The School District of Philadelphia



*Homebound Program*

*Administrative Procedures*

February 2019

**Introduction**

Homebound Instruction is a service the District *may* provide during a temporary period of excused absence not to exceed three (3) months. Excusal from school attendance during this period *may* be granted, “…upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent reasons, but the term ‘urgent reasons’ shall be strictly construed and does not permit irregular attendance” (22 PA. CODE CH. 11 Sec. 25). Homebound Instruction should be used as a last resort after all other options and /or alternative schedules (i.e. half school days, work packets, etc.) have been exhausted. Homebound Instruction is not intended, nor can it be construed, as a method of delivering a full curriculum and may not provide sufficient grades and or credits for promotion.

Homebound Instruction is not a replacement or substitute for school attendance. Homebound Instruction is not a special education placement. However, students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) may receive Homebound Instruction during a temporary excused absence from school attendance after which they will return to school.

Homebound Instruction is not to be confused with *“Instruction Conducted in the Home,”* which is included in the definition of special education located in the federal regulations (34 CFR §300.39(a)(i)) and is recognized as a placement option on the continuum of alternative placements for students with disabilities (34 CFR §300.115. This option is restricted to students who, because of a severe medical condition or mobility impairment, are unable to leave home to attend school.

Homebound Instruction is also not to be confused with “*Home Schooling”* Section 1327.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code provides for a home education program designed to permit a parent, guardian or legal custodian ("supervisor") who has a high school diploma or its equivalent to conduct a home education program for his or her child or children.

Procedures for requesting and documenting the need for a temporary period of excused absence and Homebound Instruction follow.

*Students on homebound may not work at a job and may not be involved in other activities outside the home. The premise of homebound is that students are unable to come to school and therefore should be unable to go to work, or leave their home for any length of time.*

The program of homebound instruction provided to each student shall be in accordance with the standards established by the state.

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures regarding the provision of Homebound Instruction to students who are unable to participate in their educational program at their school of enrollment due to a physical, mental or emotional condition.
2. **BACKGROUND:**

Homebound services provide continuity of instruction to students who are unable to participate in their school of enrollment due to any of the following conditions:

* + 1. A physical or medical condition as diagnosed and documented by a board certified physician
    2. A mental or emotional condition as diagnosed and documented by a board certified psychiatrist.
    3. Or other urgent reasons but the term ‘urgent reasons’ shall be strictly construed and does not permit irregular attendance,”

(22 PA. CODE CH. 11 Sec. 25)

* + 1. Intermittent Homebound Instruction may be provided for students with chronic medical conditions that, although under treatment, have episodes of exacerbation and abatement of symptoms, resulting in recurring periodic absences (i.e. including by not limited to: kidney failure, cancer, asthma, and sickle cell anemia)

At any point, the School District of Philadelphia may request additional information about a student’s absences and health status to justify approval and or continuation of Homebound Instruction. If the information is not provided, the District may terminate Homebound Instruction and the student shall be marked as truant.

Continuation of Homebound Instruction beyond three (3) months requires approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), as well as submission of a new Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction, (form SEC-137A), which may or may not be approved.

The procedures for implementing homebound/hospital instruction have been established by the Office of School Health Services and are subject to monitoring, audits and investigation.

