



Start·a·School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Virginia

Home School

Parents must ensure that their child attends school in compliance with [the state compulsory attendance law](#), when the child has reached their fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and has not passed their 18th birthday. The compulsory attendance law requires that unless the child falls within [one of the specified exceptions](#), that they attend a public or private school or receive an education through one of the other Code of Virginia alternatives to school attendance. Home instruction (also referred to as “home schooling”) is one alternative to school attendance. Parents may home school “when [the requirements...of the Code](#) have been satisfied.”

The Code requires parents who home instruct to provide their local school division with:

- Evidence of having met one of the criteria for providing home instruction (see “Criteria for Providing Home Instruction” below)
- A notice of intent to home instruct
- A list of the subjects to be studied for the coming year, and
- Evidence of academic progress at the end of the school year, by August 1

All required documentation must be submitted to the local school division, which can be found on the [Staff Listing by Division](#) page.

Evidence of Progress

The parent who elects to provide home instruction shall submit to their local school division, by August 1 following the school year in which the child has received home instruction, evidence of the child’s academic progress with either:

- Evidence that the child has attained a composite score in or above the fourth stanine on any nationally normed standardized achievement test; or an equivalent score on the ACT, SAT, or PSAT test; or
- An evaluation or assessment which the division superintendent determines to indicate that the child is achieving an adequate level of educational growth and progress, including but not limited to:

- An evaluation letter from a person licensed to teach in any state, or a person with a master's degree or higher in an academic discipline, having knowledge of the child's academic progress, stating that the child is achieving an adequate level of educational growth and progress; or
- A report card or transcript from a community college or college, college distance learning program, or home-education correspondence school

For additional information regarding the evidence of progress requirement, please [contact your local school division](#).

Steps to Start a Home School

Starting a homeschool in Virginia involves several steps to ensure compliance with state regulations. Here's a general guide:

1. **Familiarize Yourself with Virginia Homeschool Laws:** Virginia requires parents to provide home instruction for children ages 5 to 18 in one of several legal ways, including through a religious exemption, a certified tutor, or by meeting the requirements of the Virginia Home Instruction Statute. Familiarize yourself with these laws to ensure compliance. You can find detailed information on your state's Department of Education website or through homeschooling advocacy groups such as [Home School Legal Defense Association \(HSLDA\)](#).
 - Review [Home Instruction Handbook – Information for Parents](#)
 - Review [Sample Notice of Intent to Provide Home Instruction](#)
 - Review [Compulsory Attendance Statutes](#)
 - Review [Health requirements for home-instructed, exempted, and excused children](#)
 - Review [Driver Education Information for Home Schoolers](#)
 - Review [Affidavit for Approval to Provide Driver Education Programs for Parents Approved to Home School](#)
2. **Choose a Homeschooling Option:** Decide on the educational approach that aligns with your family's values and your child's learning style.
 - Option I: The parent holds a high school diploma or a higher credential
 - Option II: The parent meets the qualifications of a teacher as prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education
 - Option III: The parent provides the child with a program of study or curriculum which may be delivered through a correspondence course or distance learning program or in any other manner

- Option IV: The parent provides evidence that the parent can provide an adequate education for the child
3. **Notify the School District:** According to Virginia law, you must send a notice of intent to homeschool to the superintendent of your local school district each year by August 15. This notice typically includes information about the curriculum you plan to use, the number of children you're homeschooling, and the qualifications of any tutors you'll employ. Parents may download and use the [Sample Notice of Intent to Provide Home Instruction](#) to meet the notice requirement.
 4. **Select Curriculum and Educational Materials:** Choose curriculum materials that suit your child's learning needs and comply with Virginia's homeschooling regulations. There are many options available, including pre-packaged curricula, online programs, textbooks, and resources from educational publishers.
 5. **Establish a Schedule and Learning Environment:** Create a daily or weekly schedule that incorporates time for core subjects, electives, and extracurricular activities. Designate a space in your home for learning, free from distractions.
 6. **Keep Records:** Virginia law requires homeschooling parents to maintain records of their children's educational progress, including attendance records, samples of coursework, and standardized test results. Keep these records organized and up-to-date.
 7. **Participate in Standardized Testing or Evaluation:** Virginia homeschoolers must participate in an annual assessment or standardized test, administered by a qualified person. This assessment is used to evaluate your child's progress and ensure they're meeting educational benchmarks.
 8. **Stay Informed and Connected:** Join a homeschooling support group or network in your area to connect with other homeschooling families, share resources, and stay informed about local events and opportunities.

Remember to regularly review Virginia's homeschooling laws and regulations to ensure ongoing compliance. Each year, you'll need to submit a new notice of intent to homeschool to your local school district. Additionally, stay flexible and open to adjusting your approach based on your child's evolving needs and interests.

