



Home Instruction Fact Sheet

FACT SHEET

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Who may receive home instruction and how does it work?

Home instruction is an exception to the compulsory school attendance requirement in §7-301 of the Education Article and is available to all students pursuant to COMAR 13A.10.01 *Home Instruction*. A parent or guardian who chooses to provide a home instruction program for their child must complete the local school system's Home School/Home Instruction Notification Form which indicates consent to the requirements of the home instruction regulation. The Notification Form must be submitted 15 days before the beginning of a home instruction program.

What must be provided in home instruction?

The home instruction program must provide regular, thorough instruction in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age, including instruction in English, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health, and physical education; and must take place on a regular basis during the school year and be of sufficient duration to implement the instruction program. The home instruction program may include enrollment on a part-time or full-time basis in courses offered by accredited or unaccredited colleges.

Who can provide these services?

Either the parent or guardian provides the program and maintains a portfolio of materials to be reviewed by the local superintendent or designee which demonstrates regular, thorough instruction in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age, or the parent or guardian provides a program under the supervision of a nonpublic school or institution approved for supervision by the Maryland State Department of Education's Nonpublic School Approval Branch.

In which public school activities may a child receiving home instruction participate?

Upon request of a parent or guardian, a child receiving home instruction may participate in the regularly scheduled standardized testing programs that are administered in the public school the child is eligible to attend.

Federal law allows home instructed students to apply for participation in the United States Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC). Each public secondary educational institution that has a JROTC program must permit membership to home schooled students residing in the area served by the institution. Students must be qualified for membership in the JROTC unit.

The home instruction regulations do not include a provision to allow children receiving home instruction to participate in courses or activities offered by the local school system other than the standardized testing programs and federally allowed JROTC.

What happens if the program is deficient?

If a local superintendent or designee determines on the review of the home instruction program or inspection of the portfolio that a child is not receiving a regular, thorough instruction, the local superintendent or designee shall notify the parent or guardian in writing of any deficiencies in the program. The following apply:

- (1) Within 30 days of receipt of written notification of any deficiencies, the parent or guardian shall provide evidence to the local superintendent that the deficiency has been or is being corrected;
- (2) If a local superintendent determines there is not a satisfactory plan to correct a deficiency or if a deficiency is not corrected, a child shall be enrolled promptly in a public school or a nonpublic school.

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| <i>What responsibilities do the nonpublic schools or institutions have regarding annual verification?</i> | The supervising nonpublic school or institution must annually verify with the local superintendent the identification of home schooled students whose instruction is continuing, newly added, or no longer under its supervision. The school or institution must also notify the local superintendent if a change occurs in the status of a home schooled student whose instruction was under its supervision during the school year. |
| <i>Are online programs considered home instruction?</i> | If the online school is not a Maryland public school or approved Maryland private (nonpublic) school, the student must be registered as a home schooled student in order to partake in the online program. |
| <i>Does the school system provide instructional materials for my child?</i> | No. A parent or guardian who chooses to provide a home instruction program for their child is responsible for selecting the curriculum and/or instructional materials to be used. The home instruction regulation outlines certain aspects of the program that must be present, but also reserves for the parent or guardian a certain amount of flexibility to create a program that meets the needs of the child. |
| <i>Who may teach my child while on home instruction?</i> | <p>As the provider of a home instruction program, the parent or guardian may choose to teach their child inside or outside of the home and may also arrange for individualized instruction to be delivered by another person inside or outside of the home. Either way, the parent or guardian remains ultimately responsible for compliance with the home instruction regulations.</p> <p>Some families may seek to utilize a co-op arrangement, in which a group of parents and guardians come together to provide instruction to all of their children in certain subjects or on certain days, either by dividing teaching duties among them or by collectively hiring a tutor. While this may be used to supplement a home instruction program, a co-op cannot provide regular daily instruction to an organized group of students who are not in the same family because this may constitute an unapproved nonpublic "school."</p> |
| <i>What is the process for a child receiving home instruction to return to a public school?</i> | The parent or guardian must contact the local school system for specific procedures regarding transferring from home instruction to enrollment in a public school. The local superintendent or designee shall determine by an evaluation the placement of the child and any credits to be awarded toward high school graduation. The evaluation may include administration of standardized tests and examinations and interviews with the child. |
| <i>Does a child receive a Maryland High School Diploma upon completion of the home instruction program?</i> | <p>No. A Maryland High School Diploma is a specific type of high school diploma that can only be issued by public schools, and which can only be issued after a child has met the requirements of COMAR 13A.03.02 <i>Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland</i>.</p> <p>Another option is to obtain a Maryland High School Diploma by examination, which requires that a child successfully complete the General Educational Development (GED) test. If a child is 16 years old or over and is either participating in a home instruction program or has completed such a program, they may register for the GED test.</p> |
| <i>Where can I get additional information?</i> | Every school system in Maryland has a home school instruction office. Parents or guardians may contact the home school instruction office for information. Parents or guardian may also contact the Student Services and Strategic Planning Branch, Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy, Maryland State Department of Education, at 410-767-3364, or visit the Department's Home Instruction website . |