

HOME INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE:

This procedure will be used by the Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) to determine if a child participating in a Home Instruction Program is receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age.

II. BACKGROUND:

Each child of compulsory school age who resides in Talbot County shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year in accordance with Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, Sections 7-301 and 7-302, unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools in Talbot County to children of the same age, pursuant to COMAR 13A.10.01-.05, et seq.

III. REQUIREMENTS:

A Home Instruction Program is provided by a parent or guardian who desires to teach a child at home in lieu of enrolling him/her in a public or private school.

A. Requirements:

A parent or guardian who chooses to teach a child at home must initially complete and sign the Assurance of Consent form prescribed by the State Board of Education which indicates consent to the requirements set forth in COMAR 13A.10.01-.05 Home Instruction which:

1. Indicates consent to the requirements set forth in COMAR 13A.10.01-.05;
and
2. Shall be submitted to the local superintendent or designee at least 15 days prior to the start of the home instruction program.

B. The Home Instruction Program Shall:

1. Provide regular, thorough instruction in the studies usually taught in the public schools of Talbot County to children of the same age.

2. Include instruction in English, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health, and physical education.
3. Occur on a regular basis during the school year and be of sufficient duration to implement the instruction program.
4. Portfolio

A parent or guardian who chooses to teach a child at home shall maintain a portfolio of materials which:

- a. Demonstrates the parent or guardian is providing regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the areas specified in section III. B.2. of this procedure.
- b. Include relevant materials, such as instructional materials, reading materials, and examples of the child's writings, worksheets, workbooks, creative materials, and tests.
- c. Shall be reviewed by the designee at the conclusion of each semester at such times as are mutually agreeable to the designee and the parent or guardian.

5. Parent or Guardian Agreement

A parent or guardian shall agree to permit the designee to review the portfolio of educational materials, discuss the instructional program, and observe instruction provided that all of the following requirements are met:

- a. The review is at a time and place mutually agreeable to the principal and the parent or guardian.
- b. The purpose of the review is to ensure that a child is receiving regular, thorough instruction.
- c. There are not more than three reviews during the school year.

6. Voluntary Participation in Standardized Testing

Upon request of a parent or guardian, a child receiving home instruction may participate in the regularly scheduled standardized testing programs that are administered in the public school the child is eligible to attend. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to indicate intent for the child to participate in the standardized testing program on their child's annual assurance consent form.

7. Noncompliance with Requirements

If parent or guardian does not agree to the requirements for the Home Instruction Program as set forth in COMAR 13A.10.01.-.05 and in this

administrative procedure, the child shall be enrolled promptly in a public or nonpublic school as defined in COMAR 13A.09.10.02

8. Deficiencies in the Program

If the Superintendent of Schools or designee determines by review of the home instruction program or inspection of the portfolio that a child is not receiving a regular, thorough instruction program in conforming with COMAR 13A.10.01.-.05, the Superintendent of Schools or designee shall notify the parent or legal guardian in writing of any deficiencies in the program.

- a. Within 30 days of receipt of notification of any deficiencies, the parent or guardian shall provide evidence to the Superintendent of Schools or designee that the deficiency has been or is being corrected.
- b. If the Superintendent of Schools or designee determines there is not a satisfactory plan to correct the deficiency or if a deficiency is not corrected, the child shall be enrolled promptly in a public school or nonpublic school.

9. Placement in Public Schools

Upon application of a child for admission to a public school from a home instruction program, the Superintendent of Schools or designee shall determine by evaluation the placement of the child and any credit to be awarded toward high school graduation. The evaluation may include administration of standardized tests and examinations as outlined in TCPS Policy 9.32.

10. Home Instruction Under Supervision of a Nonpublic School

A parent or guardian may provide instruction for a child at home without compliance with the requirements of this procedure if instruction offers regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to the children of the same age and is under supervision of a school or institution offering an educational program approved by the State Department of Education or operated by a bona fide church organization or a nonpublic school with a certificate of approval from the State Department of Education. Nonetheless, the parent or guardian must complete and submit to the Home Instruction Coordinator the Assurance of Consent form indicating the child's enrollment in such a program.

