

HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND (HHB) PARENT GUIDE

What is the Hospital Homebound (HHB) Program?

Henry County Schools' Hospital Homebound Program is designed to sustain continuity of instruction for students who will be absent from school for medical or psychiatric reasons for a minimum of ten consecutive days per year (five school days on an approved block schedule) or intermittent periods of time for a minimum of ten days per year (five school days on an approved block schedule), and to facilitate the student's return to school.

HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are, by design, temporary.

This program is not designed to serve as an alternative to in-person learning, as it cannot duplicate the comprehensive classroom experience. There is no requirement to assign hour-for-hour missed instruction. Additionally, all Hospital Homebound services are virtual unless stated in the student's 504 or IEP. Instruction is minimal, and normal progressions expected through classroom instruction in the school setting may not be accomplished. ***The overarching goal of Hospital/Homebound instruction is to keep the student as current as possible with classroom instruction.*** School teams must prioritize and sometimes limit the content areas to be taught by the homebound teacher based on the needs of the student. With this in mind, Hospital Homebound may not be the best solution for students with long-term health needs. Hospital Homebound is not designed to replace enrollment in virtual programs such as Impact Academy.

Is Hospital Homebound the best solution for my child?

Students must be enrolled in a Henry County school to receive HHB services. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. ***The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented on the HHB Request form.*** General education students whose absences have accumulated to more than 20 consecutive school days may be referred to MTSS/ SST to discuss additional supports and intervention. Students with intensive needs may be referred for evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services. Hospital Homebound may not be the best solution for students with long-term health needs. For HHB service recommendations beyond 60 days, additional paperwork will be required. Students needing extended HHB services will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if HHB is the appropriate solution.

Communication

Communication between school personnel, the student's parents, district HHB staff, the HHB tutor, and medical staff is vital to the student's success while receiving HHB services. For students receiving intermittent or full-time HHB services, it is important that all parties remain in close communication regarding the student's medical status and academic progress. When all parties work together, students may benefit from the provision of services and are subsequently able to return to school with little to no disruption to their instructional journey.

Hospital-Homebound Eligibility Guidelines

1. The student must be currently enrolled in Henry County Schools (*private or home school students are NOT eligible for HHB services from Henry County Schools*).
2. **Impact Academy Students** - a determination of HHB eligibility will be made for each Impact Academy student based on their inability to participate in and/or receive instruction through their current modality of accessing their work. Students who have all virtual classes and who are not required to attend in person at least one day a week will not qualify for HHB. Impact Academy students approved for HHB may receive between 1 to 3 hours of services per week based on their class schedule and Educational Services Plan.
3. For a student to receive hospital or homebound instruction, a Georgia-licensed physician or psychiatrist **currently treating the student for the listed diagnosis** must declare that the diagnosis is preventing the student from attending school in person on a full-time basis and that the student can participate in and benefit from a Hospital Homebound instructional program. Students with other disabilities and other handicapping conditions also must meet these eligibility requirements.
 - **Physical/Medical condition:** Students with a physical or medical condition that causes them to be unable to attend school for 10 or more consecutive days or intermittent days. Examples may include students with a serious illness requiring ongoing treatment, those undergoing treatments that compromise their immune systems, and those undergoing surgery that requires 10 consecutive days of recovery.
 - **Psychiatric condition:** In some instances, when a student is experiencing psychiatric difficulties, Hospital Homebound can be considered as a **TEMPORARY** solution. However, HHB may exacerbate the student's problems and would therefore not be approved. In these cases, other school-based alternatives may be more appropriate. ***Hospital Homebound should not be used as an alternative school setting for students experiencing long-term psychiatric illness***
4. The student must have a medical and/or psychiatric condition that is documented by a licensed physician/psychiatrist. The licensed physician/psychiatrist must be able to practice medicine in Georgia. ***Only a Psychiatrist can submit a medical request form for an emotional or psychiatric disorder.*** The psychiatric condition presented must be listed in the latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)*. The referring licensed physician and/or licensed psychiatrist must be the treating physician or psychiatrist for the medical and/or psychiatric condition for which the student is requesting HHB services and must be familiar with the student's medical record or history.

