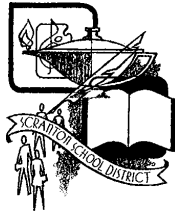


SCRANTON SCHOOL DISTRICT



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HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

I. Purpose

The purpose of homebound instruction is to provide students with some level of instructional services during a temporary period of absence so that, on return to school, they can re-engage successfully with their instructional program.

II. Legal Standard

- 22 PA Code, Chapter 11.25 requires that a principal or teacher may, upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent reasons, excuse a student for nonattendance during a temporary period, but the term “urgent reasons” shall be strictly construed and does not permit irregular attendance. A school district shall adopt rules and procedures governing temporary excusals that may be granted by principals under this section. Temporary excusals may not exceed three months.
- A school district may request approval from PDE to extend the provision of homebound instruction, which shall be reevaluated every three months. When a student receives homebound instruction, the student may be counted for attendance purposes as if in school. A school district shall be reimbursed for homebound instruction provided to a student under section 2510.1 of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P.S. § 25-2510.1).
- A school district shall adopt policies that describe the instructional services that are available to students who have been excused under this section. The policies must include statements that define the responsibilities of both the district and the student with regard to these instructional services.

III. Criteria for Eligibility

A student may be excused from school attendance and provided homebound instruction for a period not to exceed three months, providing the following criteria are met:

- The parent/guardian must document urgent reasons by providing medical documentation from a licensed physician, psychiatrist, public school psychologist, or certified registered nurse practitioner for an acute condition that prevents the student attending school for a period greater than four weeks.

- For example, if the urgent reason is due to respiratory dysfunction, documentation by the 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.
- 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, principal, etc.) to speak with the physician regarding information that is pertaining to the student's inability to attend school.

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. The student is expected to return to school when the exacerbation subsides. Chronic medical conditions such as sickle cell anemia, chronic asthma, or cystic fibrosis may qualify a student to be approved for intermittent service. The approval for intermittent homebound instruction will be granted for no longer than one school year and will expire June 30th of any school year. At any point the

The Chief of Compliance Officer may request additional information to justify continuation of temporary excused absences of homebound instruction. Student absences for intermittent homebound instruction should reflect absences due to the identified chronic illness and may need to be verified by the treating specialists. 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 months will require resubmission of the request for homebound instruction, which may not be approved.

IV. Pregnant Students/Teen Parents

- Pregnant students are expected to abide by the Scranton School District's compulsory attendance policy. If a pregnant student is unable to attend school for a certified medical reason (i.e., required bed rest, at risk for premature delivery, etc.), she will have to follow the procedure for receiving homebound instruction should the absences extend more than four weeks. A request for medical records and progress notes may be required to verify the treatment plan.
- Once a pregnant student delivers her child, her absences from school are to be marked as excused for a maximum of thirty school days. Once the pregnant student delivers, she should not be considered automatically eligible for homebound instruction.
- If the student's physician has a certified medical reason for the student to be absent from school for more than six weeks post partum, the Student Intervention Team consisting of Guidance, Social Work and School Nurse should initiate the homebound instruction process.

- 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.
- For assistance in determining the proper procedure for pregnant students or teen parents, contact the Administration.

V. Procedures

- The timelines of the school and the district in processing homebound requests is dependent on the completeness and proper documentation of the required Physician's Referral.
- All requests for homebound instruction are referred to the Chief of Compliance Officer. The Chief of Compliance Officer will provide the parent/guardian with the following:
 - Scranton School District Physician's Referral for Homebound Instruction;
 - Review the parent's responsibilities and the Parent Agreement Letter;
 - Completed Scranton School District Physician's Referral for Homebound Instruction returned to the Chief of Compliance Officer;
 - verification from the Chief of Compliance Officer that all parts of the Physician's Referral are completed, including the anticipated return to school date or recommended reasonable accommodations to expedite student's return to school.
 - NOTE: The Chief of Compliance Officer may need to contact the medical professional(s), requesting the temporary excused absence before homebound instruction is approved.
- Approval or Denial of Request of Homebound Instruction

Approved Homebound Instruction:

-Regular Education: The SIT Team convenes to complete the Education Plan for Homebound Instruction for the student.

-Special Education: IEP Team convenes to complete the Education Plan for the Homebound Instruction for the student.

