

REGULATION

VERNON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM
R2431.5 -
Home School Information

Sept 16

R 2431.5 HOME SCHOOL INFORMATION

The following is the proposed policy for the evaluation of homeschooled students residing in Vernon Township for the purpose of participating in interscholastic athletics. It is the goal of this policy to establish fair and objective standards for the home schooled student athlete.

The current New Jersey state language in statute N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 requires that

“every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a child between six and 16 ensures that such child regularly attends the public schools of the district or a day school in which there is given instruction equivalent to that provided in the public schools for children of similar grades and attainments or to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school.”

The provision, “to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school” in N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 permits a parent/guardian to educate the child at home.

The Vernon Township Board of Education has the exclusive authority to address such matters within the parameters of the State Board of Education guidelines. Therefore, a homeschooled student athlete must meet the equivalent of the following NJSIAA academic requirements with regard to credits earned.

To be eligible for athletic competition during the first semester (September 1 to January 31) of the 10th grade or higher, or the second year of attendance in the secondary school or beyond, a pupil must have passed 25% or 30 credits per year beginning with the class of 2014 during the immediate preceding academic year.

To be eligible for athletic competition during the second semester (February 1 to June 30) of the 9th grade or higher, a pupil must have passed the equivalent of 12 ½% or 15 credits per year beginning with the class of 2014 at the close of the preceding semester (January 31).

Simply stated, a student must have passed six full year courses the previous year to be eligible for fall and winter sports and be passing six full year courses at the end of the first semester (Jan. 31) to be eligible for spring sports.

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The New Jersey Department of Education states that when a child returns to school following a period of homeschooling, the local board of education treats the child as any other new or returning child (i.e. assessed as to the acceptance of credits and the appropriate grade level for purposes of placement). There are no special provisions made for the child who was educated at home. Placement should be based on an objective assessment that is given to all students for the subject or grade. In assessing the child educated elsewhere than at school, the child may not be held to a higher standard than similarly situated students within the district or transferring from other public or non-public schools. Additionally, if a child educated elsewhere than at school re-enrolls in the public school in order to obtain a high school diploma, an assessment is made as to the child's compliance with state and local requirements, as the board of education would with any new or returning student, since no diploma can be issued when such requirements are not met.

Although not required, it is highly recommended that homeschooled students complete an accredited online or correspondence program of studies where formal credits can be certified as earned. The Vernon Township School District recognizes that in many cases homeschooled students have been taught, challenged and guided by someone whose dedication is equaled only by the students' desire to learn. Therefore, each applicant for athletic eligibility is evaluated carefully on an individual basis, taking into account all methods of learning and assessment. In doing so, the Vernon Township School District will make every effort to be fair while keeping in mind the need to maintain those same standards to which our enrolled students are held.

Reading lists, curricular information, teacher narratives about courses of study, and copies of papers or projects can be used in place of traditional transcript. However, enrolled students must meet core course content standards in Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Science and World Language. In addition, Physical Education, Financial Literacy, Fine and Practical Art courses are required for graduation. Applicants without traditional transcripts must provide information about their program of study and how various competency levels were achieved in the equivalent core content areas of instruction.

The academic evaluation of a homeschooled student will focus on the following guidelines of suggested documentation for credits earned:

1. Courses taken on homeschooling must conform to the standards of the New Jersey and Vernon Township recommended high school curricula (four years of English, Math through Algebra II, three years of History, three years of Laboratory Sciences including Physical and Life Science, one year of a Foreign Language, and one-half year of Financial Literacy, four years of Physical Education and one year each of Fine and Practical Arts).

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2. A detailed written evaluation of the student covering academics and personal areas from the homeschooled teacher.
3. VTHS student-athletes must abide by a Code of Conduct that applies to VTHS athletes. Students who violate the Code of Conduct are excluded from participation.
4. The homeschool teacher must provide a summary of the student's academic performance and behavioral compliance with the homeschooling, to include but not be limited to, grades or other evaluations in a format that the homeschool teacher has written for the student. Results from course work outside the homeschool setting should also be provided.
5. The homeschool teacher should provide at least one writing sample accomplished by the student.
6. Any additional documentation which will assist the discussion.

