

Home Schooling in Tennessee

In Tennessee, parents have the option to educate their children at home, an option known as homeschooling or home education.

Parents in Tennessee may choose to home school their own children in grades K - 12. The Tennessee Home School law (Tennessee Code Annotated§ 49-6-3050) states: "A home school is a school conducted or directed by a parent or parents or a legal guardian or guardians for their own children."

Parents desiring to home school their own children may do so by choosing one of the following three options.

For additional questions email Home: School@tn.gov.

Independent Home School

Parents may home school their own children pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated§ 49-6-3050 by registering with their local school district. The law states that independent home school students must:

- Provide annual notice to the local director of schools prior to each school year of the parent-teacher's intent to conduct a home school and, for the purpose of reporting only, submission to the director of schools of the names, number, ages and grade levels of the children to be home schooled, the location of the school, the proposed curriculum to be offered, the proposed hours of instruction and the qualifications of the parent-teacher";
- Maintain attendance records and submit these records to the Director of Schools at the end of each school year;
- Submit proof of vaccination and receipt of any health services or examinations as required by law. Parents choosing this educational option should begin by contacting the local school district. The parent will be required to complete an Intent to Home School form and provide evidence of a high school diploma or GED. Student attendance (at least 4 hours per day, 180 days per year) must be reported to the local school district at the end of the school year. Testing of independent home school students is required in grades 5, 7, and 9 and coordinated through the local school district.

Home Schooling Eligibility Requirements

Requirement	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Parent's Education	High School Diploma or GED	High School Diploma or GED
Registration	With local school system prior to each school year	With local school system prior to each school year
Attendance	4 Hours per day, 180 days per year	4 Hours per day, 180 days per year
Record Keeping and Reporting	Attendance Record sent to Director of Schools at the end of school year	Attendance Record sent to Director of Schools at the end of school year
Testing	In grades 5 and 7, same state board approved secure standardized tests required of public school students	In grade 9 same state board approved secure standardized tests required of public school students but NOT the high school proficiency test
Location and Cost of Testing	In the local public school which the student would otherwise attend at no charge OR by a professional testing service at parent's expense	In the local public school which the student would otherwise attend at no charge OR by a professional testing service at parent's expense
Test Sanctions	1 year or more below grade level for 2 years in a row, superintendent MAY require parents to enroll child in public or private school (unless child is learning disabled)	1 year or more below grade level for 2 years in a row, superintendent MAY require parents to enroll child in public or private school (unless child is learning disabled)
Enter or Re-Enter Public or Approved Private School	Must be tested for grade placement	Must be tested in each subject for credit toward graduation
High School Diploma or Certificate of Attendance	None provided-parent creates	None provided – parent creates

Church-related Umbrella School

By authority of the same statute, parents may also home school their own children by registering with a church-related "umbrella" school defined by Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-50-801. Parents who choose this option will be required to provide evidence to the local school district that their child is enrolled in a church-related school. An Intent to Home School form is not required for students who enrolled in a church-related school. The church-related school will determine record keeping and test requirements for students enrolled in an umbrella program.

Accredited Online School

Parents may also enroll their child in an accredited online school. Parents choosing this educational option must be sure to determine that the school has legitimate accreditation status and will be required to provide evidence to the local school district that their child is enrolled in an accredited online school.

To be an acceptable online school for students who reside in Tennessee, the school must be accredited by one of regional accrediting agencies listed below:

- Cognia (formerly AdvancED)
- NWAC - Northwest Accreditation Commission
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) MSCES - Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools
- MSCSS - Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools
- NCA CASI - North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement
- National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and affiliates (e.g., SAIS)
- National Council of Private School Accreditation (NCPSA)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can a parent withdraw a child from public school to home school at any point in the school year?

Yes. The laws regarding independent home school do not require filing an intent to home school by a specific date. Parents or legal guardians may withdraw their child from public school and register as an independent home school at any point in the school year. Likewise, parents or legal guardians may withdraw their child from public school and enroll them in a non-public school, including a home school umbrella or accredited online school, at any point in the year if the non-public school accepts the student. The local school system may require proof of enrollment upon withdrawal. Compulsory education laws require that a student be enrolled in an approved public, non-public or independent home school.

