, and homeschool students of school age must have certain health screenings (vision, hearing, height/weight for calculation of body mass index, tuberculosis, and scoliosis), comprehensive physicals, and dental examinations at specified time frames as set forth in Article XIV (School Health Services) and in regulations (28 Pa. Code Chapter 23). The Department of Health's website provides information on the requirements, guidelines and sample forms for the required exams and screenings that can be accessed using the links listed in the Resources section.

Homeschool families may schedule appointments for these screenings with the local school district nurse or the district's contracted health care professional when the screenings/exams are being conducted at the schools. Homeschool families may also schedule comprehensive physicals and dental examinations with private health care providers, but these physicals and dental examinations must be performed no more than four months prior to the year in school for which the exam is mandated. (See 24 P.S. § 14-1419 for other considerations related to exams).

As with immunizations, the results of these screenings must be submitted to the school district at the beginning of a home education program or by August 1 for subsequent years of the home education program along with the affidavit and other required documentation.

For all students enrolling in a home education program for the first time, the record of the student's immunization (certificate of immunization) must be submitted to and reviewed by the school nurse of the local school district. After this initial review, evidence of immunizations is required for all public school, private school, nonpublic and homeschool students every year.

In lieu of the standard certificate of immunization (green and white form) and medical certificate forms (red and white form), homeschool parents/legal guardians must submit at least one of the three documents listed below to satisfy the immunization record requirement:

1. The actual records, which show the record or history of immunization, including the month, day, and year that immunizations were given, or

2. (After the initial records or certificate of immunization has been reviewed by the school nurse of the local school district) A letter from a physician or physician's designee stating the legal requirements have been fulfilled or that there exists a medical condition that prevents immunization, or
3. A letter stating that the parent/legal guardian objects to immunizations on religious grounds or on the basis of strong moral or ethical convictions, similar to religious beliefs.

The certificate of immunization form used by many school districts also has a 'Statement of Exemption' section that can be completed by a physician (medical exemption) or by a parent/legal guardian (religious/strong moral or ethical conviction exemptions)

Exemptions to Immunizations

The only exemptions to this regulation are based upon medical exemptions (i.e., a child undergoing chemotherapy and scheduled for a dose of a live virus immunization as this would not be medically appropriate) or on religious grounds or on the basis of strong philosophical, moral, or ethical convictions, similar to religious beliefs (See 28 Pa. Code § 23.84).

Closing out the School Year: The Evaluation

A written evaluation of the home education program must be submitted by the home education supervisor to the superintendent of schools in the student's district of residence no later than June 30 for the closing school year and should be submitted at the close of the program for those programs that do not take place for an entire school year.

The evaluation by a qualified home education evaluator is to be based on an interview of the student and a review of the portfolio; it must state whether an appropriate education has occurred for the student and document the student's progress while in a home education program.

Yearly Evaluation Requirements

The evaluation of the student's educational progress must be annual and written. The evaluation must be based on an interview of the child and a review of the portfolio and accompanying documentation. The evaluation must certify whether an appropriate education is occurring ([24 P.S. § 13-1327.1\(e\)\(2\)](#)).

An appropriate education is defined in [24 P.S. § 13-1327.1\(a\)](#) as:

1. A program consisting of instruction in the required subjects (see the *Home Education Curriculum* subsection)
2. The time required in this act (see the *Portfolio – Tracking a Home Education Program* subsection)
3. The student demonstrates sustained progress in the overall program

Sustained progress in the overall program would indicate that the student is progressing through the mandatory courses such that the student will complete all mandatory courses during their current interval (elementary or secondary).

Since no time can be recorded toward the mandatory hours or days until the affidavit is submitted to the school district (the affidavit *begins* the program), the evaluator can consult the notarized affidavit to determine the start date of the program if questions arise.

Qualifications

There are a number of avenues for individuals to qualify to become home education evaluators ([24 P.S. § 13-1327.1\(e\)](#)).