If the request is denied, the student must attend school and shall be marked as truant if (s) he does not return to school.

- Teacher identification process is initiated by the principal or assistant principal.
- Teacher contacts the student's parent/guardian to set up a schedule to deliver instruction.
- Progress reports and marks shall be submitted to the student's home school following the district's timeline for mark submission and at the termination of homebound instruction.
- Student returns to school at the completion of homebound instruction.
 - Parent/Guardian shall be contacted by the Chief of Compliance Officer halfway through the student's scheduled absence for an update on the student's progress.
 - Chief of Compliance Officer may request medical and psychiatric treatment plan and progress notes from treating physician and specialists.
 - Requests for extension of homebound services beyond three months will require a new Physician's Referral.
 - Requests for approval of intermittent homebound service must be resubmitted by September of every school year.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

School Nurse

- will provide the parent/guardian with a Physician's Referral for Homebound Instruction Form to be completed by the student's treating physician or specialists. 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.
- will verify that the student has a current, mandated physical and updated, required mandated immunizations.
- will issue a Report of Physical Examination to parent/guardian if no physical is on file and request documentation of immunizations.
- will present the case to the School Counselor for regular education students and the Case Manager for the special education students.
- will submit a copy of the Physician's Referral and the Report for Homebound Instruction form to the Chief of Compliance Officer for review, consultation and approval.

- will monitor the medical progress of the student by contact with the parent/guardian at least halfway through the scheduled absence.
- will monitor the need for continuation of homebound instruction for the student with a new Physician's Referral every three months.
- will document information in eSchool in HB Program.
- will add code HMBD, start and end dates to the Health History Screen, then add the end date when this code once homebound instruction has ended.
- will ensure non-computerized schools will document the information on the health record for the student.
- will document in eSchool the following:
 - Receipt of the Physician's Request for Homebound Instruction and the physician, specialist, psychiatrist, and certified registered nurse practitioner making the request;
 - Reason for request including history and circumstance;
 - Reason homebound instruction was approved or denied;
 - Start date and end date of the homebound instruction;
 - Notification of administrative designee that a teacher should be assigned within five school days; and
 - Any mental health progress, from the mental/behavioral health agency or the psychiatrist.

Principal or Assistant Principal

- will refer all requests for homebound instruction from parents/guardians, agencies or other responsible parties to the Chief of Compliance Officer. The Chief of Compliance Officer provides the requestor with the Physician's Referral form, the Parent Agreement letter and will inform the parent/guardian of the homebound instruction approval process.
- will refer all documentation to the Office of Special Education and Support Services to select and assign homebound teacher(s) to the student upon receipt of notification of approval of homebound instruction from the school nurse within three school days.

- will monitor the attendance and delivery of the Homebound Instruction (hours of service and completion)

of required forms). If the parent/guardian cancels an instructional session, the student is considered absent for that day.

- will supervise and monitor instructional programs provided to students on homebound status.
- will ensure that students be credited with full attendance during the approved dates for homebound instruction and continue to be counted on the school roll.

Administrative Assistant

- will give teacher(s) the Homebound Teacher's General Guidelines explaining the use of the forms and the possible consequences of non-compliance with School District policy with respect to completion and timely submission of the:
 - Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction;
 - Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction; and
 - Daily Time Report.
- will record the teacher's hours on the HB payroll after the hours have been approved by Office of Special Education and Support Services. Hours are to be emailed/hand-delivered with administrator's signature, once the homebound teacher completes the form.

Homebound Teacher

- will review the Homebound Teacher's General Guidelines and review the Explanation of Homebound Forms section in the Homebound Instruction Manual:
 - Parent Agreement for Homebound Instructional Form;
 - Educational Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction;
 - Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction;
 - Daily Time Sheet;
 - Employee Reimbursement Form.
- will instruct up to a maximum of four hours per week for all assigned homebound students combined.
- will schedule to provide instruction after school hours, concluding no later than 7:00 pm for homebound students that are in grades K through 3; 8:00 pm for homebound students in grades 4 through 12. It is advisable that homebound instruction should be delivered as

close to the end of the day as possible.

- will telephone the parent/guardian to establish the dates and times for student instructional sessions.
- will communicate and participate with the special education team and support the team in the development of the student's IEP.
- will submit marks to be reviewed following the School District's schedule for mark submission.
- will ensure that delivery of homebound instruction is consistent with the Scranton School District school year calendar and will not deliver instruction on any School District observed holidays, weekends, or during the summer holidays.

