



HOMEBOUND EDUCATION SERVICES

The purpose of homebound education services is to enable students to continue their education program while absent from school for periods during the school year because of illness or related medical/psychiatric reasons.

Description of Services

Homebound education services provide students with an educational program as similar as possible to the program they would receive if attending school. Contact with the student will be on a regular basis and of sufficient duration that the student is able to maintain his/her educational program to the extent that the medical condition allows. Regular contact between the homebound program teacher, the principal, the classroom teacher(s) and the parents or guardians and access to all available school district resources is expected.

Teachers of homebound students provide direct instruction to students, but in most cases responsibility for long-term planning of the students' educational program remains with the students' classroom teacher(s) in collaboration with the homebound teacher and the school-based team.

It is essential that there be effective collaboration, consultations and coordination with all care givers if services for homebound students are to be effective. In some instance, when a student is experiencing psychiatric difficulties, homebound services may exacerbate the student's difficulties. In these cases, alternative educational plans should be developed in collaboration with the community mental health team and other service providers as appropriate.

Districts should establish policies and procedures to:

- ensure direct instruction is provided to the student;
- outline a procedure for reporting student progress;
- outline the responsibilities of the parents, the principal, the classroom teacher, related school district and community personnel and homebound teachers while a student is on homebound instruction; and
- ensure collaboration, consultation and co-ordination with all caregivers (e.g. physician, mental health and social work personnel).

School boards are advised to address in their procedures issues such as parent or guardian presence in the home, service to students with communicable diseases and potentially unsafe conditions.

Access to Homebound Education Services

School districts are required to make available an educational program to all persons of school age who are resident in its district and who are enrolled in a school in the district. School district must maintain appropriate educational programs for students who are anticipated to be absent from school for extended periods of time. Instruction should be initiated as soon as possible. Authorization from the physician or public health nurse should be received prior to services being provided to students with health problems.

Students eligible for homebound services include:

- students who are absent from school for medical reasons such as injury, disease, surgery, pregnancy, psychological reasons, etc.; and
- students suspended by the board of school trustees under section 103 (c) of the *School Act* may be served in a homebound program.

This program should not be used routinely as the only option for students with severe behavioural or emotional problems. As well, homebound education services are not intended to serve students registered under Section 13 of the *School Act* (Home Education).

Districts should establish and publish policies and procedures for accessing homebound services. Policies should take into consideration the *School Act*, section 109 (examinations and reports by school medical officer).

Personnel

Homebound program teachers should have a minimum of 5 years elementary or secondary school teaching experience and should be able to demonstrate:

- knowledge of health care and community services;
- the ability to work effectively with parents, school staff, district personnel, medical personnel and community agencies;
- knowledge of curricula and instructional resources across a range of school years;
- knowledge of human behaviour and the ability to work effectively with students who have emotional or social problems;
- knowledge of child development and an understanding of the educational needs of exceptional children;
- the skills necessary to assess the educational needs of a student and to modify curriculum, teaching techniques and materials to meet the student's specific needs; and
- knowledge of distance education techniques and computer-assisted learning.

Hospital Homebound