1. Licensed clinical psychologist
2. School psychologist
3. Pennsylvania certified teacher with two years grading experience at the level they evaluate (K-6 and/or 7-12)
4. Nonpublic school teacher or administrator with two years PA teaching experience within the last 10 years at the level they evaluate (K-6 and/or 7-12)
5. Persons with other qualifications, with the prior consent of the superintendent of the district of residence

Teaching experience is defined in [24 P.S. § 13-1327.1\(e\)\(1\)](#) as:

1. A teacher or administrator who evaluates a portfolio at the elementary level (grades kindergarten through six) shall have at least two years of experience in grading any of the following subjects: English, to include spelling, reading and writing; arithmetic; science; geography; history of the United States and Pennsylvania; and civics.
2. A teacher or administrator who evaluates a portfolio at the secondary level (grades seven through twelve) shall have at least two years of experience in grading any of the following subjects: English, to include language, literature, speech, reading and composition; science, to include biology, chemistry and physics; geography; social studies, to include economics, civics, world history, history of the United States and Pennsylvania; foreign language; and mathematics, to include general mathematics, algebra, trigonometry, calculus and geometry.
3. As used in this clause, the term "grading" shall mean evaluation of classwork, homework, quizzes, classwork-based tests and prepared tests related to classwork subject matter.

If a class taken by a home school student who is dually enrolled in the school district has an associated standardized test associated (e.g., Keystone exam, PSSA), the dually enrolled student must take the test unless they opt out for religious reasons via the provision of [22 Pa. Code § 4.4 \(d\)\(4\)](#)[Opens In A New Window](#).

Supervisor-Issued Diploma

Act 196 of 2014 modified the law to allow home education supervisors (parents, guardians, legal custodians) to award a state-recognized home education high school diploma to their children. The Act became effective for diplomas granted beginning October 31, 2014. The requirements for this diploma follow.

Requirements

1. The supervisor must submit an affidavit to the superintendent of schools in their district of residence for the student's twelfth grade (graduation) year.
2. The student must complete the graduation requirements of the law while enrolled in the home education program. (See the [Curriculum](#) section)
3. The supervisor must submit an evaluation to the superintendent's office for the senior year.

Extracurricular Activities and Classes

Homeschooled students have the right to participate in the school district's extracurricular activities, CTE Programs, and Dual Enrollment classes, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria or its equivalent.

They are subject to compliance with all policies, rules and regulations, or their equivalent, of the governing organization of the activity.

These are the activities that are subject to the provisions of [24 P.S. § 5-511](#), including, but not limited to, clubs, musical ensembles, athletics and theatrical productions, interscholastic athletics, varsity sports and intramural sports, with certain qualifications. The law does not require a school district to allow participation in certain activities such as the senior prom and commencement exercises as these are decisions made at the local school district level.

The law also includes all activities related to competitive sports contests, games, events or exhibitions involving individual students or teams of students whenever such activities occur between schools within the school district or between schools outside of the school district.

In order to participate, the student must:

1. Meet the eligibility criteria or their equivalent for participation in the activity that apply to students enrolled in the school district,
2. Meet the tryout criteria or their equivalent for participation in the activity or program that apply to students enrolled in the school district, and
3. Comply with all policies, rules and regulations or their equivalent of the governing organization of the activity.
4. Homeschooled students in grades 3, 5, or 8 must take, and report in their portfolio, the results of the statewide tests or another nationally normed standardized achievement test in reading/language arts and mathematics ([24 P.S. § 13-1327.1\(e\)\(1\)](#)).
5. At the discretion of the supervisor, the portfolio may include the results of nationally normed standardized achievement tests for other subject areas or grade levels. The current "[Statewide tests](#)" include both the PSSAs and the Keystone exams.
6. Supervisors of home education students are not required to state a reason for not selecting the statewide tests. However, the statewide tests may be taken at their school district without cost to the homeschooled student whereas parents must bear any cost for an alternative test and its administration.