Guidance Counselor

- will 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 Chief Compliance Officer is to be included and informed to review the medical justification for absence and the need for homebound instruction.
- will complete the Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction for the homebound teacher.
- will reconvene if there are any difficulties in the delivery of homebound instruction to the student.
- will organize a return plan for the homebound student to return to the school reengaged with the instructional program.
- will inform the parent/guardian about credit counts that are needed in order to graduate if homebound instruction is extended.

Interagency Meeting

- An interagency meeting shall be convened for students requesting homebound instructional services 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.
 - 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.

- Parents/Guardians shall be informed that termination of treatment may result in the discontinuation of homebound service and designation of truancy on the student attendance report.
- A plan to return to school should be developed at the interagency meeting.

The plan may consist of, but not limited to, having homebound

instructional sessions take place at the student's school or public library; have the homebound student start a modified school schedule along with supplemental homebound instruction; and wrap around services, etc.

IEP Team

- will be convened to review the IEP and determine FAPE for homebound instruction during the approved period of absence. The school nurse is to be included in the IEP Team to review the medical justification for absence and the need for homebound instruction.
- will complete the Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction for the homebound teacher.
- will reconvene if there are any difficulties in the delivery of homebound instruction to the student.
- will organize a return plan for the homebound student to return to the school reengaged with their instructional program.

Parent/Guardian

- will review the Parent Agreement for Homebound Instruction Letter.
- will obtain the completed Physician's Referral for Homebound Instruction form to the school nurse for review.
- will arrange with the assigned homebound teacher dates and times after school hours that would be optimal for instruction of the child.
- will sign the Parent Agreement for Homebound Instruction letter and return to homebound teacher.
- will ensure that a responsible adult is present in the home for the instructional hour.
- will provide a clean, quiet, well-lit room with adequate heat where the homebound teacher and the child will work.
- will eliminate all distractions such as TV, radio, pets and other young children during instructional and study time.

- will have the child appropriately dressed and ready for instruction upon arrival of the homebound teacher.
- will attempt to arrange doctor appointments, therapy, etc. so they do not conflict with the scheduled instruction when possible; will 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.
- will be willing to give the Compliance Officer progress updates of the child, halfway through the scheduled absence for homebound instruction.
- will sign the teacher's timesheet at the end of each instructional period.
- will be responsible for submission to the school nurse a new Physician's Referral before the completion of three months of instruction if your child will require instruction to extend past this time.

Teacher Identification

It is the responsibility of the Compliance Officer to identify a teacher for homebound instruction within seven school days.

- The position for homebound teacher shall be selected based on the Collective Bargaining Agreement. (Should multiple applicants equally meet the criteria, selection will be based on location seniority date.)
- If the position(s) of homebound teacher(s) continue(s) to be unfilled, the Office of Special Education and Human Resources shall be contacted to advertise for the position throughout the District.
- If the position(s) of homebound teacher(s) continue(s) to be unfilled, the Office of Special Education and Human Resources shall be notified and requested that the position(s) be advertised throughout the District. Selection will be based on the Collective Bargaining Agreement. (Should multiple applicants equally meet the criteria, selection will be based on system seniority date.)

Instructional Hours

If the Guidance Staff or IEP Team concurs that homebound instruction is the intervention needed for a minimum of four weeks or greater, but less than three months, homebound instruction will consist of:

- Elementary Level (K-8) – Three one-hour sessions weekly
- Secondary Level (9-12) – Four one-hour sessions weekly

If the GuidanceStaff or IEP Team concurs that homebound instruction is the intervention needed and PDE approves extension of homebound services for more than three months, instructional hours will continue as previously indicated:

- Elementary Level (K-8) – Three one-hour sessions week
- Secondary Level (9-12) – Four one-hour sessions weekly

Intermittent Homebound Instruction

This support structure is designed for students with chronic medical conditions that are incurable with treatment and have episodes of exacerbation and abatement. Elementary students (K-8) are to receive two hours of instruction per week of absences and secondary students (9-12) are to receive three hours of instruction per week of absences. The week of absences must be for the condition for which the intermittent homebound instruction was approved.

