



219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641 (p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals and Special Education Administrators
FROM: Home Study Office; Agency of Education
SUBJECT: Home Study Information for Vermont Public Schools
DATE: February 8, 2019

Overview

The purpose of this memo is to provide administrators with information relevant to students who are enrolled in a home study program in Vermont.

Background

Families whose children are ages 6-16 may enroll in a Vermont Home Study Program through the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE). While it is not an “approval” process, families must provide the AOE Home Study Office with a variety of documentation in order to enroll.

[Title 16 V.S.A. §11\(21\) Classifications and Definitions:](#)

“A Home Study Program” means an educational program offered through home study which provides a minimum course of study and which is offered to not more than:

- (a) Children residing in that home; and
- (b) Children not residing in that home who either are two or fewer in number or who are from one family.

Relevant Information

The following information is important for administrators to be aware of when learning of a student who is enrolled in a Home Study Program:

How do I know if a student is enrolled in a Home Study Program?

- Every other week, superintendents or their designee are provided with an electronic list of students enrolled in a home study program that reside within their supervisory union/school district.
 - Superintendents should disseminate the list of students to their local schools for tracking and truancy purposes
- Families receive a “complete” letter when they have submitted the required documentation. Schools can request that families provide a copy of their “complete” letter as proof that their children are enrolled in a home study program.

- School principals, registrars and guidance staff may contact the [AOE Home Study Office](#) at 802-622-1254 to check on the enrollment status of students.

What if I have concerns regarding a student who is enrolling or has enrolled in a Home Study Program?

- Based on [16 V.S.A. § 166b](#), the Home Study Office may deny enrollment following a hearing if it has information that creates *significant doubt* about whether the Home Study Program can or will provide a minimum course of study (MCOS) for a student who is not yet enrolled. (16 V.S.A. § 166b (e)). All evidence in support of such a decision must be delivered through testimony to a hearing officer who will then determine if there is cause to deny enrollment.
- If, after home study instruction has begun, the AOE comes to believe the enrollment should be terminated, we can also call a hearing. At the hearing, we must show that the home study program has either 1) substantially failed to comply with the law, 2) substantially failed to provide a student with the minimum course of study or 3) we believe that they will not be able to provide a minimum course of study.
- If you have concerns regarding a student enrolled in a Home Study Program please contact Alicia Hanrahan at 802-479-1206 or alicia.hanrahan@vermont.gov.

Are students enrolled in a Home Study Program ever considered to be truant?

- All students ages 6-16 must be enrolled in a public or independent school until they are enrolled in a Home Study Program.
- Once families receive an official “complete letter” from the Home Study office, then they may withdraw their students from a public or independent school. Families who withdraw their student/s from a public or independent school before their home study enrollment is complete may be considered truant.
- The Home Study Office advises families against withdrawing their student/s until they have received their “complete letter” and are officially enrolled in a Home Study Program.
- Schools are encouraged to both work with families who are enrolling their student/s in a home study program as well follow their policy on truancy.

If students are enrolled in an online program, are they enrolled in home study?

- It depends.
 - Families who choose to enroll their students in on-line programs must also enroll in a home study program.
 - Students who enroll in the Oak Meadow Program full time do not need to enroll in a home study program as Oak Meadow is an approved distance learning program. Students who access the Oak Meadow curriculum (and are **not enrolled full time** in their program) **must enroll** in a home study program.

- Public or independent schools cannot pay for the Oak Meadow Program as part of school choice. See [16 V.S.A. §166 \(b\)\(6\)](#).

Can students be enrolled in both a public school and a Home Study Program?

- Yes, students can be enrolled in both a public school and home study as long as they take 3/5 of their core courses at home. The core classes include:
 - Basic communication Skills, including reading, writing
 - Basic communication Skills including the use of numbers.
 - Citizenship, history and government in Vermont and the United States;
 - English, American and other literature;
 - The natural sciences

Physical education, comprehensive health education including the effects of tobacco, alcoholic drinks, and drugs on the human system and society and fine arts are the other three areas that students (12 and under) must participate in. These courses can be taken at the public school and do not affect their home study status as long as 3/5 of the core courses are taught at home.

- **Act 119** is a provision of the Vermont statute at [16 V.S.A. § 563\(24\)](#) concerning the powers and duties of public school boards which states that school boards: “Shall adopt a policy which, in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education, will integrate home study students into its schools through enrollment in courses, participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities and use of facilities.”
- Click [here](#) to review the model Home Study Policy developed by the Vermont School Boards Association.

Can home study students access extracurricular activities?

- Yes. Act 119 is a provision of the Vermont statute at [16 V.S.A. § 563\(24\)](#) concerning the powers and duties of public school boards which states that school boards: Shall adopt a policy which, in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education, will integrate home study students into its schools through enrollment in courses, participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities and use of facilities.
- The State Board of Education rules allow home study students to be eligible to enroll as a part time student in a school in his/her district of residence or in a public school for which his or her district of residence is required to pay tuition. [Rule 4403.1](#)
- Students enrolled in home study programs may access extracurricular activities including sports teams and clubs.
- Depending on local school board policies, schools can determine whether students who are enrolled in a home study program can access dances and participate in class trips.

Can a home study student receive Special Education Services?

- Students enrolled full time in home study programs are not entitled to special education services at the public schools. Public schools, through consultation with parents, may, but are not required to, provide special education supports and services to full time

homeschoolers through a “Services Plan.” A services plan may include professional consultation, special education and/or related services.

- A part time home study student must receive special education services if needed to access a class in the public school in which they are enrolled (or an independent school if the student has school choice). For instance,
 - If a part time student with a math calculation disability wants to take an Algebra I class at the public school, the student may need special education supports and services to benefit from participate in that class.
 - However, if a part time student with a math calculation disability wants to take an English/language arts class at the public school, then the student will most likely not need any special education supports and services to either access or derive benefit from participation in the language arts class.
 - The school district may, but is not required, to provide the student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) while enrolled in the school.

Can a Home Study Student take Driver’s Education or other Highly Popular Classes?

Each school board shall adopt, by July 1, 1999, policies and procedures to ensure that home study students who request part-time enrollment in academic courses or programs are accepted into those courses or programs, and are furnished with required learning materials, on the same basis as full-time students. Please contact the [Home Study Office](#) at (802) 622-1254 with questions.