

OREGON GUIDELINES FOR HOME SCHOOLING

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1.0 NOTIFICATION

1.1 At what age may students be home schooled?

Students may be home schooled at any time. However, in order to comply with the compulsory school attendance law, parents of students between the ages of 7 and 18 must notify their local Education Service District (ESD) of their intent to home school within 10 days of beginning to home school or withdrawing their child from school or moving to a new ESD region.

1.2 What determines when a 7-year-old must begin home schooling?

A parent whose child is 7 years old on or before September 1, and who is to be home schooled, must notify the local ESD of their intent to home school their child within 10 days of beginning to home school.

1.3 What about the child who turns 7 after September 1?

Although the child may be home schooled, it is not necessary to notify the ESD until the beginning of school the following school year.

1.4 What about the child who is between ages 8 and 18?

The parent must notify the ESD of their intent to home school within 10 days of withdrawing the child from school.

1.5 What happens if a parent withdraws a student with the intent to home school and the parent does not notify the ESD within 10 days?

A student who is withdrawn from school and is not registered with the ESD as being home schooled within 10 days of being withdrawn is truant. Any gap of more than 10 days between withdrawal and registration equals truancy.

1.6 At what grade level will this child be tested?

Home schooled children must be tested at the end of grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. The end of the grade is defined as before August 15 following the end of that school year.

1.7 Who determines what grade a child is in when notifying the ESD of their intent to home school?

The rule presumes that a parent's notification of their intent to home school a child at age 7 will begin with the first grade, unless the parent specifically notifies the ESD that the child started first grade earlier. The testing requirements will be based on that presumption unless otherwise notified by the parent. For example, a student who was 7 on September 1, 2006, will be considered to be in 3rd grade for the school year beginning September 2008. The parent could specify that the child actually began home schooling as a first grader the fall when the child was 6, and would now be in 4th grade.

1.8 What if parents do not notify the ESD of intent to home school their child?

The compulsory school attendance law requires that all students between the ages of 7 through 18 years attend public school or be exempted allowed by law in ORS 339.030. One of those options is home schooling [ORS 339.030 (1)(c-d)]. Thus, if the child is not in school and is not exempt under one of the provisions of the compulsory school attendance law, the parent may be reported by the school district as in noncompliance with the compulsory school law and court action may follow.

1.9 Does the parent need to notify the ESD each year?

No. A parent is only required to notify the ESD when the student is first withdrawn from school or otherwise begins home schooling, if the student moves to a new ESD, or returns to public school.

1.10 Does a parent have to notify the school district of their intent to home school?

No. Parents are not required by law to provide advance notification to their local school district of intent to educate their children at home.

1.11 Student A was home schooled for 3rd grade and attended public school for 4th grade. If Student A's parents decide to home school for 5th grade, do they have to register again with the ESD?

Yes. Parents or guardians are required to register a child as home schooled when they withdraw the student from the public school intending to home school. There is no exemption for students who may have previously been home schooled.

1.12 Are students who are schooled at home by a parent or private teacher using materials from a "correspondence school" required to register as home schooled students?

Yes. Students taught by a parent, legal guardian or private teacher at home using materials purchased from a "correspondence school" are considered to be home schooled and must register as required in OAR 581-021-0026. The exemption under ORS 339.030(1)(a) requires that the student be "in attendance" in a private or parochial school. Further, the definition of "private school" as set out in ORS 345.505 (2) specifically excludes from that definition the option for home schooling under ORS 339.030 (1)(c and d).

1.13 What should the parent do if they move or their child begins attending a public or private school?

Parents must notify the new ESD in writing if they move to a new ESD. Parents are encouraged to notify the ESD if they enroll their child in a public or private school.

2.0 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, CURRICULUM, AND SUPPORT

2.1 How do parents know what to teach?

Required testing for home school students focuses on satisfactory progress in academic areas. Academic content standards and curriculum goals have been developed by the Department of Education and are available on the department's website. These content standards provide a framework for all content areas and are arranged as standards for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. The department's website address is www.ode.state.or.us. (Click on "Teachers" and scroll to the "Standards and Assessments" section. Parents are not required to use the state content standards and may teach programs other than those taught in public school. A list of support groups and test publishers has been included in this packet.