- Example 1: If a male elementary school student has scheduled dialysis for three days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), he can receive homebound instruction once he misses five complete days of school. Therefore, after the second consecutive Wednesday he would have had five days of excused absences because of his chronic condition and this would entitle the elementary student to two hours of instruction.
- Example 2: A female, high school student has sickle cell disease and experiences a period of sickle cell crisis that lasts for a period of ten school days. Once, this student feels better she would be entitled to six hours of homebound instruction.

Extended School Year (ESY) Programs

- Students with IEPs who are eligible for ESY and homebound instruction are expected to continue to the end of the school year and into the ESY program may be eligible for homebound ESY with verification and resubmission of Physician's Request for Homebound Instruction. The request will go through the indicated approval process for authorization of continued service. ESY packets, as with non-homebound students, still need to be submitted to the appropriate special education office through the same approval process.
- Teachers of students with IEPs approved for ESY Homebound Instruction must be selected through the ESY teacher selection process.

Renewal or Extension of Approved Service

- The Chief Compliance Officer will contact the parent/guardian of the student at least halfway through the scheduled absence (i.e., if a student is scheduled to be absent for three months, the Chief Compliance Officer and the parent/guardian should make contact by at least week six.)
- If a physician (or psychiatrist for mental health cases) feels that a student will require more than three months of homebound instruction, a new Homebound Physician's Referral will be required.
- The Physician's Referral must be completed and signed before the three month period expires in order for service to continue without interruption.
- The new Physician's Referral will need to be submitted to Health Services and to the Chief Compliance Officer and Support Services for consultation and review.
- The Chief Compliance Officer and Support Services will submit the new Physician's Referral with other necessary paperwork to PDE for approval of extension of homebound instruction.
- If the Chief Compliance Officer does not receive a new Physician's Referral, 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. The school nurse will explain to the parent/guardian that it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to see that the required referral forms are completed and presented to the school in a timely manner.

Instruction Conducted in the Home

- “Instruction conducted in the home” is in the definition of special education located in the federal regulations and is recognized as a placement option on the continuum of alternative placements for students with disabilities. The use of instruction conducted in the home is restricted to students whose needs require full-time special education services or programs outside the school setting for the entire day. Ordinarily, these will be students who, because of a severe medical condition or mobility impairment, are unable to leave home to attend school.
- Although a student placed by his/her IEP Team on instruction conducted in the home does not receive his/her program in the school setting, he/she remains entitled to FAPE equal to his/her non-disabled peers, unless the amount of instruction would jeopardize the child’s health or welfare. In such cases, the IEP Team can agree on fewer hours of instruction so long as the student receives FAPE.
- Instruction conducted in the home is not an appropriate option in other situations, such as when a district is experiencing difficulty arranging the program or placement that a student requires. In such cases, the district will continue to serve those students in accordance with his IEP while taking steps to promptly arrange for the services that the student requires.
- If the temporary condition that precipitated the excusal from attendance for a student with disabilities results in a change in the student’s need for specially designed instruction, the district may need to reevaluate the student. The district may also need to reconvene the student’s IEP Team to determine whether it is necessary to revise the IEP and change the student’s placement to instruction conducted in the home. Moreover, the district may be responsible for providing compensatory education to the student for the interruption in services if the district did not provide FAPE.

Students who are Receiving Instruction Conducted in the Home

- Students will require one Physician’s Referral at the beginning of the IEP placement.

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 services.

- Students who are receiving Intermittent Homebound Instruction will require one Physician’s Referral for the school year. If a student is absent from school for three months without interruption (s)he will require a new Physician’s Referral and should be changed from Intermittent Homebound Instruction to Homebound Instruction.

- The parent/guardian will be informed by the Chief Compliance Officer that the School District may not accept a Physician's Referral for homebound instruction if the Physician's Referral is incomplete or does not demonstrate an urgent medical reason for excusal of school

attendance. At any point the district may request additional information to clarify the need for the temporary excusal for homebound instruction. 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.

Student Grades and Records

- Students will receive grades from Homebound Instruction by the designated homebound teacher. Grades should be submitted to the principal at the homebound student's school.
- Teachers will enter grades in the Progress Report for Students on Homebound Instruction and shall follow the School District's timeline for grade submission.
- All grades and teaching hours will be reviewed by the principal prior to issuance of report cards or entry on the official student records.
- Student's grades and attendance are to be submitted to the school to be maintained as part of the student's record by the homebound teacher. Failure to do so may result in funds being withheld from the assigned teacher's paycheck.

