



**POLICY 137 -- HOME EDUCATION**

**1. Authority**

The West Jefferson Hills School District recognizes the legal rights of parents to educate their children in their own home. This right is defined in Pennsylvania School Code, Act 169 of 1988, Basic Education Circular 15-94 (replacing 1-93), and Pennsylvania Department of Education memo dated 2/8/89. West Jefferson Hills School District requires parents or guardians who elect this option for educating their children to adhere to all of the legal requirements as defined in Section 1327.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code. The Board shall approve a program of home education, pursuant to the School Code, permitting students to study at home in accordance with the following regulations.

**2. Definitions**

Home Education Program - a program conducted in compliance with this section, by the parent or guardian or such person having legal custody of the child(ren). A Home Education Program shall not be considered a nonpublic school.

Supervisor - the parent or guardian or such person having legal custody of the child(ren) who shall be responsible for the provision of instruction, provided that such person has a high school diploma or the equivalent.

Hearing Examiner - shall not be an officer, employee, or agent of the Department of Education, the school district, or intermediate unit of residence of the child in the Home Education Program.

Appropriate Education - a program consisting of instruction in the required subjects for the time required in this Act and in which the student demonstrates sustained progress.

Home-Educated Students - resident students of the West Jefferson Hills School District who have met the criteria for home education as outlined in Section 1327.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code

Co-Curricular Activities - activities that are directly related to curricular areas and/or result in the awarding of evaluative grades and credits. Examples of Co-Curricular activities include, but are not limited to, such things as band, chorus, intramurals, etc.

Extra-Curricular Activities - activities that are not tied to curricular areas and do not result in the awarding of grades and credits. Examples of Extra-Curricular activities include, but are not limited to, sports, clubs, plays, etc.

Athletic Eligibility - The PIAA allows, upon School Board approval, a student participating in a home education program under Section 1327.1 of the Public School Code of 1949 to be eligible at the school which the student would otherwise attend by virtue of his/her residence. All other PIAA eligibility rules apply to such students.

## **POLICY 137 -- HOME EDUCATION (continued)**

### **2. Definitions (continued)**

**Curriculum** - Curriculum as defined in this policy shall include all courses of study approved and adopted by the Board of School Directors of the West Jefferson Hills School District and/or courses of instruction required under Chapter 5 of the Curriculum Regulations of the State Board of Education.

### **3. Eligibility for Home Education Program**

A notarized affidavit of the parent or guardian or other person having legal custody of the child(ren), filed prior to the commencement of the Home Education Program and annually thereafter on August 1 with the Superintendent of the West Jefferson Hills School District and which sets forth:

- . the name of the supervisor of the Home Education Program who shall be responsible for the provision of instruction;
- . the name and age of each child who shall participate in the Home Education Program;
- . the address and telephone number of the Home Education Program site;
- . that such subjects as required by law are offered in the English language, including an outline of proposed education objectives by subject area; and
- . evidence that the child has been immunized and has received the health and medical services required for students of the child's age or grade level.

The affidavit shall contain a certification to be signed by the supervisor that the supervisor, all adults in the home, and persons having legal custody of a child(ren) in the Home Education Program has not been convicted of criminal offenses as enumerated in the School Code.

In the event of the Home Education Program relocating to another school district, the supervisor must apply by registered mail to the Superintendent of the district in which s/he currently resides, requesting a letter of transfer for the Home Education Program to the district to which the Home Education Program is relocating. The letter of transfer must be filed by the supervisor of the Home Education Program with the Superintendent of the new district of residence. The letter of transfer shall be issued no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the registered mail request of the Home Education Program supervisor.

### **4. Program Requirements**

A child who is enrolled in a Home Education Program and whose education is therefore under the direct supervision of his/her parent, guardian, or other person having legal custody shall be deemed to have met the requirements if the program provides a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days of instruction or nine hundred (900) hours of instruction per year at the elementary level or nine hundred ninety (990) hours per year at the secondary level.

At the **elementary level**, the following courses shall be taught: English, to include spelling, reading, and writing; arithmetic; geography; history of the United States and Pennsylvania; civics; safety education, including dangers and prevention of fires; health and physiology; physical education; music; and art.

