

HANDBOOK FOR HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Revised July 2019

Introduction

The Board of Education through the regulations establishing *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* requires in 8 VAC 20-131-180 that:

Homebound instruction shall be made available to students who are confined at home or in a healthcare facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For students eligible for special education or related services, the Individualized Education Program committee must revise the IEP, as appropriate, to direct off-site instruction. Credit for the work shall be awarded when it is done under the supervision of a teacher licensed by the Board of Education and meets the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110.

This handbook has been developed to provide guidance in the provision of homebound instructional services to students who are confined at home or in a healthcare facility. For the purposes of homebound instructional services, “**confined at home or in a healthcare facility**” means the student is unable to participate in the normal day-to-day activities typically expected during school attendance; and absences from home are infrequent, of relatively short duration, or to receive health care treatment.

Overview of Services

The goals of homebound services are to sustain continuity of instruction and to facilitate the student returning to school. Homebound instructional services are not a guarantee that the student will progress in the academic program.

Homebound instruction is designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or health care facility, for students whose medical needs, both physical and psychiatric, do not allow school attendance for a limited period of time. Homebound instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/ chemotherapy; or students with other serious health conditions).

Homebound instruction is not intended to supplant school services and is by design temporary. While no specific number of days can be set due to the many complex situations that arise for students, instruction should take place in the school setting to the fullest extent possible. The student's inability to attend school for medical reasons, both physical and psychiatric, must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist.

Eligibility for Homebound Services

Eligibility for homebound instructional services should be a collaborative decision between the treating health care provider, parent/guardian, and school personnel. Prior to requesting homebound services, the parent/guardian should explore options for school-based instruction with school personnel. If homebound services are needed, approval of services is based upon a completed medical certification of need. The medical certification of need is the healthcare provider's documentation of the student's illness, treatment plan, and the estimated length of recovery time. The certification must be fully completed, **including** parental permission to contact the treating physician or licensed clinical psychologist, in order for the student to be considered for homebound services. The school division reviews all requests for completeness of information and appropriateness of the request and will follow up with the treating physician or licensed clinical psychologist to clarify the need for homebound instruction versus school-based instruction with appropriate accommodations, as necessary. Homebound services are for student illness/injury only; services are not appropriate to compensate for absences related to family care or illness.

Requested homebound instruction for students receiving special education services shall be subject to review by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As part of its review and determination of a change in placement, the IEP team must review the approved medical certification of need for homebound instruction and determine the appropriate placement for the student based on the student's educational needs. Parental consent must be obtained to amend the IEP, prior to initiation of homebound services.

If the IEP team determines that homebound services are appropriate, the team must include language in the IEP that clearly defines the time period for the frequency and duration of the homebound services. The IEP may also include a statement that the IEP team will reconsider the need for continuation of services by a specified date. The IEP team should add a statement that addresses the fact that these services are temporary and thus do not constitute a permanent change in placement and are not the "stay put" placement should the IEP team and parents later disagree over the continuation of homebound services.

Initiation of Service

The medical certification of need is submitted by the parent/guardian directly to the staff person designated by the school division in its local procedure, usually the homebound coordinator. Homebound instruction should be initiated as soon as possible following receipt of a complete certification, but no later than ten instructional days upon **approval** of the request. In cases where the student has an IEP, the certification should be promptly transmitted to the IEP team by the homebound coordinator for review and determination of a change in placement for the student.

Review and Termination of Service

Students receiving homebound instruction should return to school-based instruction as soon as possible. Homebound services should not be approved for periods in excess of nine calendar weeks. If it is necessary for homebound instruction to continue beyond nine calendar weeks, an extension or reauthorization form, including treatment plan, progress towards treatment goals, and specific plans to transition the student back to the school setting, will be required from the treating health care provider to document the need for extended services.

The homebound teacher will assist the student, family, and school personnel with the student's transition back to the classroom setting. However, other support staff, such as the school nurse, school counselor, IEP case manager, school social worker, or school psychologist, may be more appropriately assigned to the student for transition purposes depending on the nature of the student's needs.

If a student has an IEP, the IEP team must amend the IEP upon the ending period of homebound services in order to either return the student to the school setting or continue the homebound placement.

Hours of Homebound Instruction

Homebound instruction is designed so the student does not fall significantly behind during the period of confinement. It is necessary for the student to participate in the instructional process and complete assignments. Homework should be expected. Not all work will be completed in the presence of the homebound teacher. Every effort will be made to ensure academic progress; however, course credit must still be **earned** according to class requirements. Priority will be given to core academic subjects. Specialty classes (i.e., those requiring labs, special facilities or equipment) may not be comparable. Elective courses are not guaranteed.

| Homebound Instruction IS: | Homebound Instruction IS NOT: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Designed so that the student does not fall significantly behind during the period of confinement · Interactive; the student is expected to participate in the instructional process and complete assignments · Expected to include homework · Intended to make every effort to ensure academic progress · Intended to provide priority to core academic subjects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Intended to supplant school services · Expected to have all work completed in the presence of the homebound teacher · A substitute for course credit that must be earned according to class requirements · A guarantee that specialty classes (i.e., requiring labs, special facilities or equipment) will be comparable · Automatically inclusive of elective courses (Some elective courses may NOT be offered in homebound situations. Examples- Foreign Languages, Welding, Cosmetology, Graphic Design, and Agriculture) · A guarantee of on-time graduation; all diploma requirements must be met for graduation |

The following represent the recommended hours of instruction to be provided. These hours may not be applicable in all instances (i.e., for students with IEPs, the IEP team determines the hours required in accordance with the student’s educational needs.)

