

Home Education

Frequently Asked Questions

When do I need to file an affidavit?

You must file an affidavit for each child you will be homeschooling when he or she is between the ages of 6 to 17. (compulsory school age) You must file an affidavit when you begin the home education program and annually thereafter by August 1, and as early as July 1.

Where can I get an affidavit form?

Affidavit forms may be found at the PDE website, Also, your school district may have a form, or you may create your own affidavit, following the requirements in the home education law.

What should I attach to the affidavit?

Attachments to the affidavit must include an outline of the educational objectives arranged by subject matter, evidence that the child has been immunized in accordance with the provisions of law and evidence that the child has received the health and medical services required for students of the child's age or grade level.

If there are special education needs, you must also include the IEP (please see below)

What are the Health requirements for homeschooled students?

Students in home education programs are required to be immunized in accordance with law and regulations of the Secretary of Health. (24 P. S. 13-1303a and 23 Pa. Code 23.83-84) Students in home education programs are also required to receive the health and medical services required for students of the child's age or grade level.

Each child of school age must be given an annual vision test, a hearing test and shall be measured and weighed. (Article 14 of the Pennsylvania School Cod) Home education families may use the Department of Health's form to document the child's receipt of those services (Department of Health School Health Record). Each child must also have a medical examination and a comprehensive appraisal of his or her health at the following times:

- When beginning the home school program
- While enrolled in sixth grade
- While enrolled in eleventh grade
- When he/she is issued a farm or domestic service permit

(A medical examination is not necessary at the above points in time if an examination was obtained within the previous four months.)

Also, each child must have a dental examination at the following times:

- When beginning the home school program
- While enrolled in third grade
- While enrolled in seventh grade
- When he/she is issued a farm or domestic service permit

What are the Section 111 (Criminal History or Act 34) Requirements for the Affidavit?

All adults living in the home and persons having legal custody of a child or children must not have been convicted of the criminal offenses itemized in 24 P.S. § 1-111 (e) within five years immediately preceding the date of the affidavit.

What are the Curriculum Requirements?

Elementary school level (grades K-6), mandatory courses: English, to include spelling, reading and writing; arithmetic; science; geography; history of the United States and Pennsylvania; civics; safety education, including regular and continuous instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires; health and physiology; physical education; music; and art.

Secondary school level (grades 7-12), mandatory courses: English, to include language, literature, speech and composition; science; geography; social studies, to include civics, world history, history of the United States and Pennsylvania; mathematics, to include general mathematics, algebra and geometry; art; music; physical education; health; and safety education, including regular and continuous instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires. Such courses of study may include, at the discretion of the supervisor of the home education program, economics; biology; chemistry; foreign languages; trigonometry; or other age-appropriate courses as contained in Chapter 5 (Curriculum Requirements) of the State Board of Education.

Where do I get curriculum and materials?

At the request of the supervisor, the school district must lend to the home education program copies of the school district's planned courses, textbooks and other curriculum materials appropriate to the student's age and grade level (24 P. S. 13-1327. 1 (fl)). The law does not require that the requested materials be provided within a particular period of time. However, PDE encourages school districts to work cooperatively with their homeschooling families in this regard in order to assist these families in providing a good educational experience to their children. In addition, some state and regional home education organizations hold curriculum fairs periodically so families can see and buy other materials. Many materials are available through teacher supply shops and directly from publishers.

When does my child need standardized tests?

The law requires that homeschooled students take the statewide tests or other authorized tests in grades 3, 5, and 8. The results must be reported in the portfolio; they are not reported to the school district. PDE publishes a list of acceptable alternative tests on the Home Education and Private Tutoring homepage.

Can my child have special accommodations when taking the nationally normed or state tests?

You are responsible for determining whether the test publisher allows for accommodations on the particular test you've chosen and to ensure that the publisher's policies are followed.

When is the evaluation due?

Each student's standardized test results (when required or if otherwise desired), and annual written evaluation of educational progress must be provided to the superintendent of the public school district of residence by June 30th of each school year. The superintendent may request the portfolio of records and materials, standardized test results and evaluation any time prior to June 30th if the superintendent has a reasonable belief that appropriate education is not occurring. (24 P.S. 13- 1327.1(h)).

What are the home education requirements for students with disabilities?

For any child in a home education program who is identified by the provisions of the Education of the Handicapped Act as needing special education services (excluding those identified as gifted and/or talented), the program must address the specific needs of the exceptional student and be approved by a teacher with a valid certificate from the Commonwealth to teach special education or a licensed clinical or certified school psychologist. This written notification of approval must be submitted with the notarized affidavit. A parent has the option of negating an IEP.

What responsibilities does the school district have for students with special needs?

If you believe your child is disabled and in need of special education services, but has not been evaluated, the school district in which you reside is required to evaluate the child, without charge, when you make such a request in writing. The district must hold a multi-disciplinary evaluation meeting with you to explain the results of the evaluation. If you desire special education services, you may enroll your child in the public school to receive a free, appropriate public education, or you may ask the school district to provide service(s). If you ask for services, then you and the school district may come to an agreement as to what services will be provided and where. The school district is not obligated to provide special education services if you do not enroll your child, however. Any services which are agreed to may be provided in a public school or private school which is licensed to provide such programs and services; these services will not be provided in your home. (24 P.S. 13-1327(d)).

Are there any organizations of homeschooling families that serve my area?

PDE has developed a list of Home Education Organizations Serving Pennsylvania Families. These are regional, statewide and national associations and agencies which provide a variety of services to homeschooling families. These statewide and regional organizations often keep a list of support groups which serve a smaller geographic area, such as a city or township.

How does a homeschooled child receive a high school diploma?

Although a school district does not issue a diploma to a student in home education, other diplomas are available:

- A student may fulfill the necessary requirements of a home school organization to receive a home school diploma
- A student may successfully complete the GED test and receive the Commonwealth Secondary Diploma
- A student may successfully complete 1 year or 30 semester hours at an accredited postsecondary institution and submit that information to PDE and receive a Commonwealth Secondary Diploma.

How does an organization become recognized by PDE to issue homeschool diplomas?

An organization serving homeschooling families may apply for PDE recognition by completing the Home Education Association Application for Recognition. Instructions for completion of this material and necessary attachments are included on the PDE website.

If a child is enrolled in a public or private school after home schooling, how is it determined to which grade level the child is assigned, and/or what high school credits will be awarded?

In a home education program, the parent determines the course of study for their child. This program may or may not correspond to a specific grade overall. The child's program may span more than one grade, depending on the subject. The mandatory courses are not grade-specific, they are level-specific. These courses are defined for the elementary grades (K-6) and the secondary grades (7-12). Comparing the age of the child with the law and regulations, in conjunction with a yearly review of the portfolio contents, may help reasonably infer an approximate grade in determination of the various grade-specific requirements of the laws and regulations.

Can my child participate in curricular or extra-curricular activities at the school district where we live?

The school district where you reside has the discretion to make school activities available to home-educated students. Many school districts have established a written policy on participation of homeschooled students in curricular programs, such as science classes, computer labs, and foreign language courses and extra-curricular activities such as sports, band and clubs. Please contact your local school district for this information. Please remember, however, that school districts are not required to allow home-educated students to participate in activities.

Is the parent required to do all the teaching?

The supervisor of the program, the parent or guardian or such person having legal custody of the child or children, shall be responsible for the provision of instruction. That person is not required to provide all of the instruction. (24 P. S. 13-1327. 1 (a)).