



## Homebound Instruction: Questions & Answers for Families

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The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) receives many inquiries from parents, guardians, schools, and others regarding homebound instruction. This document will help to clarify what parents or guardians can expect when requesting homebound instruction for their child.

### **1. My child can't attend school at this time due to an illness/injury/surgery. Is my school district required to provide homebound instruction?**

No. There is no law that specifically requires a school district to provide homebound instruction to a student who is unable to attend school. However, different requirements apply to special education students, i.e., students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In some situations, federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may impact a school district's obligation to provide homebound instruction. This document does not address these standards but does provide sources for additional information. See Question #3 for more information.

### **2. If my child's physician writes a prescription for homebound instruction, isn't the school required to provide it?**

No. The school board is required to *consider* the request but may or may not choose to provide the instruction.

### **3. How do I request homebound instruction if my child does not receive special education through an individualized education program (IEP) or accommodations through a 504 plan?**

The actual procedure for requesting homebound instruction is determined by each local school board, not at the state level. Start by discussing your concern with the school principal. Some boards require that requests be put in writing. Some school districts may have a written policy on homebound instruction. If so, you are entitled to receive a copy, if you request it. School boards have 90 days to render a written decision to your written request for homebound instruction. If your child has been evaluated for special education but was not found to be eligible for special education, then the school board must provide a written decision to your request within 30 days.

### **4. How do I request homebound instruction if my child receives special education services through an individualized education program (IEP)?**

If your child currently has an IEP, then you should request an IEP team meeting to discuss whether homebound instruction is necessary to meet your child's disability related needs. You may wish to provide the team with information from your child's physician. This information is not required for making a homebound placement; however, it may assist the team in better understanding your child's medical condition that might warrant a homebound placement. If the IEP team determines that a homebound placement is the appropriate placement, then your child will receive homebound instruction and services, and you do not need to request them through the school board.

**5. How do I request homebound instruction if my student receives services or accommodations through a 504 plan?**

If your child has a 504 plan, then you should request a meeting with your 504 team to discuss whether homebound instruction is an appropriate placement for your child. You may wish to provide the team with information from your child's physician. This information is not required for making a homebound placement; however, it may assist the team in better understanding your child's medical condition that might warrant a homebound placement. If the 504 team determines that a homebound placement is the appropriate placement, then your child will receive homebound instruction and services, and you do not need to request them through the school board. If your child does not have a 504 plan, but you believe that your child needs one, you may ask your school district to conduct an evaluation. School districts may use the same process to evaluate the needs of students under Section 504 as they use to conduct a special education evaluation. For more information about 504 plans, please see the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights' website, [Protecting Students With Disabilities \(ed.gov\)](https://www.ed.gov/office-of-civil-rights/protecting-students-with-disabilities).

**6. My child is not in special education, but I wonder if this illness could change that?**

If you believe that your child may have a disability requiring special education services, you can request a special education evaluation. The request must be in writing, must provide the name of your child, and must provide the reasons why you believe your child is a child with a disability. Once a referral is received by the school district, the school district will appoint an individualized education program (IEP) team to conduct the evaluation. As the parent, you are part of this IEP team, and will be an equal partner in determining whether or not your child is eligible to receive special education services. However, even if your child is found eligible, this does not mean that homebound instruction and services will necessarily be provided. Rather, this will be an IEP team decision, with you as part of the team. For more information on special education bulletins, please see "Special Education in Plain Language" at [spec-ed-plain-lang-english.pdf \(wi.gov\)](https://www.wisconsin.gov/spec-ed-plain-lang-english.pdf).

**7. My child is pregnant. May I request homebound instruction for them?**

School age parents are eligible for services that allow them to continue and complete their education. This may include homebound instruction on a temporary basis. Be sure to tell the school that your child is or will be a school-age parent. More information is available at DPI's [School-Age Parents webpage](https://www.wisconsin.gov/school-age-parents).

**8. My child is having mental health issues. May I request homebound instruction for this type of illness?**

Yes. Mental illnesses or concerns can be a legitimate reason to request homebound instruction.

**9. If the district does provide homebound instruction, how much do they need to provide?**

Because homebound instruction is not required, there are no standards as to the amount of instruction, the time of day it is delivered, or the classes offered. Even in the best of circumstances, homebound instruction cannot completely replace the experiences your child would get by attending school. A licensed teacher must teach homebound instruction when it is provided.

**10. Isn't this standard different for high school students, due to graduation requirements?**

No. Because schools are not required to provide homebound instruction, they can determine appropriate amounts of instruction on an individual basis, if it is provided.

**11. If I request homebound instruction and it is denied, will I get in trouble for not sending my child to school?**

A child who is excused because they are “temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend a school program, but who can be expected to return to a school program upon termination or abatement of the illness or condition” cannot be found truant or habitually truant. However, the school can request a written statement from your child’s physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner as proof of the condition of your child. This excuse must state the time period for which it is valid and cannot be valid for longer than 30 days. If your child needs to miss school longer than 30 days, the school could ask for another written excuse.

**12. If the district denies my request for homebound instruction, may I request other changes in my child’s schedule, such as a shortened schedule?**

Yes. Parents have the right to request modifications in their child’s educational program. As with homebound instruction, the district may or may not choose to modify your child’s program. It is best to meet with school staff to discuss what is best for your child.

**13. Is homebound instruction the same as home schooling?**

No. In a home-based Private Education Program, or “home schooling,” parents are responsible for their child’s education. They must register their home-schooled child with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to avoid their child being considered truant.

**14. Can I home-school my child if the district denies my request for homebound instruction?**

Parents always have the right to home-school their child. If you choose to home-school your child, state law requires you register them. Call 1 (888) 245-2732 to request a form or go to <https://sms.dpi.wi.gov/HomeSchoolParent/>. Refer to the [Home-Based Private Educational Program \(Homeschooling\) Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information.

**15. My child attends private school. May I request homebound instruction from my local public school district?**

You can request it, but the public school is not obligated to provide it, just as they are not obligated to provide it for students attending the public school.

For further information or questions, contact [dpisspw@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpisspw@dpi.wi.gov) or (608) 266-8960.

Special education related questions about homebound instruction can be directed to [dpisped@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpisped@dpi.wi.gov) or (608) 266-1781.

This document is also available for download at:  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/homeboundqafamilies.pdf>.

This document is meant to provide general guidance to families regarding homebound instruction. It is not meant to substitute for legal advice. Please consult an attorney for assistance in individual cases.

The references used in preparing this document are Wis. Stat. sec. [118.15](#), Compulsory Attendance and Subchapter VI of Chapter 115, Education for School Age Parents.

More information about compulsory school attendance can be found at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/safe-schools/school-attendance>.