At the **secondary level**, the following courses shall be taught: English, to include language, literature, speech, and composition; science; geography; social studies, to include civics, world history, history of the United States and Pennsylvania; mathematics, to include general mathematics, algebra, and geometry; art; music; physical education; and health and safety education, including regular and continuous instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires.

## **POLICY 137 -- HOME EDUCATION (continued)**

Such courses of study may include, at the discretion of the supervisor, economics; biology; chemistry; foreign languages; trigonometry; or other age-appropriate courses as contained in Chapter 5 curriculum requirements of the State Board of Education.

### **5. Graduation Requirements**

The following minimum courses in Grades 9 through 12 are established as a requirement for graduation in a Home Education Program: four (4) years of English; three (3) years of mathematics; three (3) years of science; three (3) years of social studies; and two (2) years of arts and humanities.

### **6. Requirements of Supervisor**

In order to demonstrate that appropriate education is occurring, the supervisor shall provide and maintain on file the following documentation for each student enrolled in the Home Education Program: a portfolio of records and materials. The portfolio shall consist of a log, made contemporaneously with the instruction, which designates by title and reading materials used, samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks, or creative materials used or developed by the student; and in Grades 3, 5, and 8, results of nationally normed standardized achievement tests in reading/language arts and mathematics or results of state-wide tests administered in these grade levels. The supervisor shall ensure that the nationally normed standardized tests or the state-wide tests not be administered by the child's parent or guardian.

### **7. Evaluation Requirements**

- A. A teacher or administrator who evaluates a portfolio at the **elementary level** shall have at least two (2) years of experience in grading any of the following subjects: English, to include spelling, reading, and writing; arithmetic; science; geography; history of the United States and Pennsylvania; and civics.
- B. A teacher or administrator who evaluates a portfolio at the **secondary level** shall have at least two (2) years of experience in grading any of the following subjects: English, to include language, literature, speech, reading, and composition; science, to include biology, chemistry, and physics; geography; social studies, to include economics, civics, world history, history of the United States and Pennsylvania; foreign language; and mathematics, to include general mathematics, algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and geometry.
- C. An annual written evaluation of the student's educational progress as determined by a licensed clinical or school psychologist or a teacher certified by the Commonwealth or by a nonpublic school teacher or administrator is required. The evaluation shall also be based on an interview of the child and a review of the portfolio and shall certify whether or not an appropriate education is occurring. At the request of the supervisor, persons with other qualifications may conduct the evaluation with the prior consent of the Superintendent. In no event shall the evaluator be the supervisor or their spouse.
- D. Documentation required by this policy shall be provided to the Superintendent or designee at the conclusion of each school year. If the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that at any time during the school year appropriate education may not be occurring in the Home Education Program, s/he may require documentation pertaining to the portfolio, to be submitted to the district by certified mail (with return receipt requested) within fifteen (15) days, and the evaluation to be submitted within thirty (30) days.

## **POLICY 137 -- HOME EDUCATION (continued)**

If the Superintendent or designee determines, based on documentation, that appropriate education is not occurring, the Superintendent or designee shall send a letter to the supervisor that in his/her opinion appropriate education is not occurring in the Home Education Program and shall return all documentation, specifying what aspect(s) of the documentation are inadequate.

The supervisor of the program shall have twenty (20) days from the receipt of the certified letter to submit additional documentation demonstrating that appropriate education is taking place. If documentation is not submitted within that time, the Home Education Program shall be out of compliance and the student shall be promptly enrolled in the public or a nonpublic school.

### **8. Right of Hearing**

The Board shall provide for a proper hearing by a duly qualified and impartial hearing examiner within thirty (30) days. The examiner shall render a decision within fifteen (15) days of the hearing except that s/he may require the establishment of a remedial education plan mutually agreed to by the Superintendent and supervisor of the Home Education Program which shall continue the Home Education Program. The decision of the examiner may be appealed by either the supervisor or the Superintendent to the Secretary of Education or Commonwealth Court.

If the hearing examiner finds that the documentation does not indicate that appropriate education is taking place in the Home Education Program, the Home Education Program shall be out of compliance and the student shall be promptly enrolled in a public or nonpublic school.

### **9. Loan of Instructional Materials**

The district shall, at the request of the supervisor, lend to the Home Education Program copies of the school district's planned courses, textbooks, and other curriculum materials appropriate to the student's age and grade level. Teacher lesson plans, tests, and other resource materials will not be provided. Teacher Editions will not be provided; however, the parent may contact the publisher directly and purchase the Teacher Edition.