1. **PROCEDURES:**
2. **Criteria for Eligibility –** A student may be excused from their school of enrollment and provided Homebound Instruction for a period not to exceed three (3) months, providing the following criteria are met.
3. The parent /guardian must document urgent reasons by providing medical documentation from a physician for an acute condition that prevents the student attending school for a period of at least four (4) weeks.
4. If the urgent reason is due to a condition that is treated by a specialist, the proper documentation will be required to be completed by the treating specialist. For example: respiratory dysfunction, documentation by a pulmonologist, allergist or immunologist will be requested. If the urgent reason is due to mental/behavioral conditions, documentation by a board certified psychiatrist will be requested.
5. The physician’s documentation is not to be construed as prescriptive. The Homebound Coordinator, in the Office of School Health Services, will make a determination regarding the approval of Homebound Instruction if the documentation provided (a) validates that the student cannot be in a school setting, (b) demonstrates a treatment plan that includes goals and or supports that return the student to the school setting as quickly as possible, and (c) provides a projected date when the student will return to school.
6. If additional information is required by the school nurse for clarification of the medical documentation, the parent/guardian must give written consent consistent with FERPA, HIPAA and the Mental Health Act. This consent will permit designated school personnel (school nurse, school counselor, principal or designee) to speak with the physician regarding information that pertains to the student’s inability to attend school.
7. A student may be provided Homebound Instruction on an intermittent basis during short but repeated periods of absences due to exacerbations of a chronic medical condition, (authenticated by the medical provider in writing). The student is expected to return to school when the exacerbation subsides. The approval for intermittent Homebound Instruction will be granted for no longer than one (1) school year and will expire at the end of any school year.
8. **Pregnant Students/Teen Parents -** Pregnant students are expected to abide by the School District of Philadelphia’s attendance policy.
9. If a pregnant student is unable to attend school for a certified medical reason (i.e. requires continuous bed rest, at risk for premature delivery, etc.) the procedure to apply for Homebound Instruction must be followed, if the absences are to extend for more than four (4) weeks.
10. Homebound Instruction is not to be granted to the student teen parent because of lack of child-care and is not to be granted solely because the pregnant student is in her third trimester.
11. If any assistance is needed in determining the proper procedure for pregnant students or teen parents contact the ELECT Program, Office of Early Childhood Education, Office of School Support, (215) 400-4270, for assistance.
12. **Referral & Approval Process** - The timeliness of the school and the Office of School Health Services processing homebound requests is dependent on the completeness and proper documentation of the required ‘Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction Form” (SEC-137A).
13. All requests for Homebound Instruction are referred to the school nurse, (see “Roles and Responsibilities, The School Nurse” section). The school nurse will give the parent/guardian:
    1. “Physician’s Referral form for Homebound Instruction” (SEC-137A, current version available online)
    2. “Parent Agreement letter” (MEH-210)
14. Completed form SEC-137A is returned to the school nurse.
    1. School nurse verifies that all parts of the SEC-137A are completed, including the anticipated return to school date.
    2. The school nurse may need to contact the medical professional(s), requesting additional information *before* requests are submitted to the Homebound Coordinator in the Office of School Health Services for review.

3. The SEC-137A and any supporting documents (SEC-137B) are

transmitted electronically (faxed, emailed, etc), to the Office of

School Health Services for review where the request for services are

approved or denied by the Homebound Coordinator.

1. The Homebound Coordinator e-mails the principal and the school nurse with the decision and, if approved, the number of instructional hours to be provided and end date of services.
2. If the request is denied, the student must attend school and shall

be marked as truant if he or she does not return to school.