Home School Statutes

The Education Freedom Foundation has relied on the [U.S. Department of Education's State Regulation of Private and Home Schools Map](#) for relevant statutes. Over time, the state pages on this map have been updated since their initial creation. In some cases, states have changed their laws without these updates being reflected on the map. Given the various methods each state uses to publicize changes to its laws, the most recent information for the Start-A-School project was often obtained directly from the U.S. Department of Education website. Users are encouraged to verify any information before making decisions based on it.

- Parents providing home instruction are in compliance with the compulsory attendance law if they meet all requirements of the Code of Virginia governing home instruction. [Va. Code §22.1-254.](#)
- Instruction in the home of a child or children by the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such child or children shall not be classified or defined as a private, denominational, or parochial school. [Va. Code §22.1-254.](#)
- Parents may also teach their own children under the "tutor" provision or the "religious exemption" provision of the compulsory attendance law. A tutor must have a valid Virginia teaching license in any area. [Va. Code §§22.1-254.A, 22.1-254.B.1.](#)

Assessment and Diplomas

- Annually by August 1, the parent is required to submit to the local superintendent evidence of the child's home instruction accomplishments or academic achievement. The parent may either present evidence that the child has attained a composite score in or above the fourth stanine on any nationally normed standardized achievement test or provide an evaluation or assessment that, in the judgment of the division superintendent, indicates that the child is achieving an adequate level of education growth and progress. The latter option includes but is not limited to "(a) an evaluation letter from a person licensed to teach in any state, or a person with a master's degree or higher in an academic discipline, having knowledge of the child's academic progress, stating that the child is achieving an adequate level of educational growth and progress; or (b) a report card or transcript from a community college or college, college distance learning program, or home-education correspondence school." [Va. Code § 22.1-254.1.C.](#)
- The local school board is required to notify families of homeschooled students about Advanced Placement (AP) and Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude (PSAT) tests as well as the availability of financial assistance for low-income and needy students who may be interested in taking these exams. [Va. Code §22.1-254.1.F.](#)
- Those homeschooled students 16 years or older who have completed their homeschool instruction may participate in the state's program of testing for general educational development (GED) and earn a high school equivalency certificate or a diploma. [Va. Code §22.1-254.2.A.2.](#)

Curriculum and Instruction

- Parents are permitted to provide home instruction in lieu of school attendance if they meet any one of the following four conditions. The teaching parent 1) holds a high school diploma or higher credential certificate (a high school equivalency examination approved by the board of education [formerly known as a GED] will not satisfy this requirement); 2) meets the qualifications for a teacher prescribed by the board of education; 3) enrolls the child or children in a correspondence course or distance learning program; or 4) provides evidence that he or she is able to provide an adequate education for the child (parents' instructional plan includes content of "reasonable scope and sequence"). [Va. Code §22.1-254.1.](#)

Initial and Renewal Applications

- A parent who elects to home instruct must 1) notify the school division superintendent no later than August 15 of the intent to do so for the coming school year; 2) provide a list of subjects to be studied for the coming year; and 3) provide evidence of having met one of the criteria to permit home instruction. [Va. Code §22.1-254.1](#).
- Parents who move into the school division or begin home instruction after the school year has begun must notify the school division superintendent of their intent to provide home instruction within a reasonable amount of time. After doing so, the parents have 30 days to present the required information to the school division office. [Va. Code §22.1-254.1.B](#).
- Parents, guardians, or other persons in charge of a child being home instructed or exempted from school attendance must ensure that the state immunization requirements required of a child enrolled in and attending school are being met. [Va. Code §§22.1-254, 22.1-254.1, 22.1-271.4, 32.1-46](#).

Public School Access

- Local school boards may permit part-time enrollment of home-school students. Students may be allowed to enroll in classes in English, mathematics, science, history, social science, foreign language, career and technical education, health education, physical education, or fine arts. [Va. Code §22.1-253.13:2.N](#).
- Participation in certain interscholastic activities such as varsity sports is governed by policies of the Virginia High School League (VHSL). Other extracurricular activities are governed by policies of the local school board. [Virginia Administrative Code, 8 VAC 20-131-200](#).
- Children who are taught by their parents under the religious exemption provision of the compulsory attendance law are not eligible to enroll in a public school on a part-time basis. [Va. Code §§22.1-254.1, 22.1-253.13:2\(N\)](#).

Resources

Contact Information--State and Federal Departments of Education

- Virginia Department of Education (mailing address)
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218; or
Virginia Department of Education (street address)
James Monroe Building
101 North 14th St.
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 225-2420
Website: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Education: [Virginia](#)

[Home Educators Association of Virginia \(HEAV\)](#)

Offers support, resources, and a large annual convention for homeschooling families in Virginia.

Information and Legislation

- [Virginia Council for Private Education \(VCPE\)](#)
- [Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\): Home Instruction](#)
- Virginia General Assembly: Code of Virginia [Title 22.1: Education](#)