If a student is 18 years old, can they withdraw themselves as an independent home school student?

No. Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050(a)(1) defines a home school as “a school conducted or directed by a parent or parents or a legal guardian or guardians for their own children.” Therefore, students would not be allowed to withdraw themselves from their current public or non-public school and enroll as an independent home school student even if they are 18 years old.

Is a power of attorney sufficient as proof of legal guardianship?

No. A power of attorney is not the same thing as legal guardianship for the purpose of withdrawing a student from home school. Legal guardianship is appointed by a judge through a court of law.

Can a student who has attended an independent home school during the kindergarten year enter the first grade in a public school?

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-201 requires students in Tennessee to attend an approved kindergarten program prior to entering the first grade. Independent home school is deemed an approved kindergarten program provided the student is five on or before August 15 and is properly registered with the school district for independent home school. Upon enrolling into a public school, the home school student may be tested to determine placement.

What rights do home school students have for special education services from the local school district?

Students who are home schooled are entitled to the same special education services as children who are placed in private schools by their parent or legal guardian. Students with disabilities who are placed by their parents or legal guardian in a private school or home school are not entitled to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) through an individualized education program (IEP). The school district is responsible for providing equitable services to home school students who are determined eligible as a child with a disability. This is accomplished through a “services plan” and is generally a type of related service, such as speech therapy, as determined by the school district where the student is registered to home school. Parents and legal guardians should contact their local school district for complete information.

Are home school students allowed to take classes or participate in extracurricular activities at a public school?

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050(a)(1), “Public school facilities may be used by home school participants with the approval of the principal of the school, but this permissive authority shall not be construed to confer any right upon the participants to use public school facilities. If approved, use shall be in accordance with rules established by the local board of education.”

Are home school students allowed to participate in public school athletic programs?

An independently registered home school student may participate in public school athletic programs if allowed by the local education agency (LEA). For interscholastic athletic competition, LEAs must allow home school students to participate under certain conditions: see Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050(e) below. This does not apply to students attending a Category IV church-related school or a Category III accredited online school. Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-

3050(e) states:

- If any of the public schools established under the jurisdiction of an LEA are members of an organization or an association that regulates interscholastic athletic competition, and if such organization or association establishes or maintains eligibility requirements for home school students desiring to participate in interscholastic athletics at a member school, then the LEA shall permit participation in interscholastic athletics at those schools by home school students who satisfy the eligibility requirements established by the organization or association.
- This subsection (e) does not guarantee that a home school student trying out for an interscholastic athletics team will make the team or supplant the authority of coaches or other school officials in deciding who makes the team. This subsection (e) is intended to guarantee only that the home school student shall not be prohibited from trying out for an interscholastic athletics team, if the student is eligible under the rules of the organization or association, solely by reason of the student's status as a home school student.
- This subsection (e) shall not be construed to limit or supplant the authority of the organization or association to determine eligibility and to establish, modify and enforce its rules and eligibility requirements, including those applicable to home school students

Are home school students allowed to participate in JROTC?

Yes. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 2031(h)(1), high schools are required to allow home school students to enroll in JROTC. The federal law states, “Each public secondary educational institution that maintains a unit under this section shall permit membership in the unit to homeschooled students residing in the area served by the institution who are qualified for membership in the unit (but for lack of enrollment in the institution).”

Is the state curriculum mandated for independent home school students?

No. Parent-teachers are responsible for selecting and purchasing the curriculum used in their independent home school. Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050 provides little guidance specific to the curriculum a parent or legal guardian must use. The law states that the parent or legal guardian shall submit the proposed curriculum to the director of schools, however it does not specify what that curriculum should be. Parents should keep in mind the testing requirement in grades 5, 7, and 9 in which their child will be tested on the grade level state curriculum in reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Those subjects should be included in the proposed curriculum to ensure students will be prepared for testing in those areas.

Is the local school district responsible for testing students enrolled in church-related home school umbrella programs or accredited online schools?

No. The local school district is responsible for testing only those students registered as independent home school students. The church-related umbrella program or accredited online school is responsible for testing its enrolled students.

Can a parent or legal guardian of an independent home school student in grades 5, 7, or 9 choose to have their student tested somewhere other than their local school system?