2.2 Where do parents get educational materials?

ESDs and local school districts are not required by law to provide educational materials or services for students who are being home schooled. Acquisition of these materials is the responsibility of the parent. However, some school districts may be able to provide materials on a loan basis. A deposit may be charged. Various instructional materials are available on the Department of Education's website.

2.3 Is the ESD or local school district required to provide educational services; i.e., academic classes, math, foreign language, band, etc., to home school students?

No. A school district may allow home school students to attend academic classes, but is not required by law to do so. A home school student who attends classes in a local school district is subject to the same rights and responsibilities as any student enrolled in the district.

2.4 May materials from a correspondence school program be used for home school instruction?

Yes. Parents may purchase instruction materials from any source, including a correspondence school. See Question 1.12.

2.5 May a home schooled child participate in interscholastic activities?

Yes, as long as the following statutes and administrative rules are followed: ORS 339.460, Interscholastic Activities; OAR 581-021-0034, Administration of Interscholastic Activities; and OAR 581-021-0033, Interscholastic Activities Eligibility Requirement for Home School Students. Interscholastic activities include those activities administered by the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA).

Home schooled students must be tested every year and must score at or above the 23rd percentile to be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities. Assessment scores must be submitted annually to the school district by the student's parent or legal guardian. A school district may adopt alternative methods to determine eligibility, including a portfolio of work samples.

Parents or guardians should contact the school district athletic director and the OSAA for specific eligibility requirements. The home school parent is responsible for any fees charged for participation in such activities.

3.0 TESTING INFORMATION

3.1 Must home schooled students be tested?

Yes. Home schooled students must be tested at the end of grades 3, 5, 8, and 10.

3.2 When must the tests be administered?

If the child never attended public or private school, the child must be tested before August 15 following the end of grade 3.

If the child was withdrawn from public or private school, the first test may not be administered within the first 18 months of home schooling even if during that 18 month period the child is in grade 3, 5, 8, or 10.

For example, if a student completed grade 4 in a public school and was then withdrawn to be home schooled, the student would not be required to be tested at grade 5 because grade 5 is within the 18 month period. The child would not be required to be tested until August 15th following grade 8.

3.3 Which tests may be used?

The home schooling administrative rules list tests that may be given to home schooled students. Parents or guardians must make sure that their home schooled child is tested using a test from the following list that is appropriate for the child's grade level. The two most recent editions of these tests are approved for testing a home schooled child.

- California Achievement Test
- Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills/Test of Achievement and Proficiency
- Metropolitan Achievement Battery
- Stanford Achievement Test Battery

The Oregon State Assessment no longer meets the requirements under the law that requires that tests be nationally normed. While there is a method to convert Oregon State Assessment scores to allow comparison with nationally normed tests, the OSAT is not nationally normed.

Students who are on an individualized education plan (IEP) or a privately developed plan (PDP) may use Oregon State Assessment if that assessment is specified in the IEP or PDP.

3.4 Who is authorized to administer the tests?

The test examiner must be a "neutral person" and one who is "qualified" to administer such tests. A "neutral person" is defined as an individual who is selected by the parent or guardian of the child to be taught at home who has no relationship by bloodline or marriage to the child. A "qualified person" is defined in OAR 581-021-0026 (1)(i) as a person who:

- Holds a current personnel service license or teaching license from Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission; or
- Has been licensed by the Oregon Board of Psychological Examiners; or

- Has met the publisher’s qualifications for purchase, and has purchased at least one test from the list set forth in section (1)(a) of this rule; or
- Provides evidence of satisfactory completion of a graduate course in which test administration and interpretation is included in the objective; or
- Has previously qualified as a tester pursuant to paragraph (1)(i) of this rule, and has during the previous year administered at least one test from the list set forth in section (1)(a) of this rule.

A list of qualified persons is on file at each ESD and at the Department of Education.

3.5 Who is responsible for the cost of testing?

The parent or guardian.