1. If the Homebound Instruction request is approved:
   1. If the student is regular education, the MTSS team convenes to complete the “Education Plan for Homebound Instruction” (MEH-211), for the student. (See MTSS/IEP Team section).
   2. If the student is special education, the IEP team convenes to complete the “Education Plan for the Homebound Instruction” (MEH-211), for the student. (See MTSS/IEP Team section).
2. Identifying the Teacher who will provide homebound instruction is initiated by the principal or assistant principal where the student is enrolled (See “Teacher Identification” section).
3. The Teacher contacts the student’s parent/guardian to set up a schedule to deliver instruction. (See “Homebound Teacher General Guidelines”).
4. Quarterly progress reports and grades shall be submitted to the student’s school of enrollment following the District’s timeline for grade submission and at the termination of Homebound Instruction.
5. Student returns to school at the completion of Homebound Instruction.
   1. Parent/guardian shall be contacted by the school nurse at least once, half way through the student’s scheduled absence, for an update on the student’s progress.
   2. Requests for extension of homebound services beyond three (3) months must be approved by PDE and require a new SEC-137A (See “Renewal or Extension of Homebound Instruction” section).
   3. Requests for approval of continuing intermittent homebound service from year to year must be resubmitted in September of every school year.
6. **Renewal or Extension of Approved Service -** The school nurse will contact the parent/guardian of the student receiving Homebound Instruction at least half way through the scheduled absence (i.e., if a student is scheduled to be absent for 12 weeks, there should be contact made between the nurse and the parent/guardian by at least 6 weeks).
   1. If a treating medical specialist (a board certified psychiatrist in cases of mental illness) feels that a student will require more than three (3) months of Homebound Instruction, approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) must be obtained, as well as submission of a new Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction, (form SEC-137A).
   2. The school nurse will explain to the parent/guardian, that it is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to obtain, submit and ensure the required referral forms are completed and presented to the school in a timely manner. The school nurse will inform the parent/guardian that if the SEC-137A is incomplete or does not demonstrate an urgent medical reason for excusal of school attendance, the request will not be approved.
7. At any point the District may request additional information to clarify the need for Homebound Instruction.
8. Additional information requested may include, but is not limited to, the treatment plan, goals and objectives of treatment, transition plan to return to school, and when student can be expected to return to school.
9. If the information is not provided, the District may change the attendance status of the student from excused to unexcused followed by a truancy referral.
   1. The SEC-137A must be completed and signed well in advance of the three (3) month period expires in order for service to continue without interruption.
   2. If the school nurse does not receive a new SEC-137A, Homebound Instruction is to be discontinued by the school and the student shall be marked as truant if the student does not return to school.
10. **Student Grades, Attendance and Records**
11. Students will receive grades from Homebound Instruction by the designated homebound teacher. Grades should be submitted to the principal or assistant principal at the homebound student’s school.
12. Teachers will enter grades in the “Progress Report for Students on Homebound Instruction” (MEH-212) and shall follow the School District’s timeline for grade submission.
13. All grades and teaching hours will be reviewed by the principal prior to issuance of report cards or entry on the official student records.
14. Students who are approved to receive Homebound Instruction are to be assigned their regular home room (HOME) and are to be marked excused.
15. Student’s grades and attendance should be submitted by the homebound teacher to the school to be maintained as part of the Pupil Pocket. Failure to do so may result in funds being withheld from the assigned teacher’s reimbursement for Homebound Instruction.
16. At the completion of Homebound Instruction for the student, a copy of the Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction (MEH- 212) and the Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction (MEH-211) must be submitted to the school’s principal or administrative designee
17. **Roles and Responsibilities**

The **School Nurse** will:

* 1. Provide the parent/guardian with the “Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction” (SEC-137A) to be completed by the student’s treating medical specialist. For behavioral/mental health conditions, which prevent the student from attending school a board certified psychiatrist is the only health care provider who can assess the student and deem that the student is too ill to attend school.
  2. Review the parent’s responsibilities with the parent and have the parent sign the “Parent Agreement Letter” (MEH-210).
  3. Present the case to the MTSS team for regular education students and the IEP team for special education students.
  4. Submit a copy of the SEC-137A and the “Report of Homebound Instruction/Instruction Conducted in the Home” (SEC-137B) to: Homebound Coordinator, Office of School Health Services, 440 N. Broad Street, 3rd fl, Philadelphia. PA 19130 or transmit electronically, via email at [homeboundrequest@philasd.org](mailto:homeboundrequest@philasd.org) or if email is not available, please fax to 215 400-4921.
  5. Monitor the medical progress of the student by contact with the parent/guardian at least once, half way through the scheduled absence.
  6. Communicate with the Homebound Coordinator to ensure timely approval for continuation of service is received from PDE on requests beyond three (3) month period.
  7. Monitor the need for continuation of Homebound Instruction for the student with a new SEC-137A every three (3) months.
  8. Document information in the SIS regarding the request for services, ongoing interaction with the student, family, staff or health providers, and student’s health status.
  9. Non computerized schools will document the information on the Health Record for the Student (MEH-3).