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050(b)(5)(A-B) states that tests can be administered by a professional testing service within thirty (30) days of the date of the statewide test and at the expense of the parent-teacher. However, it must be the same state-board-approved tests administered in public schools. Currently, there are no state-board-approved assessments available through a professional testing service location.

Which end-of-course exams are required of 9th grade independent home school students?

If a home school student in grade 9 is taking a course for which there is an end-of-course test, that student should be required to take that end-of-course exam. That will mean some 9th grade students, depending on the courses they are taking, will have fewer tests to take that year than others.

Who is responsible for issuing a diploma or transcripts for a home school student?

Transcripts and diplomas should be issued by the school where the student was enrolled. Parent-teachers are responsible for creating and issuing transcripts and diplomas for independent home school students. Students attending a home school umbrella program, or an accredited online school will be issued transcripts and diplomas from the non-public school.

How do I know if an accredited online school is approved in Tennessee?

To be an acceptable accredited online school for a student residing in Tennessee, the school must be accredited by an agency that has been approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education. The board of education has authorized these accrediting agencies to approve Category III non-public schools for students in Tennessee. To identify which agencies are approved, visit the Home School webpage and click on the Accredited Online Schools List. The approved agencies are listed at the top of the page.

What if I want to enroll my child in an online school that is not approved by a Tennessee State Board of Education authorized regional accrediting agency?

To comply with Tennessee's compulsory attendance laws, students must attend an approved public, private, or home school if they are between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17), inclusively. To be considered an approved school, online schools must be accredited by an agency approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education (see question #16). If a parent or legal guardian wants to use an online school that is not approved in Tennessee, the parent or legal guardian may choose to register their child as an independent home school student. This would allow the parent-teacher to use the online school as part of their selected curriculum for their student. The parent or legal guardian would be responsible for meeting the requirements for operating an independent home school. Another option might be enrolling the student in an approved church-related umbrella school that allows the parent-teacher to select their own curriculum resources. The parent would be responsible for discussing the curriculum requirements with the selected umbrella school. A list of approved Category IV church-related schools can be located on the Non-Public Schools webpage.

Can a home school student graduate early?

Yes. Home school students can graduate early so long as they meet the early graduation

guidelines of the district where they live. State Board of Education Policy 2.103 states, “A student who does not participate in the Move on When Ready program may still graduate earlier than the end of their senior year of high school, provided the student meets all graduation requirements outlined in Section 1 of this policy and any additional requirements for early graduation set by the LEA.”

Can I hire a tutor for my home school student?

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050(c) states, “In the event of illness of a parent-teacher, or at the discretion of the parent-teacher, a tutor, having the same qualifications that would be required of a parent-teacher teaching the grade level or course, may be employed by the parent-teacher.”

This does not allow the parent-teacher to substitute the tutor’s credentials for the parent-teacher’s credentials when registering the child for independent home school. The parent or legal guardian must still meet the requirements for home schooling.

Can my home school child take the ACT or PSAT at the local public school?

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3050(f)(3) allows independent home school students to take the AP and PSAT/NMSQT examinations at any public school offering the examinations. Independent home school students wanting to take the ACT or SAT can sign up to take these assessments at any open testing location. More information is available on the ACT and SAT websites.

Do credits transfer for home school students?

The Tennessee State Board of Education has approved rules for the transfer of credits for students enrolled in non-public or home school. Students enrolled in a Category IV church-related home school umbrella or registered as independent home school students may be required to take placement tests when transferring to a public or non-public school. Students enrolled in a Category III accredited school will receive transfer credit for work completed when transferring to a public school or a Category I, II, or III private school if the school from which the student is transferring supplies an appropriately certified transcript to the enrolling school.

Can a home school student participate in TN Promise?

Yes. According to the Tennessee Promise Frequently Asked Questions at Tennessee Promise Scholarship (tn.gov), “A high school senior, beginning with the class of 2015, who graduates from an eligible Tennessee high school, completes a Tennessee home school program, or prior to his or her 19th birthday, obtains a GED or HiSET diploma. Students will apply by the November deadline of their high school senior year or the year in which he/she will obtain the GED/HiSET and begin working with a mentor and attending mandatory meetings in their counties.”