If coursework was taken through an established nontraditional program (i.e., correspondence, internet, tutoring, etc.) that evaluates your coursework and issues transcripts, please have that program provide a copy of your transcript and provide contact information so the review committee can obtain further information, if necessary.

With non-traditional records, some kind of outside assessment is helpful. Many homeschool candidates, for example have had an opportunity to take a course at a local community college during high school years. The community college transcript can be an outside validation of particular levels of achievement. Some type of standard credential can help in the assessment of a student with no formal high school transcript.

In the absence of a traditional high school transcript, the Athletic and Guidance Directors along with an Academic Chair will meet to assess a student's academic progress in an equivalent educational program. The purpose of this meeting will be to determine academic/athletic eligibility. If academic/athletic eligibility is granted on a per season basis, this in no way correlates to a high school diploma being issued.

Additional Requirements:

All VTHS homeschooled student athletes will abide by all NJSIAA and VTHS rules and regulations. These include but are not limited to the Suggested New Jersey Home School Guidelines as established by the NJSIAA and approved by the VTHS BOE.

As part of the initial application process, the homeschooled student and his or her parents or legal guardians are to meet with the Athletic and Guidance Directors prior to the specific athletic season

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application date listed below. The purpose of this meeting is to determine what has been accomplished academically and to review future courses. Failure to meet will automatically render the homeschooled student ineligible for the athletic season in question.

Initial determination of eligibility will be by the Athletic and Guidance Directors and an Academic Supervisor. If denied, the following appeal process will apply: The homeschooled student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will inform either the Athletic or Guidance Director of their decision to appeal. Appeals will be directed to the School Superintendent.

Time lines: All application materials including the academic portfolio must be submitted by the following dates: For a fall sport, the second Tuesday of June; for a winter sport, the second Tuesday of October; for a spring sport; the second Tuesday of February. The pre-determination meeting with the Athletic and Guidance Directors must be held prior to the above meeting date. For the multi-sport homeschooled student, the determination of eligibility will be by athletic season. In other words, application must be made per season for the homeschooled student to be considered for athletic participation. A decision of eligibility will be rendered within two calendar weeks of submission of the Application and the student portfolio.

Students are expected to provide their own transportation to meet practice obligations. Students are expected to ride on all school provided transportation to and from athletic contests. Exceptions may be made with prior written notification and approval from the head coach.

All forms are to be on file with the head coach prior to tryouts.

Any attempt to circumvent eligibility rules will result in immediate dismissal from the VTHA athletic program.

Homeschooled athletes will be eligible for all post season awards with the exception of Academic All League recognition.

Should the homeschooled student/athlete aspire to gain NCAA academic eligibility the following standards would need to be documented.

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NCAA Requirements for the Homeschooled Student-Athlete:

Division I Core Courses: English 4 years, Math 3 years, Science 2 years including 1 lab science if available, Social Sciences 2 years of History and an additional 1 year of English, Math, or Science plus 4 years of any of the above and/or a Foreign Language.

Division II Core Courses: English 3 years, Math 2 years, Science 2 years including 1 lab science if available, Social Sciences 2 years of History, etc. plus 2 additional years of English, Math, or Science plus 3 years of any of the above and/or a Foreign Language.

The NCAA will require the following documentation: Home school transcript that includes the Course Title, Course Grades, Units of Credit, Grading Scale, and Signature of the home school administrator. Additionally, any transcript from any other high school, college, and/or non-traditional program that the student attended. Proof of high school graduation including the specific graduation date (month/day/year). Evidence that homeschooling was conducted in accordance with state laws – a written statement from the homeschool administrator verifying compliance with state homeschool legislation. A statement of who taught and evaluated the coursework, awarded grades and issued credit. A list of textbooks used throughout the homeschooling experience; this includes Course Title, Textbook Title, Publisher, Name of Book and level, if applicable, and a description of the homeschool teaching environment.

Adopted: September 2016