

IHBG-R

HOME SCHOOL PLAN PROCEDURES

I. Notice to District

1. A parent/guardian seeking to home school their child must submit a homeschool education plan in writing to the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) Superintendent (care of the Child Study Department) before commencing the home school program.
2. Students must attend their assigned school until their initial home school plan is approved. Students who are currently receiving education under an approved home school plan may continue homeschooling until their new plan is reviewed and approved.
3. A parent who is no longer homeschooling must notify the district and re-enroll the child in a public or approved private school. A notification is required for each child upon attaining the age of compulsory attendance.
4. Homeschool education plan forms (both elementary and secondary) are available upon request from the office of Child Study at (508) 799-3175 for the convenience of the parent and the district. The form is provided as a convenience but is not required so long as the information is provided.

II. Homeschooling Plan Requirements

1. The parent/guardian must provide the following information as part of the home education plan, which will be reviewed by the Superintendent's Designee:
 - i. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects;
 - ii. The competency of the parents/guardians to teach the children;
 - iii. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents/guardians; and
 - iv. Evidence of progress to ensure educational progress in each subject area and the attainment of minimum standards.
2. Evidence of Progress: Worcester Public Schools accepts a home education plan which includes one of the following approved methods of annual assessment of student progress:

- i. Dated work samples
- ii. Report cards
- iii. Standardized assessments
- iv. Scope and Sequence
- v. Narrative report of progress

The District will provide the opportunity for home-taught children to participate in the annual standardized achievement battery which is typically administered at various times throughout the school year. Arrangements can be made with the Child Study Department.

III. Homeschool Plan Submission

1. To ensure prompt approval of a Homeschool Plan, parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to submit a Homeschool Plan as soon as possible, but must submit their Homeschool Plan at least 14 business days before the intended commencement date of the home-based education program.
2. In the case of the continuance of an established home-based education program, parents must submit their plan at least 14 days before commencement of the next academic year.
3. Home school plans are accepted throughout the year and reviewed as received.
4. Plans submitted prior to June 15th of each year will be reviewed within 2 – 3 weeks. Plans submitted after June 15th of each year will be reviewed within 4 – 5 weeks.
5. The district will take no adverse action against a homeschooling family during the time between submission and approval if the family has submitted a homeschool plan in good faith unless otherwise required by law. However, district personnel are mandated reporters pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 51A and will abide by their reporting requirements in appropriate cases.

IV. Homeschool Plan Review and Approval

1. The Child Study Department (as Superintendent's Designee) shall approve any homeschool plan that complies with District policy, Section II of this policy and applicable law.
2. In the event that the Child Study Department rejects a proposed homeschool plan, the reasons for the decision shall be set forth in writing to the parent/guardian, and the Superintendent or his/her designee, shall suggest specific homeschool plan revisions as necessary to cause such homeschool plan to obtain approval pursuant to this policy.
3. The Parents/Guardians will be invited for an optional meeting with the Child Study Department to receive support in successfully completing the plan. This meeting shall be offered in person or alternative means (via telephone, email etc).

4. Parents/Guardians have the right to an appeal hearing before the Superintendent regarding a homeschool plan rejection, which shall include the right to explain their proposed plan and present witnesses on their behalf. After the hearing, the Superintendent will issue a written decision setting out the reasons for his/her decision to override the rejection or uphold it. The parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to revise their proposal to remedy any inadequacies.
5. If the District chooses to seek prosecution of the parents pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 76 Section 2, the burden of proof shifts to the District to show that the instruction outlined in the home school proposal fails to equal in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein, that in the public schools of Worcester.

V. Student Progress/Assessment

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will provide evidence of their child's homeschool program for review to the office of Child Study annually. It can be provided either at the end of the academic year and may be included with the submission of the Homeschool Plan for the next academic year. For families seeking to continue a home education, evidence of progress for the current year must be reviewed prior to approval of the home school plan for the upcoming year.
2. The evidence of progress shall be one of the five options listed in Section II. The family will select which option to show progress.
3. Worcester Public Schools will maintain permanent student record folders for students participating in a homeschool program which may contain work samples, standardized assessments, scope and sequence reports and/or narrative progress reports or other documents provided by parent(s)/guardian(s) and should be kept in a private and secure location by the superintendent or her/his designee. (603 CMR 23.00).

VI. Participation in Worcester Public Schools Programs

1. Home educated students do not participate in state testing programs such as MCAS and are not eligible to receive a Worcester Public School Diploma.
2. Worcester Public Schools is not responsible to supply textbooks or instructional materials to home schooling students
3. A student being educated in a home-based program within the Worcester Public Schools may have access to public school activities of an extra-curricular nature, only upon prior approval of the Superintendent or designee.

4. Home-schooled students may not participate in specific classes or courses offered during the school day that are not open to the public and that are intended for enrolled Worcester Public School students only.
5. The home-schooled student who accesses Worcester School athletics or extra-curricular activities after receiving approval from the Superintendent is subject to the following provisions that are consistent with MIAA guidelines:
 - i. Signed Worcester Public School handbook release form must be on file with the home school plan, acknowledging compliance with all Worcester Public Schools' rules and policies including MIAA guidelines.
 - ii. A home-schooled student who is determined to be eligible for High School athletics shall submit quarterly progress reports for review by the High School Principal on or before the dates established by the high school for report card distribution. Progress reports shall be submitted in a format that indicates clearly whether the home-schooled student has passed or failed each course identified under the approved home-school plan.
 - iii. The home-schooled student is subject to all High School eligibility standards as outlined in the student handbook and MIAA guidelines.
 - iv. The District reserves the right to allow enrolled students to have precedence or priority over the home school student with regard to placement on sports teams and activities that have limited enrollment.