

1042 – Homebound Instruction Procedures

Homebound instruction may be necessary for students who are unable to attend school for two consecutive weeks or more. This document outlines the procedural requirements for identifying, approving, implementing, and monitoring homebound instruction services, including additional considerations and requirements for students with disabilities and English Learners. This document only applies to charter schools authorized by the Charter Commission. These procedures cover:

- Definitions
- Homebound Point of Contact
- Identification
- Instructional Service Requirements
- Considerations for Students with Disabilities
- Considerations for English Learners (EL)
- Documentation and Record Keeping

Definitions

- **Medical Homebound:** A program for students with medical conditions certified by a licensed physician, indicating the student cannot attend school for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive instructional days. The certification must include:
 - Diagnosis and prognosis,
 - Expected duration of absence; and
 - Statement that the student can receive instruction without endangering the health of the instructor.
- **Medical Condition:** A physical or mental condition, illness, or disorder that prevents a student from attending regular classes and is certified in writing by the student's treating physician.
- **Educational Homebound:** A temporary placement for students with disabilities, determined by the IEP team, when the student cannot receive educational benefits in a less restrictive setting. This must be reviewed by the IEP team every thirty (30) school days.

Homebound Point of Contact

Each charter school shall name a point of contact ("POC") who will be the main liaison between students receiving homebound instruction at the school and the Commission. The school's POC shall communicate with the Commission's POC on the implementation of homebound



instruction, including reporting students who are transitioning to homebound instruction and returning to school following an approved period of homebound instruction. The school's POC shall notify the Commission's POC prior to meeting to discuss homebound placement for any student.

Every year, each charter school shall notify the Commission of the school's homebound instruction POC by submitting the individual's name and contact information on a spreadsheet contained within the reporting calendar.

LEA Responsibilities

A representative of the Commission may attend any meeting in which homebound services are being considered, including initial placement, recertification, continuation, or removal of homebound services.

The Commission may monitor compliance through an audit of student files to ensure schools maintain the proper documentation, including:

- Desktop monitoring of IEPs of students identified as receiving homebound services
- On-site monitoring in conjunction with annual authorizing site visits

If proper documentation is not maintained, the Commission shall notify the appropriate parties. Charter schools shall complete any corrective actions outlined in the memo.

Identification

To determine if a student is eligible for homebound services, each charter school must complete the following process:

- Written referral: Initiated by parent/guardian, school personnel, or medical provider.
- Documentation submitted to the school and held in student's cumulative file.
 - Submission of application for homebound services (templates attached),
 - Medical certification indicating the necessity (for medical homebound only), and
 - Release of information signed by parents (template attached, for medical homebound only).
- Review Team: Comprised of school staff familiar with the student's health and educational needs, including the 504 or IEP team if applicable, the parent/guardian, and Commission staff.
- Decision: The review team evaluates the application and determines eligibility.

Schools shall maintain all documentation, including the written decision, within the student's cumulative file. Note, schools may consider the need to evaluate a student requiring homebound placement for eligibility for Section 504 services. Consideration may also be given

by the school to use other alternative schedules for the student in lieu of homebound assignments. These may include late start, shortened school day or changes of instructional setting in order to accommodate and meet the student's needs.

Instructional Service Requirements

If homebound services are approved, the school and family will coordinate to determine the best instructional plan, considering both the student's academic and medical needs. The instructional plan should include, at a minimum, the following:

- **Duration:** A minimum of three (3) hours per week while school is in session, distributed based on individual needs. The minimum of three (3) hours per week must not include travel or preparation, but rather time that the student is engaged in instruction with properly endorsed personnel.
- **Delivery Methods:** In-person at the student's location, including home or hospital, or via the school's virtual program.
- **Instructional Personnel:** Qualified teachers licensed in the appropriate content areas.
- **Technology:** An asynchronous technology-based program does not meet the criteria of qualified, licensed instructional personnel but can be used as a supplement. The school must ensure that the student has all the necessary equipment, access, and training for working via the internet at no additional cost to the student.
- **Curriculum:** Aligned with the school's standards and the student's current grade/coursework.
- **Re-entry plan:** Outline of re-entry plan that determines the support the school will provide to transition the student back to the school setting once homebound instruction is no longer medically required or determined to be required through the IEP team.

Each charter school should have a process for monitoring the academic progress of students receiving homebound services. Schools may be asked to provide a record of the written instructional plan, including the assigned teacher(s) and subjects taught, documentation of communication and/or services held, and a list of materials and technology used if virtual instruction is utilized.