Program Monitoring and Assessment Process

- The Homebound Reporting form and the Physician's Referral must be submitted to the Chief Compliance Officer and the Office of Special Education and Support Services.
- Any changes in the homebound instruction should be reported to the Chief Compliance Officer and the Office of Special Education and Support Services (i.e., change in the original assigned homebound teacher; change in type of homebound instruction; etc.).
- If homebound instruction will extend past three months, a new Physician's Referral will need to be submitted to Chief Compliance Officer and the Office of Special Education and Support Services for submission to PDE. Once approval or denial of homebound instruction extension is given PDE, the School District will be notified.
- At the completion of homebound instruction for the student, a copy of the Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction and the Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction must be submitted to the school's principal or administrative designee.
- The procedures for implementing homebound/hospital instruction have been established by the Chief Compliance Officer and the Office of Special Education and Support Services and are subject to monitoring, audits and investigation

Homebound Teacher's General Guidelines

- Review carefully the materials enclosed in the Homebound Instructional Manual before visiting the home.
- Instruct up to a maximum of four hours per day for all assigned homebound students combined.
- Schedule to provide instruction after school hours, concluding no later than 7:00 pm for homebound student who are in grades K through 3; 8:00 pm for homebound students in grades 4 through 12. It is advisable that homebound instruction be delivered as close to the end of the school day as possible.
- Teacher(s) shall be certified in the subject area in which they are instructing. For homebound students who are designated special education, their homebound teacher must have special education certification.
- When preparing lesson plans for homebound instruction sessions:
 - Refer to the Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction form as a guide for instruction.
 - Homebound teachers are required to teach the four core area subjects-English-Social Studies-Mathematics-Science.
 - Instruction in the designated courses will be based on the Scranton School District's curriculum or functional curriculum and/or the student's IEP goals.
 - Textbooks and other instructional materials are to be provided by the student's home school. All homebound students are to participate in all state and district assessments including the PSSA, the PASA and alternate assessments. Arrangements for test administration are to be made with the homebound student's home school.
 - Homebound teacher(s) may be expected to participate with the special education team and support team in the development of the student's IEP.
 - Marks are to be reviewed by the principal or administrative designee prior to issuance of report card grades or entry on the official student records.
 - Delivery of Homebound Instruction must be consistent with the Scranton School District's school year calendar. When the School District observes any given holiday, weekend or summer holidays, homebound instruction is not to be delivered to the homebound student.

- Documentation of the Homebound Instructional Program on the Education Plan for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction form and the Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction form will be maintained by the school.

- The time will be logged on the Scranton School District payroll form.

Explanation of Forms used for Homebound Instruction

- **Parent Agreement for Homebound Instruction**

- This form should be given to the homebound student's parent/guardian on the initial visit to the homebound student's home for review and the required signature.

- A signed copy of the Parent Agreement shall be kept at the homebound student's home school.

- The homebound student's home school will need to be informed either verbally or in writing once instruction is completed. The home school will also need to be informed in writing if any difficulties in delivering instruction are encountered or if there is a breach in the Parent Agreement.
- **Progress Report for Students Receiving Homebound Instruction**
 - This form is required to be completed by the homebound teacher(s) at least once during any report period (or convalescence period of shorter duration).
 - The curriculum areas reflected on this form should be consistent with the areas designated on the Education Plan.
 - The Progress Report is to be reviewed and verified by the principal or the administrative designee before the issuance of any formal grades.
 - A copy of the Progress Report may be given to the parent/guardian after the principal or the administrative designee's review and verification. A copy will need to be forwarded to the student's home school to be maintained in the student's record.
- **Daily Time Report**
 - The teacher will record his/her time worked on a daily time report. The completed daily time report must be sent to the Special Education Office to verify the hours and sign the form.
 - The parent must sign the Daily Time Report after each instructional session.
 - The teacher must place his/her name at the top of this form and fill in the weekly dates and times.
 - The homebound teacher will tally the biweekly instructional hours.
 - The homebound teacher's signature is required on the bottom of the form.
 - Incomplete Daily Time Reports will be returned to the homebound teacher for correction before the homebound teacher's payroll school signs it for time and attendance reporting purposes.
 - The teacher will submit an original completed report on a biweekly basis.

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