

Timberlane Regional School District	Policy Code: IHBG
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HOME EDUCATION INSTRUCTION

Home Education is an alternative to compulsory attendance at a public or private school and is an individualized form of instruction in accordance with New Hampshire RSA 193-A and Department of Education Rule Part 315 (Ed 315). Parents or guardians may establish a home education program for any child, including one who is an "educationally disabled child" as defined under RSA 186-C:2, I, whether or not such child is previously enrolled in a school of the District. When and how parents/guardians determine to commence a home education program, and other choices the parents/guardians make, determine whether and the extent to which the District will have responsibilities relative to the home educated child(ren).

This policy is intended to help District personnel and home education families within the District understand those responsibilities based upon the family's choices. Nothing in this policy, however, should be understood to infringe upon the parent's/guardian's right under the applicable statutes or Department of Education rules.

A. Parent/Guardian Selection of a Participating Agency.

1. Selection of a Participating Agency. One of the most significant decisions the parents/guardians make relative to a home education program is the selection of a "participating agency" for home education program notification and support. This decision will also largely govern the District's obligations during the home education program.

The parent/guardian decides which participating agency to select, from the following:

- a. The Commissioner of the Department of Education;
- b. The resident district Superintendent ("District"); or
- c. The head of a nonpublic school.

The selected participating agency shall work with the parents/guardians upon request to meet the essential requirements of a home education program as set out in RSA 193-A:4, I.

2. Changing Participating Agency. At any time, the parents/guardians may select a different, valid, participating agency. To do so, the parents/guardians must provide notice to the new participating agency in the same manner as outlined in Section B.2, below.
3. District Obligations Relative to Selection of Participating Agency. If the selected participating agency is the resident district Superintendent, the District shall provide evaluation services as discussed in Section C, below. If the resident district Superintendent is *not* selected as the participating agency, the District may, but is not obligated to, provide evaluation services. However, the District shall, work with parents *upon request* to meet the requirements of RSA 193-A:4.

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B. Notices for Commencement of Home Education Program.

1. Notice For Students Withdrawing from District. State school attendance laws apply to each student unless and until a parent/guardian commences a home education program. Similarly, the District's attendance policies apply to all students enrolled in schools of the District.

Accordingly, when a parent/guardian of a child who is enrolled in a school of the District wishes to begin a home education program for the child, Ed Rule 315.05 (b) requires that on or before the date home education program begins, the parent/guardian must advise the Superintendent of the child's withdrawal from the District. The notice of withdrawal must be made in writing by the parent/guardian.

2. Written Notice of Program Required. In addition to the less formal notice required for a child being withdrawn from the District, RSA 193-A and Ed 315 both require that the parent/guardian provide written notice of the commencement of a home education program to the selected participating agency. *The District only receives this notice if the parents/guardians are selecting the Superintendent as the participating agency.*

The only information required in this written notice of commencement is listed in RSA 193-A:5, II: the names, addresses, and birth dates of all children who are participating in the home education program. The parents/guardians shall also provide contact information and update the notification information as necessary. If selected by the parents/guardians as the participating agency, the Superintendent of the resident district shall acknowledge receipt of the notification of commencement of home education within 14 days of receiving such notification, along with a request for any information required by RSA 193-A:5, II that was not included in the original notice.

3. No Annual Notice Required. Once established, the home education program remains in effect unless terminated pursuant Ed 315.06. The parent/guardian is *not* required to provide annual notification of continuation of a home education program.

C. Evaluation & Assessment.

Under RSA 193-A:6, II, parents/guardians are required to provide for an annual educational evaluation for home educated children that documents "educational progress at a level commensurate with the child's age and ability." Both the statute and Ed 315.08 provide several options for parents/guardians to meet the statutory evaluation requirements, and the parents/guardians are free to select their preferred method.

1. Evaluation with Assistance from the District. If the District is selected as the participating agency, the District must provide evaluation services upon request of the parent/guardian. If the District is not selected as the participating agency, the District *may* aid in evaluation, but is not required to do so.