A student may be recertified for medical homebound by the treating physician if, in the treating physician's judgment, the student's medical condition continues to prevent the student from returning to regular classes following the initial certification period. Recertification must be obtained upon the expiration of each additional medical homebound instruction period if medical homebound instruction is to be continued beyond the initial medical homebound instruction period.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

A student with a disability may receive educational or medical homebound services. In all cases, instruction shall be provided by an appropriately endorsed educator, and the placement must be reviewed by the IEP team at intervals of thirty (30) school days to ensure the appropriateness of the instruction and the appropriateness of continuing the homebound placement.

Least Restrictive Environment

Homebound instruction is considered one of the most restrictive placements on the continuum of services for students with disabilities. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Least Restrictive Environment mandate requires that students with disabilities be educated alongside their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Removal from the regular education environment should only occur if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved.

IEP Team Review

IEP teams must demonstrate that a homebound placement is necessary, temporary, and consistent with the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Homebound instruction should not be used as a disciplinary measure. If a student's behavior impedes learning, the IEP team should consider conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and developing a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in addition to considering more restrictive placements.

An IEP team may return a homebound or hospitalized student to the regular classroom on a gradual basis. The student should be marked as homebound until that student is in the regular classroom for at least 50 percent of the scheduled school day, at which time the homebound student is removed from the homebound/hospitalized census.

Documentation

An IEP addendum must be created at the onset of homebound services, at each 30-day interval, and at the conclusion of homebound services. As outlined in State Board Rule, IEPs of students receiving educational homebound instruction must include a goal of the transition or return of the child to a less restrictive environment within the school year. An IEP of a student receiving homebound instruction may include the following documentation to demonstrate that the placement is consistent with the provision of FAPE:

- Updated data within the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAPF) that supports homebound placement. For educational



homebound, PLAAFPs must include quantitative and qualitative data that shows all other less restrictive options have been unsuccessful;

- Updated service type, dates, location, and length of placement in alignment with services provided while on homebound placement; and
- An updated Least Restrictive Environment statement.

A Prior Written Notice must be created at the onset of homebound services, at each 30-day interval, and at the conclusion of homebound services. The PWN must include the following documentation:

- The rationale for the decision to move or continue with homebound services, including the data (for educational homebound only) to support this as the least restrictive environment;
- The method of instruction, including IEP services, while the student receives homebound services;
- The date homebound services will expire, not more than thirty (30) school days following initiation of homebound services;
- A plan for transitioning the student back to a less restrictive environment.

For medical homebound placements, a signed copy of the physician's statement certifying the necessity and duration must also be uploaded to the TN Pulse system and kept in the student's cumulative record.

Considerations for English Learners (EL)

EL students receiving homebound services must continue to receive appropriate language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) as outlined in their Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), including services provided by an appropriately endorsed educator.

- Instructional Service Time: It is recommended that ESL service minutes be prorated like their general education instructional minutes.
 - If the student requires one (1) hour of daily ESL services, their services should account for 1/7 of the determined homebound instructional services.
- Documentation: ILPs must be revised to reflect the changes in services provided.
- Collaboration: ESL specialists collaborate with homebound instructors to tailor instruction that meets both academic and language development needs.
- Assessment: EL students must participate in required language proficiency assessments, with accommodations provided as necessary.
- Communication: All communications with EL families should be in the family's preferred language, utilizing translation and interpretation services as needed.

Documentation and Record Keeping

Each charter school must maintain accurate coding of homebound students in the Commission's Student Information System (SIS) using the following guidance:

- At the beginning of the homebound period, the appropriate staff shall enter the start date and the estimated date of return. When the student returns, the estimated date of return shall be changed to the actual date.
- Homebound students shall not be dropped and re-entered but shall remain enrolled and be counted present.
- Homebound students and students who receive services under a Section 504 plan, but are not IDEA eligible, are not included in the special education census.
- Homebound/hospitalized students are to be included in the regular grade-level count.
- Students with disabilities who are returning on a gradual basis should be marked as homebound until that student is in the regular classroom for at least 50 percent of the scheduled school day, at which time the homebound student is removed from the homebound/hospitalized census.
- Students with disabilities who are placed on homebound should also be included in the Option 10 count using a date range identifying the homebound period.
 - An IEP team may return a homebound or hospitalized student to the regular classroom on a gradual basis. The student is marked as homebound until the student is in the regular classroom for at least half of the scheduled school day, at which time the student is removed from the homebound/hospitalized census.
 - b. Special education personnel are responsible for reporting special education homebound students for each census period.