1. Elementary school students –one hour per day
2. Middle school students - eight hours per week
3. High school students –two hours per core academic subject per week; other accommodations on an individualized basis

Responsibility for Provision of Services

The School-Level Homebound Coordinator and Classroom Teacher

A student receiving homebound instruction is maintained on the class roll. The classroom teacher with the assistance of the school-level homebound coordinator will:

1. Provide the homebound teacher with appropriate instructional materials and information
2. Be responsible for grading procedures in collaboration with the homebound teacher
3. Maintain close contact with the homebound teacher or the program coordinator supervising online instruction to monitor the instructional progress of the student
4. Collaborate with the homebound teacher about the curriculum and appropriate instructional strategies

The Student/Parent/Guardian

The student and parent/guardian are expected to work cooperatively with the assigned homebound teacher and school personnel to comply with school division policies and procedures for:

1. Notifying the school division that homebound services may be needed, discussing the process for initiating services, and signing a release of information form so the school can share information with the physician about homebound services prior to the official request being made
2. Obtaining the medical certification of need from the physician or licensed clinical psychologist requesting homebound services and completing parental signature forms in order to begin homebound instruction
3. Having a responsible adult in the home during the entire period of instruction
4. Providing adequate facilities for teaching (quiet room without interruptions, with a table, chairs and appropriate supplies) or provide transportation to another agreed upon facility
5. Having the student ready for instruction at the time designated by the homebound teacher
6. Supervising daily homework
7. Notifying the teacher, prior to the scheduled visit, if there is a contagious illness in the home or if there is an emergency
8. Keeping all appointments with the homebound teacher (excessively missed appointments may result in suspension of services for general education students and may relieve the school division from providing make-up services to students with disabilities)
9. Making every effort to complete school assignments

10. Advising the homebound teacher of any change in the student's status that would necessitate modification or termination of homebound services
11. Notifying the school division coordinator of missed appointments or tardiness by the homebound teacher
12. Following the health care provider treatment plan by keeping appointments, therapy sessions, and so forth.

(*A parent/guardian may not serve as the homebound teacher for his/her child.)

Responsibilities of the Homebound Teacher

Persons serving as homebound teachers must:

1. Maintain close contact with the student's teachers, school counselor, or the program coordinator to receive and implement appropriate educational programs
2. Use assignments and materials provided by the classroom teacher or supervisor of instruction
3. Maintain an accurate record of the hours of instruction provided for each assigned student and file such information with the designated school division representative
4. Submit the student's completed work to the designated school representative prior to the end of the grading period and maintain written documentation of work completed with the homebound records, or in cases where online instruction is used, provide a written record
5. Document any instructional time that is interrupted because of the child not being available for the instruction period

The homebound teacher is an essential part of the team of persons who provide materials and instruction to enable the homebound student to maintain academic progress while not attending the regular school program. Homebound instruction is a modification of the general education program. Work is returned to the classroom teacher for grading, prompt feedback to the homebound teacher and student is expected, and necessary, in order to ensure progress in the academic program.

Role of Physician or Clinical Psychologist Providing Certification

Homebound instruction is designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or health care facility for students whose medical needs, both physical and psychiatric, do not allow school attendance for a **limited** period of time. At the time of the initial request, the physician or clinical psychologist providing medical certification of need for homebound instruction must provide in writing to the school division the following:

1. Name of the student
2. Certification that the student is “confined at home or in a healthcare facility”
3. Nature and extent of the illness, including whether the condition(s) prohibit attendance for a full day or a portion of the day
4. Date of examination or diagnosis
5. Whether the illness is chronic or intermittent
6. Accommodations the school could make that would allow the student to attend
7. Any particular aspects of the illness that may impact the way in which instruction is delivered (e.g., the student will be unable to write or type)
8. Estimated date of return to school (the parent and health care provider should be informed that if this date is beyond nine calendar weeks, additional steps must be taken as outlined below)
9. Ongoing treatment and/or therapy being provided
10. Frequency of treatment and/or therapy
11. Specific plans to transition the student back to the school setting
12. Signature, date, office address, and phone number

Since homebound instruction is not intended to supplant school services, if it is necessary to extend homebound instruction beyond the initial time frame or longer than nine calendar weeks, a transition plan is required outlining the following:

1. Name of the student
2. Justification for the extension of homebound instruction
3. Additional time homebound instruction is anticipated
4. Specific steps planned to return the student to classroom instruction
5. Changes in amount and kind of activity for the student during extended homebound instruction
6. Signature, date, office address, and phone number