Category III Online Schools

To be an acceptable online school for students who reside in Tennessee, the school must be accredited by one of the regional accrediting agencies listed below:

- Cognia (Formally AdvancED)
 - NWAC. Northwest Accreditation Commission
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)
 - MSCES - Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools
 - MSCSS - Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
- National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and affiliates (e.g., SAIS)
- National Council of Private School Accreditation (NCPSA)

Partial Listing of acceptable Distance Learning Schools - Please check the websites of these schools to ascertain that they are still accredited by one of the associations listed above. Accreditation status may change. It is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to determine that their child is attending an accredited online school.

Non-Public School Name	Website
Abeka Academy	www.abekaacademy.org
Acellus Academy	www.acellusacademy.com
Altis International School	altischool.com
American Academy Online	www.theamericanacademy.com
American High School	americanonlinehigh.com
American High School/ Virtual	www.americanhighschool.org
American School	www.americanschoolofcorr.com
Apex Learning	www.apexlearning.com
ArchwayOnline	www.archwayonline.com
Ashworth College/James Madison High School	www.jmhs.com
Blueprint Education	www.blueprinteducation.org
Bridgeway Academy	www.homeschoolacademy.com
Brigham Young University	is.byu.edu
Calvert	www.calverteducation.com
Catholic Schools	www.csk12.com
Christa McAuliffe Academy-School of Arts and Sciences Christian Academy of America	www.cmasas.org
Citizens High School	www.citizenshighschool.com

Clonlara School	www.clonlara.org/home
CompuHigh/Whitmore School	www.compuhigh.com
Cornerstone Christian School	www.ccsonlinecampus.org
Cumberland Christian Academy (High School Only)	www.cumberlandchristianacad.org
Dolphin STEM Academy	www.dolphinstemacademy.com
EdOptions Online Academy	www.edoptionsacademy.com
Enlightium Academy	www.enlightiumacademy.com

Meningococcal ACWY Vaccine:

What You Need to Know

Many vaccine information statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis

Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite www.immunize.org/vis

1. Why get vaccinated?

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine can help protect against **meningococcal disease** caused by serogroups A, C, W, and Y. A different meningococcal vaccine is available that can help protect against serogroup B.

Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and infections of the blood. Even when it is treated, meningococcal disease kills 10 to 15 infected people out of 100. And of those who survive, about 10 to 20 out of every 100 will suffer disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage, kidney damage, loss of limbs, nervous system problems, or severe scars from skin grafts.

Meningococcal disease is rare and has declined in the United States since the 1990s. However, it is a severe disease with a significant risk of death or lasting disabilities in people who get it.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Certain people are at increased risk, including:

- Infants younger than one year old
- Adolescents and young adults 16 through 23 years old
- People with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*, the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease
- People at risk because of an outbreak in their community

2. Meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Adolescents need 2 doses of a meningococcal ACWY vaccine:

- First dose: 11 or 12 years of age
- Second (booster) dose: 16 years of age

In addition to routine vaccination for adolescents, meningococcal ACWY vaccine is also recommended for **certain groups of people**:

- People at risk because of a serogroup A, C, W, or Y meningococcal disease outbreak
- People with HIV
- Anyone whose spleen is damaged or has been removed, including people with sickle cell disease
- Anyone with a rare immune system condition called “complement component deficiency”
- Anyone taking a type of drug called a “complement inhibitor,” such as eculizumab (also called “Soliris”®) or ravulizumab (also called “Ultomiris”®)
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*
- Anyone traveling to or living in a part of the world where meningococcal disease is common, such as parts of Africa
- College freshmen living in residence halls who have not been completely vaccinated with meningococcal ACWY vaccine
- U.S. military recruits



3. Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone meningococcal ACWY vaccination until a future visit.

There is limited information on the risks of this vaccine for pregnant or breastfeeding people, but no safety concerns have been identified. A pregnant or breastfeeding person should be vaccinated if indicated.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting meningococcal ACWY vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.

4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Redness or soreness where the shot is given can happen after meningococcal ACWY vaccination.
- A small percentage of people who receive meningococcal ACWY vaccine experience muscle pain, headache, or tiredness.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

5. What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*

6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Claims regarding alleged injury or death due to vaccination have a time limit for filing, which may be as short as two years. Visit the VICP website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Visit the website of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for vaccine package inserts and additional information at www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call **1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)** or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

