



RPS RICHMOND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Virtual Learning Services Parent / Teacher / Student Handbook

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Richmond Virtual Academy's Virtual Learning Services. As a recipient of one of these services, this handbook will provide you with basic information that will be valuable to you as your family navigates homebound, home-based and administrative placement. For more information about the program, please contact the Home Instruction Coordinator Sandra Portee, at spillard@rvaschools.net.



Overview of Virtual Learning Services

Virtual Learning Services are temporary services which are available to all students who are enrolled in Richmond City Schools. The program is designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home through virtual learning tools and resources. The program encompasses core content only (reading, math, science and social studies), as it is only intended to temporarily replace a student's school setting. The ultimate goal is always to return the student to the school setting as soon as possible.

Overview of Virtual Learning Services (cont'd)

Virtual Learning Services is an umbrella term that encompasses the following categories:

Homebound- Scholars who have been determined by a medical physician to require time away from the traditional setting due to medical/mental health needs

Home-based- Scholars who require time away from the traditional setting due to non-medical related reasons. Below are the non-medical related reasons used:

- IEP- an IEP team has determined that a scholar would be best served in a virtual setting based on learning needs, suspension, expulsion or pending a private placement.

Admin Placement- A school administrator and district team has determined that the scholar would be best served in a virtual setting based on safety and security reasons.

Homebound Services

Richmond Public Schools (RPS) has a responsibility to meet the educational needs of children who are confined to their homes due to illness, injury, pregnancy, or emotional difficulties. It may also be used to supplement the classroom program for health-impaired children whose conditions may interfere with consistent attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis, chemotherapy, or radiation treatments) or for children with disabilities that prevent regular school attendance. Homebound instruction enables students to continue their educational program while confined at home. Educational and physical modifications to the school environment may be attempted before students are placed on homebound instruction.

Homebound Services (cont'd)

Homebound services can be delivered in one of these 3 ways:

- **Full Time** – Homebound services which are provided virtually or in the home on a full-time basis when the student is confined at home for short periods of time.
- **Partial** – Homebound services can be provided on a part-time basis for students that cannot tolerate or endure a full day in a classroom setting. If the student receives homebound services on a partial basis, a schedule will be developed between the student's school, Home Instruction Coordinator and parent, that will allow the student to attend school each week for a set number of hours or specific classes, with the goal of the student resuming a full-time schedule as soon as possible.
- **Intermittent** – Homebound services are provided on an intermittent basis when approved by the Home Instruction Coordinator. To receive intermittent homebound services the student must be diagnosed with a chronic illness. The Medical Certificate of Need and Treatment Plan must clearly define the student's illness and pre-defined occurrences that would necessitate short and frequent periods from school.

Eligibility for homebound instruction is determined based on **medical** evidence submitted by the licensed physician or the licensed psychologist. A student may be found eligible for homebound instruction if medical evidence shows that he or she is physically or psychologically unable to attend school. Eligibility for homebound services will be reviewed periodically to determine if additional services are needed.

For a student receiving **exceptional education services**, the individualized education program (IEP) team must revise the IEP to determine how the student's temporary instructional needs will be met while on homebound instruction including the number of hours of service that will be provided (8 VAC 20-121-180).

Homebound instruction is available to students who are **pregnant** for a period of six to nine weeks following the birth depending on the recommendation of the physician.

Eligibility for Homebound Services



Restrictions While on Homebound



Student Employment

Students receiving homebound instruction **MAY NOT** report to a place of employment during school hours for the period approved for services. A student's instructional schedule will take priority over his/her work schedule.

Attendance at School Sponsored Activities

Students receiving homebound instruction **MAY NOT** be on school property or attend school sponsored activities at any time during the time approved for services without permission of the school principal or his/her designee **AND** written release from their health care provider. The student's participation in school related extracurricular activities and non-academic activities will not be allowed when the student receives homebound services.

Program Limitations

While homebound/home-based instruction is helpful to students whose illnesses and disabilities preclude school attendance for a period of time, it has limitations. Students who are injured or have an illness that makes it difficult for them to complete assignments independently, may fall behind in their work. Classroom instruction, given in the form of lecture, laboratory research and media presentations, may not be possible to replicate in the home setting.