Examples:

 - A student with leukemia may not request HHB services with a medical statement from a pediatrician. A statement from the oncologist currently treating the student is required.
 - A student with major depressive disorder may not request HHB services with a medical statement from a psychologist or pediatrician. The medical request must be from the licensed psychiatrist currently treating the student.
5. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive school days per year (or the equivalent on a modified calendar), or the student has a chronic health condition causing him/her to be absent for intermittent periods of time and anticipates exceeding ten school days during the school year.

6. If the school is on an approved block schedule, then the ten-day minimum requirement is reduced to five consecutive or five intermittent days during the school year.
7. Students approved for intermittent HHB services must be absent for three consecutive school days on each occurrence before HHB services will be provided. **Chronic illnesses that require ongoing intermittent absences may require students missing many days, but possibly not three consecutive days. **Such cases will be evaluated on an individual basis.***
8. Students who have been declared emancipated by a court or are 18 years of age or older are eligible to sign the Hospital-Homebound (HHB) Services Request Form.
9. Students who are out of school due to an acute infectious illness that lasts no more than 10 days are not eligible for HHB Services.
10. Students out of school because of expulsion or suspension are not eligible for HHB services during the time of their expulsion or suspension.
11. Students who are pregnant do not qualify for HHB. However, student absences due to pregnancy, related medical conditions, services or treatment, childbirth, and recovery therefrom are eligible for HHB services for a length of time as determined by the treating physician, provided that they satisfy the eligibility requirements for HHB.
12. The parent, guardian, emancipated minor, or student 18 years of age or older must sign a Hospital Homebound Parent Request form, certifying they understand the policies and procedures for HHB services. Additionally, a completed HHB Medical Referral from the treating physician/psychiatrist must be submitted before services can be provided.
13. Hospital Homebound Services cannot start until the student has been approved by the HCS Hospital Homebound Program.
14. In cases where there is a delay in the submission of a Medical Referral from a treating physician, the HCS Hospital Homebound Office will contact the parent or the physician's office to request the Medical Referral form. The student's HHB request (Parent Request Form) will be held in "PENDING" status for 5 school days. If the HCS Hospital Homebound Office does not receive a HHB Medical Request for the student, the HHB file for that student will be closed unless otherwise arranged by the parent, school, and or physician's office. (Example - new referral for additional evaluation, treating physician out of town, awaiting test results).
15. The final determination or approval of Hospital Homebound services is made by Henry County Schools' Hospital Homebound Office. In making a determination of eligibility, full consideration will be given to the written recommendation received from the treating physician. **However, a recommendation for HHB by a treating physician does NOT guarantee approval for Hospital Homebound.**

Evaluation of HHB Documentation

For an HCS student to be considered for HHB eligibility, the Hospital Homebound Office must receive a completed HHB Medical Referral from a licensed physician who is treating the student. The term "licensed physician" means one who is qualified to assess the student's physical or psychiatric condition. This includes medical doctors (MDs), osteopathic physicians (DOs), psychiatrists, etc. An out-of-state physician may not sign the medical statement unless the physician is also licensed to practice within the state of Georgia, unless otherwise approved.

For a student who is being considered for HHB services due to a psychiatric condition, the evaluation should be conducted by a **licensed psychiatrist**. The medical evaluation is only one piece of information used in determining eligibility for HHB services. Medical Referrals for extended full-time HHB services will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The HHB application may be denied if it is determined that the student can be supported in an environment with fewer restrictions.

NOTE: Students must be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). HHB is one of the most restrictive settings. **MEDICAL REFERRALS THAT ARE MISSING INFORMATION OR COMPLETED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE TREATING PHYSICIAN OR TREATING PSYCHIATRIST WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Hospital-Homebound Program Delivery Models

Full-Time Services (Limited or Long-Term)

Students can be recommended for Full-Time Hospital Homebound if they meet the following conditions:

- They have been medically diagnosed with a physical or psychiatric condition that confines them to their home, hospital, or full-day or partial hospitalization program for a minimum of 10 consecutive days.
- **Limited Services** - for eligible students with a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition, which confines the student to their home or a hospital and restricts all activities for a ***minimum of 10 consecutive days but for no more than nine weeks*** (or 5 consecutive days on a high school block schedule)
 - **Example** - A student who broke a limb and was directed not to bear weight on their limb and had to stay at home for 6 weeks to prevent further injury.
 - Determination of services will be based on information in the Medical Referral form.
 - Students approved for Full-Time (Limited) HHB services will receive a minimum of 3 hours of instruction per week.
- **Long-Term Services** - for eligible students who have a medically diagnosed condition from a physician or psychiatric which may cause the student to be absent from school for more than nine consecutive weeks or equivalent on a modified calendar.
 - **Example** - A student who has received an organ transplant and is directed not to return to in-person instruction due to a weakened immune system.
 - Determination of services will be based on information included in the Medical form.
 - Students on long-term HHB will receive a minimum of 3 hours per week during the initial service period, but may be referred to an alternative program that best meets the student's academic needs.

Intermittent Services

In certain cases, it is deemed by the physician that a student may attend school on an intermittent basis due to a chronic condition from which they may suffer. In cases such as these, the physician will indicate the attendance parameters for the students based on the illness or injury of the student. Students receiving intermittent services must be absent for a minimum of three consecutive days before HHB services will be provided, unless the student has a chronic illness requiring ongoing intermittent services, in which case the days may not be consecutive.

- **Example:** A student has severe asthma that flares up periodically during the school year. The student will receive services after being absent 3 consecutive days due to a severe attack.
- A student receiving ongoing intermittent services (ex. dialysis or chemotherapy patient) in which regular treatment requiring absences occurs will receive an adjusted rate of services based on the number of hours the student is able to attend school. This schedule of services will be evaluated by the Hospital/Homebound Coordinator and communicated to the HHB tutor.
- Intermittent HHB students who only miss 1 or 2 days sporadically may never receive HHB instructional services. Instead, they should be allowed an equivalent number of days to make up their work per HCS policy.
- **It is the parents' responsibility to notify the school and the HHB tutor when their child is absent from school. HHB services will not begin until after the third consecutive absence.**

Hospital-Homebound Attendance Guidelines

**Please note - HHB should not be used as a solution for students who are chronically absent without a documented medical impairment. Additionally, any absences that an approved HHB student accumulates BEFORE approval of services CANNOT be retroactively changed to an excused HHB absence.*

1. The student shall be counted present for the entire week when he or she is provided instruction on an individual basis or as part of a group by the HHB teacher for a minimum of three hours per week.
2. A student shall be counted absent for the week when the HHB tutoring sessions (3 hours) are canceled by the parent/guardian, emancipated minor, or student 18 years of age or older without a 24-hour notice. At the discretion of the HHB Tutor, the canceled sessions may be rescheduled the same week. Once the schedule is completed, the student is counted in accordance with the Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student Attendance.
3. If the student is unable to receive HHB instruction during the school week due to his or her medical condition, the tutor may schedule a make-up session. Once the session is completed, the student is counted in accordance with the Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student Attendance.
4. Attendance credit will only be given to students who are active participants in the Hospital/Homebound program. **Misuse of HHB for attendance purposes may result in dismissal.**

Instructional Delivery Expectations

1. Whenever possible, the student's current teacher will be asked to provide hospital/homebound services. If a current teacher is not available, every effort will be made to hire a teacher from the student's school to serve as the Hospital Homebound teacher.
2. An individual employed as an HHB teacher must hold a Georgia teacher's certification and be employed by Henry County Schools. The HHB teacher should have a broad background of professional training and experience so that he or she will be able to adapt instruction to each student's needs.
3. **A parent or guardian over 21 must be present during the entire instructional period for students under age 18. A parent, guardian, or approved adult parent designee is not required to be in attendance during the session with students 18 years of age.**
4. A schedule for student study time between teacher visits should be established, and the student should be prepared for each session with the teacher. **Students are expected to work on assignments during the days/times that they would be in that particular class so that they can review/discuss their assignments with their HHB teacher during their HHB sessions.**
5. The HHB tutor will work as a facilitator by assisting the HHB student with understanding and completing their assignments. **HHB teachers may not be able to teach new concepts during their HHB sessions or provide subject-area tutoring.**
6. The student's content area teachers (teachers of record) will still be available to assist the student with content-specific questions.
7. Since Impact Academy meets the State's minimum requirement of three hours of HHB instruction per school week for an HHB student, the HHB teacher may only facilitate the learning process, monitor assignments, and provide tutoring assistance as defined in the ESP for select courses that the student is unable to receive direct instruction.
8. HHB tutors shall provide direct delivery of the course assignments/materials provided by the student's classroom teacher. The student's teachers should provide their course syllabus, assignments, tests and any supplementary materials (i.e., study guides for quizzes/tests, chapter notes, etc.) to the HHB tutor. The HHB teacher will be unable to tutor students on content that is not related to the coursework assigned by the classroom teacher.
9. HHB instructional delivery shall focus on the core subjects, i.e., reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, elective courses MAY be included in HHB instruction for high school students for graduation credit.
10. Some adaptations to regular assignments may be required for some of the following reasons:
 - a. Medically related limitations may require that part or all of the classwork be modified. Such accommodations will be specified during the initial setup of Hospital Homebound services.
 - b. Class work may be of a nature that cannot be extended or modified.. In this case, the classroom teacher will focus on assignments that demonstrate an understanding of the standard. The classroom teacher has the discretion to determine which assignments the HHB student should complete.