### **10. Curricular Activities**

- A. Home-educated students will be permitted to participate in all curricular activities (e.g., courses of instruction, standardized tests) of West Jefferson Hills School District providing that the parent (or student, when appropriate) requests pre-approval for participation the semester before the course or class is to be offered. Also, the addition of this student must not significantly impact the financial obligation of the district (by adding another teacher or section).
- B. Upon request, individual buildings will make available to home educators and their parents information pertaining to curricular activities.
- C. Home-educated students are expected to follow all district and school rules, regulations, and procedures while registering for and attending classes.
- D. In all situations, the student will be expected to fulfill the same course and attendance requirements as other students and will be graded accordingly. No audit of courses will be permitted.
- E. When appropriate, grades will be recorded permanently as with other students.

## **POLICY 137 -- HOME EDUCATION (continued)**

- F. The school district will not grant “credit” for courses completed at home and will neither “promote,” “advance,” nor “graduate” students who complete a series of courses through home education.
- G. Pre-approval for home-educated students to participate in curricular areas will be made by the appropriate building administrator.
- H. Appeals may be made to the Superintendent, and his/her decision will be final.

### **11. Co-Curricular Activities**

- A. Home-educated students will be permitted to participate in Co-Curricular activities of the West Jefferson Hills School District provided that the parents (or student, when appropriate) requests pre-approval for participation the semester before the course or class is to be offered. Also, the addition of the students must not result in the hiring of additional sponsorship.
- B. Home-educated students will not be permitted to participate in Pennsylvania Music Education Association (PMEA) music events.
- C. Home-educated students are expected to follow all district and school rules and regulations while attending activities.
- D. In all situations, the student will be expected to fulfill the same activity and attendance requirements as other students. When appropriate, the student will receive a grade.
- E. As with other students, home-educated students’ grades will be permanently recorded.
- F. Pre-approval for home-educated students to participate in co-curricular areas will be made by the building administrator.
- G. Appeals may be made to the Superintendent, and his/her decision will be final.

### **12. Extra-Curricular Activities**

- A. Home-educated students will be permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activities that carry athletic eligibility requirements per PIAA and/or WPIAL regulations.
- B. Home-educated students will be permitted to participate in certain district-supported clubs. Participation in these clubs is dependent upon eligibility as imposed by West Jefferson Hills School District.
- C. Home-educated students will be permitted to participate in all other extra-curricular activities sponsored by the West Jefferson Hills School District provided that the parent (or student, when appropriate) requests pre-approval to participate one month before the commencement of the activity, and that the addition of the student (due to numbers) does not necessitate the hiring of an additional sponsor, director, coach, or the like. All activities requiring tryouts and/or competition to participate by students will be followed by the home-educated student.
- D. Home-educated students are expected to follow all the rules as set by the sponsor, director, coach or the like, and the district.
- E. Pre-approval for home-educated students’ participation in extra-curricular areas will be made by the building administrator in conjunction with the sponsor.

## **POLICY 137 -- HOME EDUCATION (continued)**

- F. Appeals for extra-curricular sports participation shall be made to the Athletic Director, then to the Principal, and finally reviewed by the Superintendent.
- G. Appeals for all other extra-curricular activities shall be made to the Principal and finally reviewed by the Superintendent.

### **13. Miscellaneous**

- A. Home-educated students' participation in field trips is permitted if the request is received by the building administrator one month in advance of the trip and that the addition of the student does not require additional resources or cost.
- B. Home-educated students are not permitted to take subject/course related tests, quizzes, or exams in school unless they are enrolled in that course.
- C. Books and relevant materials will be loaned for a period of one school year, and the district will request full reimbursement for any texts or materials not returned.
- D. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent for academic purposes. The district will, however, provide transportation for home-educated students if such transportation coincides with regularly scheduled bus routes and times, and participation of the home-educated student does not cause the district to incur additional costs.
- E. Appeals for other home-education issues not directly addressed in this policy should be made to the building principal and may be appealed to the Superintendent whose decision shall be final.
- F. Upon request of the Superintendent of Schools in August of each school year, home-education students may take nationally-normed standardized achievement tests in Grades 3, 5, and 8.