Students may not be able to complete requirements for certain classes while receiving homebound instruction. These include classes requiring specialized equipment and direct student participation such as technical center work/study programs, computer classes, technical classes, and certain fine arts and physical education programs and electives. Homebound teachers are only allowed to teach core content areas. Parents are encouraged to work closely with school personnel to make program choices that will ensure the success of their students who require homebound/home-based instruction. As a recommendation, parents are encouraged to meet with school counselors to discuss the student's graduation status at the onset of homebound/homebase placement.

Extension of Services

Extension of homebound instruction is determined based on medical information submitted by the attending physician or licensed clinical psychologist. If it is necessary for homebound instruction to continue beyond nine weeks, an extension or reauthorization form, including treatment plan, progress towards treatment goals, and specific plans to transition the student back to the school setting, will be required from your treating health care provider to document the need for extended services.

For pregnant students, extended services may be approved upon receipt of additional medical information in cases where the physician determines that school attendance would present a health risk to the mother or the baby prior to delivery, additional medical information will be required before approval for extended service can be given.

Suspension of Services

The Virtual Learning Coordinator may issue a suspension in services if the student exhibits excessively missed appointments with the homebound teacher. If the student misses five consecutive scheduled sessions, services will be suspended until alternate arrangements are secured and the student will be referred to the Office of Climate, Culture, and Student Services for further assistance.

Termination of Services

If a student is able to return to school before the scheduled end date, the homebound department must receive a medical release from the referring physician, allowing the student to return to school. The homebound teacher will then return all complete and incomplete assignments to the respective classroom teacher for each subject area.



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Transition of Services

Transitioning from Homebound or Home-Based Instruction

As students plan for transition back to school, the homebound/home-based teacher will assist the student, family and school with the student's transition back to school. However, other support staff, such as the school nurse, school counselor, or school psychologist, may be more appropriately assigned to the student for transitional purposes depending on the nature of the student's needs.



Home-based Services

Home-based instruction refers to services that are delivered virtually or in the home setting (or other agreed upon setting) in accordance with the child's individualized education program. (8 VAC 20-131180). Home-based services are determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan teams or requested by the Disciplinary Review Hearing Officer for discipline related reasons.

Non-medical placement for home-based instruction may be authorized under the following conditions:

- ❖ For students waiting for a disciplinary panel hearing.
- ❖ For students whose IEP teams have determined that the least restrictive environment for a student is home-based instruction (*For a student receiving exceptional education services, the IEP team must revise the IEP to determine how the student's instructional needs will be met while on home-based instruction. Written parental consent must be obtained prior to initiating of homebased services. All non-medical requests must be approved in advance and will be reviewed by the school level exceptional education instructional specialist and/or compliance coordinator*)
- ❖ For students with an IEP who have been expelled by the RPS School Board;
- ❖ For students placed on long term suspension by the RPS School Board following a panel hearing
- ❖ For students awaiting private placement

Administrative Placement

At Richmond Virtual Academy (RVA), we welcome both scholars who choose to enroll in our virtual program and those who are placed here for safety or disciplinary reasons. Starting October 28, 2024, we will introduce an Asynchronous RVA model to provide greater flexibility and support for students who have been administratively placed.

- **Enrollment:** Students assigned to RVA by the school division will transition to new "ASYNCH" Google Classrooms, tailored specifically for their needs. These classrooms will be separate but similar to their current virtual classes.
- **Onboarding:** Families of placed scholars will receive guidance from our Virtual Learning Coordinator, Mrs. Portee, who will ensure students have the necessary technology and support. Each student will be paired with a Homebound Hero, a dedicated staff member for one-on-one assistance.
- **Technology & Supplies:** Students will receive a Chromebook and supplies from RVA. Families can choose to pick up these materials or arrange for delivery.
- **Attendance:** Starting October 28, RVA teachers will mark asynchronous students as present daily, as they won't need to attend live sessions.
- **Assignments & Grades:** Scholars will complete no more than two assignments per week, with due dates on Thursdays. Grades and feedback will be provided weekly.
- **Testing:** Administratively placed scholars may need to take assessments, for which our team will coordinate schedules and locations.
- **Support Services:** Students needing exceptional education or language services will receive support during school hours. Our coordinators will ensure all necessary services are provided.
- **Home-Based Education Services:** Each scholar will be assigned a Homebound Hero who will meet with them weekly to support their learning. Consistent engagement with this staff member is essential for success.

