

Home School Frequently Asked Questions

What are the basic provisions of the compulsory attendance law?

Every parent, guardian or other person residing within this state having control or charge of any child(ren) between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays must enroll and send such child(ren) to a public school, a private school or a home study program that meets requirements.

Who can operate a home study program?

Parents or guardians may operate a home study program for their child(ren) only, provided the parents or guardians meet specific requirements of the law.

Who is responsible for the enforcement of the law?

It is the duty of the local board of education and each local school superintendent to contact juvenile authorities if the home study requirements are not being met after written notice to the parent or guardian of the child. The Department of Education shall coordinate with local school superintendents with respect to notification for students in home study programs.

According to the law, what is the first step in establishing a home study program?

Within 30 days after a program is established and by September 1 annually thereafter, the parents or guardians must file a Declaration of Intent with the Georgia Department of Education. This Declaration must include the names and ages of the students, the address where the program is located, public school district attendance zone based on home address, parent/guardian's name, and the dates of the school year.

Are there any qualifications required for the parent who teaches the child?

Yes. If the teacher is a parent or guardian, s/he must have a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (G.E.D.).

Can the parents or guardians employ someone else to teach in a home school program?

Yes, any employed tutor must have a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED).

Does the law address curriculum requirements for home study programs?

Yes. The program must provide a basic academic educational program which includes (but is not limited to) instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies and science.

Is a home study program to be operated within specified hours?

No. The law only requires the program to operate the equivalent of 180 days or at least 4.5 (four and one-half) hours of instruction per day or its equivalent unless the child is physically unable to comply with this requirement.

Does the law specify any promotion requirements, testing or record keeping by the home study program?

The law does not specify any promotion requirements. However, it does stipulate that an "appropriate" nationally standardized testing program be administered in consultation with a person trained in the administration and interpretation of norm-referenced tests. The law further states that the student must be evaluated at least every three years, beginning at the end of third grade. Nationally-normed assessments must be given at the end of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. Additionally, the records of such tests must be retained for three years.

Are progress reports or report cards required of home study programs?

The law states that the instructor must write an annual progress assessment report in each required subject area for each student and that the reports must be retained for at least three years.

Are home study programs required to keep attendance records?

As of July 1, 2013, you are no longer required to submit attendance records to the Georgia Department of Education. However, attendance reports should be retained by the parent(s) or guardian of children in the home study program.

How do I request a Certificate of Attendance for a work permit or for other purposes?

For driving permits or licenses all that is needed is the Declaration of Intent with a 36 character parent signature. This document replaces the Certificate of Attendance and should be submitted with all other Driver Service's required documents to obtain a driving permit or license.

Should officials of the local public school system attempt to monitor the curriculum, the test program, student assessment process, student records or instruction time of home study programs?

No.

Are there any requirements in the law pertaining to facilities or health and safety standards?

No.

Are public school systems required by law to furnish for home study programs instructional materials, textbooks or services such as testing?

No.

Are students in home study programs eligible to participate in public school interscholastic competitive activities?

No. Pursuant to State Board Rule 160-5-1-.18, students wishing to participate in public school interscholastic competitive activities must be enrolled full-time in a public school during the semester of participation.

Are there any state rules, regulations or guidelines concerning the grade placement of students or validation of credits earned by students in home study programs who are entering or returning to the public schools?

Pursuant to State Board Rule 160-5-1-.15, local boards of education are required to adopt policies and procedures for validating credit for courses taken in a home study program. The procedures at a minimum must include the following:

- Probationary placement and satisfactory performance for one or more grading periods or
- Acceptable scores on tests focused on group placement, subject area and/or grade level.

Will high school students entering the public schools from home study programs be required to meet all state board rules concerning graduation requirements?

Yes. All students graduating from any state-supported Georgia high schools must meet all state requirements in regard to attendance, Carnegie Units and passing scores on the state assessment requirements.

What is the process for a home school student entering public school?

The public school may either test the student to place at the appropriate level OR the school may accept the school records to place for a probationary period of at least one grading period to see if the student is successful.

What is the penalty for being in violation of this law?

Any person in violation of this law is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$100 (one hundred dollars).

What steps should a local school superintendent take when a violation occurs?

The law requires the local school superintendent to notify the parent or guardian of the child and then to report to the juvenile or other court having jurisdiction.

NOTE:

The mandate placed on the public education system calls for the Georgia Department of Education to coordinate with local boards of education and local school superintendents to enforce the compulsory attendance of all children between the ages of six and sixteen in a public school, a private school or a home study program that meets legal requirements. Therefore, the Declaration of Intent form must be completed for each student enrolled in a home school and submitted to the Georgia Department of Education. The Declaration of Intent must be submitted within 30 days after a program is established and by September 1st annually thereafter.