Schools must also maintain all relevant documentation, including ILPs, IEPs, medical certifications, and progress reports, in the TN Pulse system.



Homebound Services Application - (Template)

To: Healthcare Provider

This student is being referred for homebound services. Homebound instruction is available for students who will be unable to attend school for ten (10) consecutive school days or longer due to a medical condition. There must be a strong medical justification for this restrictive placement. This information is confidential and will be used only by school personnel involved with the student. By signing the attached Release of Records, the parent/guardian gives permission for the physician to discuss this student's medical condition with _____ (school name).

The Tennessee Public Charter School Commission requires the current diagnosis and treatment plan, in writing, from the treating physician before making a homebound determination. It would be helpful to have a brief note stating the reason you feel homebound services is appropriate for this student. The homebound request cannot be considered until all of the above documentation and information is received. At that time a determination will be made whether it is in the student's best interest to be placed on homebound or whether other educational adjustments would be more appropriate.

Parent/guardian, please complete the following information (please print):

Student Name _____ DOB _____ Grade _____

Student's Address: _____ Phone _____

School _____

Does the student have: IEP *please check* ____ yes ____ no 504 *please check* ____ yes ____ no

Healthcare Provider, please complete the following (please print):

Healthcare Providers Name and Practice _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Address _____

Date Last Examined _____ Diagnosis _____

Treatment Plan or Therapy (specify types and times administered)



Restrictions of Physical Activity (if any)

Expected length of recovery_____ Expected Return to School _____

Signature of Licensed Physician or Licensed psychologist in the State of Tennessee *Date*



Homebound Services Application for Pregnancy - (Template)

To: Healthcare Provider

The Tennessee Public Charter School Commission requires the current diagnosis and treatment plan before making a homebound determination.

T.C.A. § 49-10-1101 provides for homebound instruction for pregnant students. Under this statute, each pregnant student is entitled to three hours of homebound instruction per week throughout a six-week period of maternity leave. ("If the student's physician certifies in writing that the student's medical condition prevents the student from returning to regular classes, then the local education agency shall continue to offer three hours of homebound instruction per week, subject to periodic recertification that the student remains medically unable to attend class because of health complications arising from the pregnancy.")

Parent/guardian, please complete the following information (please print):

Student Name _____ DOB _____ Grade _____

Student's Address: _____ Phone _____

School _____

Does the student have: IEP *please check* _____ yes _____ no 504 *please check* _____ yes _____ no

Healthcare Provider, please complete the following (please print):

Healthcare Provider's Name and Practice _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Address _____

Date of most recent visit: _____ Expected Date of Delivery: _____

Recommending Homebound Instruction

Please select one below: (to be completed by the Healthcare Provider)

- ☐ Normal pregnancy: Maximum of six-week period beginning with date of delivery
- ☐ Complications of pregnancy: If the student is medically unable to attend class because of health complications arising from the pregnancy, please list complications:

Note: Complications should have a diagnostic code. Some examples are: pre-term labor (PTL), gestational diabetes, eclampsia/toxemia/PIH, etc.



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- ☐ Prior to Delivery: Must provide written medical documentation with treatment plan, i.e., prenatal record, and be recertified every 4 weeks until delivery.
- ☐ Beyond the six-week maternity period, must be recertified every 2 weeks until return to school.

When will this student be able to return to school?_____

Signature of Licensed Physician or Licensed psychologist in the State of Tennessee

Date



Homebound Release of Information - (Template)

Student Name _____ DOB _____ Grade _____

I authorize _____ (school name) to obtain records pertaining to previous and current medical issues to my child.

This may apply to (check all that apply):

_____ Medical Examination Records/History Diagnosis

_____ Psychological Evaluations

_____ Speech/Language Evaluations

_____ Consultations/Observations

_____ Legal issues/concerns

_____ Other evaluations (please list): _____

This consent will also allow open communication between doctors and authorized staff of the student and representatives of _____ (school name) to discuss medical, educational, and attendance information. This consent is for one year or until the date of _____. I understand that I may withdraw my consent to release this information at any time by submitting a written statement to both the school and provider.

Name(s) of Doctor(s) or Organization(s)

Phone or Fax

Parent/Guardian Name print

Parent/Guardian signature

date