The **Principal or Principal’s Designee** will:

* + 1. Refer all requests for Homebound Instruction from parents/guardians, agencies or other responsible parties to the school nurse. The school nurse provides the requestor with the Physician’s Referral form (SEC-137A), the Parent Agreement letter (MEH-210) and will inform the parent/guardian of the Homebound Instruction approval process.
    2. Select and assign homebound teacher(s) to the student upon receipt of notification of approval of Homebound Instruction from the school nurse (Refer to the Teacher Identification section).
    3. Monitor the attendance, payroll procedures (note: travel time 15 minutes per visit per student.) and delivery of the EC Homebound Instruction. (Hours of service, completion of required forms).
    4. The teacher of record will **print and complete** the [Homebound EC Attendance Log](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UGAjd2F08uvA66epD6Z-hsi9khJ67Mso/view?usp=sharing). The paperwork is submitted to the building administrator for signature, the administrator will give the paperwork to their school based Grant Compliance Monitor for review and processing.
    5. The teachers will include the student name or eid on the attendance log for reviewing purposes and the work completed in the Event Description portions of the attendance log.
    6. Should the assigned teacher come from a school other than the student’s home school, the teacher’s payroll school principal or designee will monitor payroll procedures. The student’s home school principal will continue to monitor instruction.
    7. Supervise and monitor instructional programs provided to students on homebound status.
    8. Assure that students shall be credited with full attendance during the approved dates for Homebound Instruction and continue to be counted on the school roll.

The **Homebound Teacher** will:

1. Review the “Homebound Teacher’s General Guidelines,” including the “Explanation of Forms Used for Homebound Instruction” section:
   1. “Parent Agreement for Homebound Instructional form” (MEH-210)
   2. “Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction” (MEH-211)
   3. “Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction” (MEH-212)
   4. The teacher of record will **print and complete** the [Homebound EC Attendance Log](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UGAjd2F08uvA66epD6Z-hsi9khJ67Mso/view?usp=sharing). The completed log will be submitted to the building administrator for a signature. The signed form will be forwarded to the building’s Grant’s Compliance Officer for review and payment. The form may not be signed electronically and it may not be copied. The original form needs to be turned in.
2. Ensure that delivery of Homebound Instruction is consistent with the School District of Philadelphia’s school year calendar and no instruction is conducted on any District-observed holidays, weekends, or during the summer holidays.
3. Instruct up to a maximum of four (4) hours per day for all assigned homebound students combined.
4. Schedule to provide instruction after school hours, concluding no later than: 7:00 pm for homebound students that are in grades K through 3; 8:00pm for homebound students in grades 4 through 8; and 9:00 pm for homebound students in grades 9 through 12.

a. It is advisable that Homebound Instruction should be delivered as close to the end of the school day as possible.

1. Telephone the parent/guardian to establish the dates and times for student instructional sessions.
2. Contact the parent/guardian prior to each student instructional session to ensure that the student is at home and available to receive instruction, prior to arriving at the home.

a. Teachers will not be compensated for the 15 minutes travel time to the student’s home when the student is not available.

1. Participate with the special education team and support team in the development of the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP).
2. Following the School Districts schedule for grade submission homebound teachers shall submit marks to be reviewed.

The **MTSS Team** will:

1. Convene to review and recommend instructional content to be

provided at home during an absence of a regular education

student at his/her school. The school nurse must be included in

the MTSS to review the medical justification for absence and

the need for Homebound Instruction.

2. Complete the “Education Plan for Students Receiving

Homebound Instruction” (MEH-211) for the homebound

teacher.

3. Reconvene if there are any difficulties in the delivery of

Homebound Instruction to the student. Coordinate a return to

school plan for the homebound student to reengage with the

instructional program.

**Interagency Meeting:**

1. An interagency meeting may be convened for students requesting Homebound Instruction for behavioral/mental health conditions, or for students who have existing interagency support, to discuss the request for Homebound Instruction and the need for the agency support.
2. Parents/guardians must be informed that students excused from school and provided with Homebound Instruction based on a mental health diagnosis are expected to maintain and report progress on the student’s treatment plan from the outside agency.
3. Parent/ guardian shall be informed that termination of treatment may result in the discontinuation of Homebound Instruction and designation of truancy on the student attendance report.
4. A plan to return to school should be developed at the interagency meeting. The plan may consist of, but not be limited to: having Homebound Instruction take place within the student’s school or a public library; having the homebound student start a modified school schedule along with supplemental Homebound Instruction; wrap-around services, etc.