3.6 Will the ESD or local school district administer the test to the student?

Testing home school students is usually done by independent test examiners. ESDs and school districts as governmental entities do not usually administer tests for home schooled students. Some local school districts do allow testing of home-school students with their regular students. Results of tests given in the local school district may be submitted as home schooling tests. The test must be from the approved list and must be administered and submitted according to the approved timeline. It is up to the local school district to decide whether to include home schooling students in the district testing program. The local school district may charge for individual testing services.

3.7 How does a person get on the list of qualified examiners?

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) reviews requests from persons who believe they meet the requirements of OAR 581-021-0026(1)(i)(A- E) (see Question 3.4). The requests describe how the person meets at least one of the qualifications in the rule and also includes copies of the appropriate evidence, such as a copy of a current teaching license. The Department maintains a database of qualified testers and prepares a list from the database each year that is sent to each ESD.

3.8 What do parents or guardians need to do with the test results?

Parents or guardians are required to submit test results (following grades 3, 5, 8 and 10), to Clackamas ESD, Home School Office, 13455 SE 97th Ave., Clackamas, OR 97015). Parents or guardians should maintain a cumulative record of the test results for each home schooled child.

3.9 How will the results of the test be evaluated?

A student must score at or above the 15th percentile on one of the approved tests, or score equal to or greater than the composite score on the previous test.

3.10 What if the student does not meet the performance requirements on the test?

Using the example of a student at grade 5, if the student does not meet the performance requirement on the test given following grade 5, the student will be required to be tested again after grade 6. If the results of the test given following grade 6 are below the performance requirement, but do not show a decline from the grade 5 test, the student meets the performance requirement and the student will not be required to be tested again until grade 8. (see examples #3 and #4 in question 3.7 above). If the results of the grade 6 test show a decline from the grade 5 results, the student will be required to be tested again following grade 7 **and the ESD superintendent may require the parent or guardian to place the student under the supervision of a licensed teacher at the expense of the parent** (see example #5 in question 3.7 above). If the results of the grade 7 test continue to show a decline, **the ESD superintendent may:**

- **allow the student to continue under the supervision of a licensed teacher and be tested again at grade 8; or**
- **allow the student to continue to be home schooled and be tested again at grade 8; or**
- **order the student back to the public school for no more than 12 consecutive months.**

3.11 Are there any penalties for not adhering to these procedures?

Yes. Students between the age of 7 and 18 are required to attend public school under ORS 339.010. Every person “having control of any child between the ages of 7 and 18” is required to send the child to public school under ORS 339.020. ORS 339.030 sets up several exemptions to the requirements that children attend and parents send children to public school. There is an exemption for children who are taught at home. The specific requirements for home schooling are set out in ORS 339.035. Violation of either ORS 339.020 or ORS 339.035 is a Class C violation that carries a fine of up to 150 dollars.

4.0 CREDITS, RECORDS, DIPLOMAS, INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES, ETC.

4.1 If home-school students return to their public school, is that school required to accept credits for home-school education?

Oregon law allows school districts to develop policies and procedures to review a home schooled student's transcript and/or work samples to determine if credit can be awarded. Districts are not required to award credit for home-school work. Therefore, the acceptance of high school credit earned in a home school program is determined by the district's local board policy.

4.2 Where will the student's permanent public school records be kept?

These records will be kept in the last public/private school attended. Home-school records and documentation will not be a part of the student's permanent public school records.

4.3 Will home-school students receive a high school diploma?

No. ESDs do not award diplomas to home schooled students nor do high schools generally award diplomas to home schooled high school students. Parents may, however, contact their local high school principal regarding local district policies, if any, on accepting credits pertaining to high school diplomas, participating in graduation, and related matters.

4.4 Can a home schooled student participate in the General Educational Development (GED) program? If so, when?

Yes. An applicant, who is at least 16 years of age, but not yet 18 years of age, may take the GED tests under certain circumstances.

OAR 581-43-600, General Educational Development Program and Certificates of High School Equivalency states in subsection (7)(b)(A)(ii) that "the Education Service District must certify to authorized Oregon GED Chief Examiners that the applicant is exempt from compulsory school attendance" because the student is being home schooled as provided in ORS 339.030 (1)(c and d).

The acknowledgment letter from the ESD to the parent of a child who is home schooled can serve as certification to the authorized Oregon GED Chief Examiners that the applicant is exempt from compulsory school attendance.