Instruction & Accommodations

1. Virtual Learning Instruction should be conducted between the hours of 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday through Friday.
2. For students in grades K-8, homebound instruction will primarily be provided through the Richmond Virtual Academy. Students will be temporarily enrolled in virtual instruction and will have access to full time instruction. Middle School students on homebound will be registered for core content classes only with RVA. For high school, intensive support and exceptional ed students, a homebound teacher will provide 1:1 virtual instruction.
3. For students whose needs require in person instruction, a homebound teacher will be able to provide **limited** services at home. A responsible adult, 18 years of age or older, must be present at all times when the homebound teacher is in the home providing instruction. The Home Instruction Coordinator may approve alternate locations in special circumstances. Alternate locations must be in the city of Richmond and may include public buildings such as libraries. Permission must be secured in writing from the Home Instruction Coordinator before the change in venue is made.
4. No instruction will be conducted on RPS student holidays or days that students would normally be out due to inclement weather.
5. The number of hours of instruction will be based on a student's schedule and the decision of school personnel. A minimum of 8 hours per week for middle school, 5 hours per week for elementary school students and 2 hours per week per core content subject (Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies) for high school students.

Responsibilities of Parents

The student and parent(s) are expected to work cooperatively with the home school and assigned homebound/home-based teacher. The responsibilities of the parent(s)/guardian(s) are as follows:

Complete all necessary paperwork to have the student receive homebound/home-based instruction.

Provide an environment conducive to learning with televisions and electronic devices kept off and other children, visitors, and pets should be kept out of the room.

Ensure that a responsible adult is present in the home or at alternate location when the homebound/home-based teacher is working with the student in person.

Notify the homebound/home-based teacher, prior to the scheduled visit, if there is a contagious illness in the home or if there is an emergency resulting in the student's inability to attend the session.

Supervise daily homework and establish a schedule for the student to study between homebound/home-based teacher's visits;

Cooperate with the homebound/home-based teacher in seeing that the student completes the required assignments and monitor and encourage the child to plan his or her time in order to accomplish assigned work

Notify the home instruction coordinator of excessively missed appointments or tardiness by the homebound/home-based teacher, as well as conflicts, disagreements, or disappointments with the way in which instruction is being provided.

Keep all appointments with the homebound/home-based teacher. If possible, schedule all medical appointments during hours that do not interfere with scheduled instructional time.

Understand that the state's compulsory attendance laws fully apply to homebound students.

Inform Home instruction Coordinator of changes in the child's health and return to school plans. Work with the school to set reasonable goals and to make changes to the student's instructional program as necessitated by the student's physical or psychiatric condition.

Sign/approve the homebound/home-based teacher's time sheet indicating the hours and days that the teacher has worked with the student.

Maintain communication with classroom teacher, homebound/home-based teacher, attendance clerk, and RPS Homebound Program Coordinator.

Make arrangements with the classroom teacher to complete any work missed prior to the approval of homebound/home-based instruction.

Responsibilities of Students

The student and parent(s) are expected to work cooperatively with the home school and assigned homebound/home-based teacher. The responsibilities of the student are as follows:

Be available for scheduled instruction

Dress appropriately

Have all books and materials needed for instruction

Ask for assistance or clarification needed to complete assignments

Complete homework assignments

Remain courteous, comply with teacher requests, and use appropriate language

Dedicate instructional time for instruction only (no phone calls, social media, visits, radio, or television)

Have a quiet area suitable for instructional purposes;

Return completed assignments to homebound/home-based teacher when due

Notify homebound/home-based teacher in advance if a scheduled session needs to be cancelled.

Responsibilities of Teachers

Below are the responsibilities of the classroom teachers:

- Provide all assignments for the student on homebound/home-based instruction and remain available to home instruction teacher, student, and parents.
- Communicate with the home instruction teacher to explain lesson content, expectations for the student and student progress.
- Collect student work; grade it, record and report progress on interims and report cards.
- Assist with transition back to school.