The **IEP team** will:

1. Convene to review the IEP and determine free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for Homebound Instruction during the approved period of absence. The school nurse must be included as part of the team to review the medical justification for absence and the need for Homebound Instruction.
2. Complete the “Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction” (MEH-211), for the homebound teacher.
3. Reconvene if there are any difficulties in the delivery of Homebound Instruction to the student.
4. Organize a return plan for the homebound student to re-engage with their instructional program.
5. Students who are receiving Instruction Conducted in the Home will require one (1) Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction (SEC-137A) at the beginning of the IEP placement and once, yearly. The IEP team for students receiving Instruction Conducted in the Home, which is considered a special education placement, will monitor student’s progress and continued need for services at home. The school nurse is a member of the IEP team and must be included in recommendations for continuation of or changes in service.

The **Parent/Guardian** of the homebound student will:

1. Review the “Parent Agreement for Homebound Instruction” letter (MEH- 210).
2. Return the completed “Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction” (SEC-137A) form to the school nurse for review.
3. Collaborate with the assigned homebound teacher dates and times after school hours that would be optimal for instruction of the child.
4. Sign the “Parent Agreement for Homebound Instruction” letter (MEH-210), and return to homebound teacher.
5. Ensure that a responsible adult is present in the home for the instructional hour.
6. Provide a clean, quiet, well-lit room with adequate heat where the homebound teacher and the child will work.
7. Eliminate all distractions such as TV, radio, electronic devices other than as instructional tools, pets and other young children during instructional and study time.
8. Have the child appropriately dressed and ready for instruction upon arrival of the homebound teacher.
9. Attempt to arrange doctor appointments, therapy, etc. so they do not conflict with the scheduled instruction when possible. Notify the teacher by 8:30 am to cancel instructional time if the student is too ill to be taught or if any other persons in the home are suffering from a contagious illness.
10. Provide the school nurse with progress updates of the child, at least once, half way through the scheduled absence for Homebound Instruction.
11. Be responsible for submission to the school nurse a new “Physician’s Referral for Homebound Instruction” (SEC-137A) well in advance of the completion of three (3) months of instruction, in the event that the student will require an extension of Homebound Instruction beyond the time previously approved.

**Teacher Identification**

1. It is the responsibility of the principal or principal’s designee to identify a teacher for Homebound Instruction.
2. In elementary schools the student’s teacher of record shall be asked first regarding becoming the student’s homebound teacher.
3. For special education students in elementary school, the student’s special education teacher of record shall be asked first.
4. In middle schools & high schools the student’s teacher(s) for the area(s) in which the student will be receiving instruction is approached first regarding becoming the student’s homebound teacher.
5. If the position(s) of homebound teacher(s) is unfilled at this point, the position for homebound teacher shall be advertised throughout the school. Selection will be based on article XVII, C.1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. (Should multiple applicants equally meet the criteria, selection will be based on location seniority date.)
6. If the position(s) of homebound teacher(s) continues to be unfilled, the Neighborhood Network shall be contacted to advertise for the position throughout the Network. Selection will be based on article XVII, C.1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Should multiple applicants equally meet the criteria, selection will be based on system seniority date).
7. If the position(s) of homebound teacher(s) continues to be unfilled, the principal shall notify Student Health Services at studenthealth@philasd.org.
8. While the position is unfilled, the school may continue to reach out to the student and family and, if appropriate to the health status of the student, engage the student by methods such as learning packets, e-mail, Skype, etc., until a teacher begins Homebound Instruction.
9. **Instructional Hours -**Homebound Instruction is intended as a temporary accommodation to keep the student engaged in the school program. It is not intended, nor can it be construed, as a method of delivering the full curriculum.
10. If the Homebound Coordinator in the Office of School Health Services approves the request for Homebound Instruction for a minimum of four (4) weeks, but less than three (3) months, Homebound Instruction will consist of:
    1. Elementary Level (K-8): Two (2) one hour sessions weekly.
    2. Secondary Level (9-12): Three (3) one hour sessions weekly.
    3. Graduating High School Students (12th grade): student carrying three (3) or more major subjects may receive up to a total of five (5) hours weekly.
11. If the Homebound Coordinator in the Office of School Health Services approves a request for an extension of homebound services after the completion of three (3) months, instructional hours may consist of Intermittent Homebound Instruction.
12. Intermittent Homebound Instruction may be provided for students with chronic medical conditions that, although under treatment, have episodes of exacerbation and abatement of symptoms, resulting in recurring periodic absences.
    1. Elementary students (K-8) are to receive two (2) hours of instruction per the equivalent of 5 days of absences and secondary students (9-11) are to receive three (3) hours of instruction per the equivalent of 5 days of absences. Graduating high school students (12th grade) carrying three (3) or more major subjects may receive up to a total of five (5) hours per the equivalent of 5 days of absences.
    2. The week of absences must be for the condition that the Intermittent Homebound Instruction was approved.