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Parents/guardians seeking to utilize evaluation services through the District should contact the Superintendent's office as soon as practicable to ensure adequate time to prepare any necessary materials and accommodations.

While the parent/guardian may select any evaluation method outlined in RSA 193-A:6, II, as well as any other method agreed to by the parent/guardian and the participating agency, two methods merit further note:

- a. State or Local Assessment Provided by the District. If the evaluation method is a state or local assessment provided by the District, the parent/guardian must notify the Superintendent in writing as soon as practicable to provide the District adequate time to prepare and obtain the testing materials and prepare any necessary accommodations. Under this election, the District will not charge a fee for providing or administering the test. Reasonable academic proficiency is deemed demonstrated if the composite results place the child at or above the fortieth percentile.
 - b. Portfolio Review. If the District is the selected participating agency, the parent/guardian may request the District to perform a portfolio review, for which the District may charge a fee.
 - c. Other "Valid Measurement Tool". When the Superintendent is the participating agency, the parent/guardian and Superintendent may mutually agree upon any other valid measurement tool(s). A non-exclusive list of examples may be found in Ed 315.08(e).
2. Evaluation Independent of the District. As outlined in RSA 193-A:6, II, the parent/guardian may collaborate with the participating agency to find a mutually agreed upon method of evaluation as described in Ed 315.08(d) - (f).

D. Reports and Records.

1. Parent/Guardian Requirements. RSA 193-A:6, I requires the parent/guardian to maintain a portfolio of records and materials relative to the home education program. The portfolio shall consist of a log which designates by title the reading materials used, and also samples of writings, worksheets, workbooks, or creative materials used or developed by the child. Such portfolio, ***which at all times remains the property of the parent***, shall be preserved by the parent for 2 years from the date of the ending of the instruction.

Parents/guardians need only provide the evaluation results/portfolio to the District to the extent necessary to demonstrate proficiency in order to participate in school programs, and co/extra-curricular activities as provided under RSA 193-A:6, III, and Ed 315.07(b). See also Board policy JJJ.

2. District Requirements.
 - a. District as Participating Agency. On October 1 of each year, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of the number of children for whom the Superintendent was selected as a participating agency since the previous year's report.

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The District should maintain record of a student's enrollment and withdrawal from the school in the same manner as it would for a student transferring to another district. The District should maintain a record of its status as the participating agency for as long as it holds that status. While the parent/guardian keeps any portfolios and assessments conducted outside the District, the District should maintain record of any involvement it has in assessments as it would for any other student.

- b. District Not as Participating Agency. The District should maintain record of the student's enrollment and withdrawal from the school in the same manner as it would for a student transferring to another district.

E. Re-enrollment into School District & Notice of Termination of Home Education Program.

Parents deciding to re-enroll their children into the School District following a period of home education will make arrangements with the Principal for an evaluation to determine appropriate placement in the District's program. Placements will be consistent with section B of Board policy JJJ governing home education and other non-enrolled district student program placements, and are subject to the same appeal process.

Parents should be attentive that when re-enrolling a student, there may be discrepancies between the home education level of achievement and the scope and sequence of the District's curriculum.

Also, in the event that a parent/guardian terminates a home education program, the parent/guardian is required under RSA 193-A:5, III to provide written notice within 15 days of the termination to *either* the N.H. Commissioner of Education, the resident district superintendent, *or* the non-public school principal.

F. Graduation/Diplomas.

The School Board will not award certificates or diplomas to home educated students. Students must enter the regular school program and complete all necessary graduation requirements of the District and the state to be eligible for a certificate or diploma.

G. Participation in School Curricular and Co/Extra-curricular Activities.

Information regarding the participation of home education students (as well as students of nonpublic or of public charter schools) in District curricular and co/extra-curricular programs is found in Board policy JJJ.

Legal References:

RSA 193-A, Home Education

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil RSA

193:1-a, Dual Enrollment

RSA 193:1-c, Access to Public School Programs by Nonpublic or Home Educated Pupils

NH Dept. of Education Rules, Section Ed 315, Procedures for the Operation of Home Education Programs