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. The parent/guardian should discuss with the school counselor and/or the Home Instruction Coordinator the requirements that must be met to establish a Home Instruction Program and the procedure and time frame involved in processing the Assurance of Consent form for the Home Instruction Program.

B. After discussing the requirements of the Home Instruction Program with the parent or guardian, the school counselor or Home Instruction Coordinator forwards an Assurance of Consent form for home instruction to the parent or guardian.

C. The parent or guardian completes the Assurance of Consent form for home instruction and returns the completed form 15 days prior to the start of the Home Instruction program to the Home Instruction Coordinator.

D. The Home Instruction Coordinator reviews the Assurance of Consent form for appropriateness. If it is incomplete in any respect, the parent/guardian will be contacted to obtain the necessary information for completion of the document. Upon receipt of a completed Assurance of Consent form, the Home Instruction Coordinator files the original form in the Office of Student Services and sends a copy to the school of residency. If the parent/guardian requests that the child be enrolled in the standardized testing program, the Home Instruction Coordinator will notify the child's school of residency to notice the parent of testing dates and times.

E. The Home Instruction Coordinator will contact the parent or legal guardian and arrange a date and time agreeable to both parties for the first review of the Home Instruction Program.

F. The Home Instruction Coordinator informs the parent/guardian of the assessment of the program and any deficiencies. Suggestions for improving the program are also forwarded to the parent or guardian at this time. Within 30 days of receipt of notification of any deficiencies, the parent or guardian shall provide evidence to the Home Instruction Coordinator that the deficiencies have been or are being corrected. Any deficiency in the home instruction program must be completed before the next scheduled review.

G. The Home Instruction Coordinator determines whether or not the deficiencies have been corrected. If the parent or guardian has not corrected the deficiencies as specified, the Home Instruction Coordinator informs the parent/guardian that the child must be promptly enrolled in a public or private school. A parent or guardian who fails to enroll a child in a public or private school will be referred to the State's Attorney for noncompliance with Maryland's Compulsory Attendance Law.

H. A parent or guardian who desires to enroll a child in their school of residency must contact the school to register their child and complete a Readmittance to School from the Home Instruction Program form.

I The Home Instruction Coordinator will review all information provided by the parent to make recommendations regarding grade level placement and credits that the student will be awarded toward high school graduation according to TCPS Policy 9.32.

V. INCLUSION IN THE NAVAL JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS UNITS (NJROTC)

Under the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 ,home instruction students are permitted to participate in the JROTC programs which operate in a public school that serves their residential area. Home instructed students who participate in a JROTC program at their school of residence will be expected to comply with the TCPS Code of Conduct, and all other TCPS policies while on school grounds and engaging in NJROTC sponsored activities; and are subject to disciplinary action as specified in the TCPS handbook should a violation occur.

A. Application Process

Home instructed students seeking to participate in their local NJROTC unit must complete an application, each year in which they seek to participate, no later than July 1 for the upcoming school year. The application process requires the applicant to have a student identification number. Parents/guardians can obtain a student identification number from their school of residence after presenting the required registration documents. Eligible home instructed students are between the ages of 14 and 18 at the start of the upcoming school year, compliant with all home instruction regulations, and be willing to sign and adhere to the contract of the NJROTC unit to which they apply.

B. Registration Process

If the application for a home instructed student to participate in NJROTC is approved, the parent/guardian must satisfy all TCPS registration requirements and be registered at the school in order to participate.

C. Continuation In Program

Continuation in the NJROTC program will be contingent upon:

1. The annual submission of an application to participate; and
2. Current enrollment with school of residence; and
3. Remaining in good standing with the NJROTC unit; and
4. Open seats in the NJROTC program that serves their residence

VI. RELATED LAW AND BYLAW:

A. The Public School Laws of Maryland - MD. Annotated Code, Education Article 7-103, Required School Days and Holidays and 7-301 Compulsory Attendance and 7-302 Report of Absences and Maladjustment.

B. Code of Maryland Regulations, 13A.09.10.02.. Nonpublic Nursery Schools, Kindergartens, and Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Schools.
Code of Maryland Regulations, 13A.10.01-.05