**Example 1**: If an elementary student has scheduled kidney dialysis for 3 days per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), he can receive Intermittent Homebound Instruction once he has missed 5 days of school. Therefore, after the second consecutive Wednesday he would have had five (5) days of excused absences because of his chronic condition and would be entitled to two (2) hours of instruction.

**Example 2**: A high school student in grade 9-11 has sickle cell disease and experiences a period of sickle cell crisis that lasts for a period of ten (10) school days. Once the student feels better she would be entitled to six (6) hours of Intermittent Homebound Instruction.

1. **Extended School Year (ESY) Programs**
2. A student with an IEP who is receiving Homebound Instruction that is approved to continue to the end of the school year and whose IEP team has determined is eligible for ESY may be eligible for ESY Homebound Instruction.
   1. ESY homebound service must have been authorized through the usual Homebound Instruction approval process.
3. ESY Homebound Instruction teachers must be selected though the ESY teacher selection process as part of the regular ESY program
4. **Homebound Instruction for Non-Public Schools**
5. In keeping with ACT 89, homebound services will be provided on a contractual basis effective September 1997, by the following agencies:
   1. CORA Services
6. Initial notification to one of the above agencies of the approval of services, as well as to the school nurse, will be made by the Homebound Coordinator in the Office of School Health Services, after which the agency may contact the school nurse directly.
7. **Explanation of Forms used for Homebound Instruction**

*(All forms may be found SDP’s website online)*

1. Form MEH-211: Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction
   1. Completed by the MTSS or IEP team, once approval for Homebound Instruction is received from the Homebound Coordinator in the Office of School Health Services.
   2. The student’s home school teacher(s) are required to complete the Current Educational Program section.
   3. The team, including the home school teacher(s), completes the Proposed Educational Plan section.
2. Form MEH-210: The Parent Agreement for Homebound Instruction
   1. A completed copy is to be given to the assigned homebound teacher and a copy should remain in the student’s pupil pocket.
   2. Should be given to the homebound student’s parent/guardian on the initial visit to the homebound student’s home, or sooner, for review and the *required* signature.
   3. A signed copy of the Parent Agreement shall be kept at the homebound student’s home school.
3. Form MEH-212: Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction
4. Required to be completed by the homebound teacher(s) at least once during any report period (or convalescence period of shorter duration)
5. Curriculum Areas reflected on the MEH-212 should be consistent with the areas designated on the MEH-211 Proposed Education Plan.
6. The MEH-212 is to be reviewed and verified by the principal or the administrative designee before the issuance of any formal grades.
7. A copy of the MEH-212 may be given to the parent/guardian after the principal or the administrative designee’s review and verification. A copy must also be forwarded to the student’s home school to be maintained in the student’s pupil pocket.