Below are the responsibilities of the home instruction teacher:

- Initiate contact with the parents and student to arrange a schedule for virtual or in-home instruction.
- Develop and maintain appropriate relationships with students and parents/guardians
- Collaborate with the student's classroom teachers to plan assignments during homebound or home-based instruction.
- Log assignments.
- Keep all appointments with students, meeting on time and working with student for length of session
- Collaborate with teachers and counselors to determine any specific needs the student may have upon return to school.
- Submit time sheets and other documents according to the established schedule

Hours of Services

Hours of Homebound/Home-based Instruction

- ❖ The following are hours for students on **homebound** instruction: elementary school students will receive five hours of instruction per week. Middle school students will receive eight hours per week and High school students will receive 2 hours per week per core content subject (math, history, ELA, science).
- ❖ Hours of instruction for students on **home-based** (non-medical) instruction are determined by their IEP team
- ❖ The program for homebound/home-based instruction follows the RPS school year calendar. Homebound/Home-based teachers are not permitted to meet with students during school holidays or on days when inclement weather forces the closing of schools. Students receiving homebound service at the end of the school year must complete the requirements for classes (including exams) before the close of school so that classroom teachers can submit grades and collect instructional materials.
- ❖ All homebound/home-based instruction ends at the conclusion of the school year and must be reevaluated for continuation into the following school year.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

My child's placement has been changed to Homebound or Home-Based by the IEP Team. I was told he/she can only receive 10 hours of homebound instruction per week. Is this correct?

Students are entitled to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that allows them to make progress toward the general education curriculum as well as make progress toward meeting their IEP goals. A student with a disability who receives at least 10 hours of instruction per week can be counted for full attendance for funding purposes, but the amount of instruction a student receives is an IEP Team decision. Students with disabilities must receive sufficient homebound instruction to be provided with FAPE.

My child has an IEP and is receiving homebound services. Does the homebound teacher have to be an exceptional education teacher?

No. The homebound teacher must have either teacher certification or a substitute certificate. It is expected that a homebound teacher who is not an exceptional education teacher will be working with the child's exceptional education case manager who does have exceptional education teacher certification.

Must homebound occur in my home?

No. With the new home instruction model, students will now receive homebound instruction, virtually. Sometimes divisions provide what they refer to as "homebound" in a "neutral" site such as a library or other public location. It is best to clearly identify the location that the homebound instruction will take place in the IEP so that there is no confusion about what is meant by "homebound".

When children are placed on homebound, are they required to participate in state testing such as SOL and MAP testing?

Yes. Students who are receiving homebound services must take the Grade-Level assessments unless they have a waiver. Arrangements will be made by your child's school.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If I have two children on homebound and they both need instruction in the same subject at the same time and they live in the same home, can they be instructed in a group?

Yes, it is reasonable to provide homebound services in a group setting, unless age and grade level or other circumstances unique to a student's condition would dictate a one-to-one situation.

How long can my child receive homebound instruction?

Students receiving **homebound instruction** (medical) can receive instruction for up to a nine-week period. After that time, the child's physician would need to request an extension of services through recertification. A new medical certification of need must be completed by the physician justifying the need for the extension. Please note that homebound instruction is NOT a comprehensive educational program intended to support a student during a whole school year. Homebound services are temporary.

Is it the parent's responsibility to submit the Medical Certification of Need form to the Home Instruction Coordinator?

Yes. If your child's physician recommends Homebound services and completes the form, it is your responsibility as a parent to submit these forms to the Home Instruction Coordinator and follow up as needed. Once the approval period has ended, it is the parent's responsibility to submit recertification if homebound instruction is still needed.

I want my child to attend the Richmond Virtual Academy and receive virtual instruction. Can I submit a homebound application to enroll them?

No. Although the Richmond Virtual Academy provides the instruction for students in grades K-8, students on homebound are approved for up to nine weeks. Families that are interested in enrolling their children in the Richmond Virtual Academy should look out for RPS Open Enrollment application window which can be found on the RPS Open Enrollment website.



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