Instructional Materials for HHB Services

1. The HHB student shall use instructional materials issued by the student's classroom teachers. The student's parents or guardians shall be responsible for obtaining all of the student's books from the school before the first session of HHB instruction.
2. Students in grades 3 through 12 should utilize their HCS district laptop during their HHB services.
3. It is the students' and parents' responsibility to stay current with homework and class projects and make appropriate arrangements for the delivery and submission of completed assignments to the school.

Standardized Assessment Expectations for HHB Students

1. All HHB students in grades 3-12 will be expected to take all state-mandated tests in person unless the student is approved to take an alternate assessment as stipulated in their accommodations (504 Plan or IEP).
2. All state-mandated tests shall be administered based on the accommodations listed in the student's 504 Plan, IEP, and/or ESP.
3. The HHB Program cannot waive standardized testing for any student receiving HHB services. The decision to test must be made with the child's school and the HCS Assessments and Performance Department.
4. All HHB students will be encouraged to take all state-mandated assessments at the school (in-person) during the district's testing window.
5. Although there is no option for a parent to opt a student out of standardized testing, they can submit a written response to their child's school stating that they refuse to allow their child to participate in testing.
6. Upon receipt of the written response, the school's testing administrator shall collaborate with the district's Testing Coordinator to review each request and submit a response to the parent.

End of HHB Services/Return to School Guidelines

Before the start of HHB services, the student's HHB team will discuss the student's transition back to school.

1. If the student is prepared to return to school (in-person) on a full-time basis, they will need to submit a Medical Clearance form/letter from their treating physician to their home school, stating that they have been medically cleared to return to school.
2. If the treating physician determines that the student is not medically cleared to return, the parent must submit a written statement or a new HHB Medical Referral from the treating physician with a new HHB end date. This referral should be submitted to the district's Hospital Homebound office.
3. Students who do not submit a Medical Clearance form/letter by their return date will not be allowed to return to school and will begin to accrue absences under the HCS Attendance policy until they are medically cleared to return or submit new HHB paperwork.

Termination of Services

A student's HHB services can be terminated early (before the original end date) for the reasons listed below:

1. The licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist indicates that the medical condition has changed from what was defined in the ESP, and the student has been cleared to return to in-person learning.
2. The student completes all credit requirements early or in December.
3. The student withdraws from Henry County Schools.
4. The student repeatedly does not assume responsibility for the completion of their assignments or repeatedly exhibits disruptive behavior towards the HHB tutor.
5. The student is employed in any capacity, goes on vacation, regularly participates in extracurricular activities, or is no longer confined at home.
6. The parent or secondary student cancels three sessions without 24-hours' notice and/or fails to reschedule.
7. The instructional environment is not conducive to HHB service (repeated background disruptions, technology issues, behavior issues, late starts, ending early, etc).
8. HHB Services are misused by the parent/student for purposes other than for a documented illness.
9. The parent chooses to end the HHB services.

For additional information about the HCS Hospital Homebound Program, please contact the Office of Family Services at 770-957-3945 or sheryl.matthews@henry.k12.ga.us