

Home School Rule & Participation

2022-23 TSSAA Bylaws Article II, Section 25

This bylaw establishes the minimum eligibility requirements for a home school student desiring to practice, tryout, and participate at any level in extracurricular athletics at a member school:

A. Definitions

1. A “home school” is a school conducted by a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for their own child. Parents desiring to home school their own children may do so by choosing one of the following three options:
 1. Independent Home School - Parents may home school their own children pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-3050 by registering with their local school district. The home school must be operating in compliance with state law.
 2. Church-related Umbrella School - By authority of the same statute, parents may also home school their own children by registering with a church-related "umbrella" school defined by Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-50-801. Parents who choose this option will be required to provide evidence to the local school district that their child is enrolled in a church-related school. An Intent to Home School form is not required for students who are enrolled in a church-related school. The church-related school will determine record keeping and test requirements for students enrolled in an umbrella program.
 3. Accredited Online School - Parents may also enroll their child in an accredited online school. Parents choosing this educational option must be sure to determine that the school has legitimate accreditation status and will be required to provide evidence to the local school district that their child is enrolled in an accredited online school.

Note: *Eligibility of virtual public school students does not fall under the home school rule. Eligibility of virtual public school students shall be determined by Article II, Section 27 (Virtual School Rule).*

2. “Director of Schools” shall mean the chief administrative official of a public school system. In the case of a private school, the responsibilities of the Director of Schools are to be carried out by the Head of School or chief administrative official in that school.

B. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

1. **a.** The student shall be enrolled in a home school conducted by his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). **b.** The student must be taking a minimum of five (5) academic subjects or the equivalent administered by the parent(s)

- or guardian(s) which would count toward graduation at the school where the student wishes to participate.
2. The participating student must have a legal residence within the school district of the school where he/she will be participating, if participating with a public school. If participating with a private school, the student must have a legal residence within a 20 mile radius of the private school and meet all tuition and financial aid requirements.
 3. The parent or guardian must make application for participation in athletics to the principal of the member school in which the home school athlete wishes to try out and possibly participate before the first official practice date for that sport.
 4. **a.** The home school athlete shall meet the same academic and conduct standards required of a member school student-athlete to participate in the athletic program. **b.** The Director of Schools (Head of School for private schools) or their designee shall confer with the parent(s) or guardian(s) conducting the home school to determine that the home school student is academically eligible. **c.** If a home school student's course of study does not include five (5) academic subjects or the equivalent, which are being administered by the parent/guardian, then the Director of Schools (Head of School, for a private school) or their designee and the parent/guardian shall develop an alternative measure of academic progress and submit it to the TSSAA for approval. **d.** In no event shall a home school student be eligible who is not receiving the minimum four (4) hours per day of instruction administered by their parent/guardian. **e.** In no event shall a home school student be eligible who has fallen three (3) or more months behind the student's appropriate grade level.
 5. The home school student must provide proof of liability insurance coverage which names the TSSAA as an insured party or the administration of the school must submit to TSSAA a copy of the **TSSAA Indemnity Form** signed by the guardian(s).
 6. **a.** The LEA may impose a participation fee for each sport in which a home school athlete participates. Such participation fee shall not exceed the fees or costs charged to or borne by students enrolled at the school and shall be paid in full prior to the first regular season contest. **b.** A home school student participating at a private school must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules. For the purpose of this rule, "full tuition" is defined as the same amount paid by all other students enrolled and in regular attendance at the school.
 7. The home school student must meet all other TSSAA eligibility requirements.
 8. Eligibility issues may be appealed in accordance with the Bylaws of the TSSAA.
 9. The home school athlete must adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibility, performance, and code of conduct as other participants of the team.
 10. Ultimate decisions on team rosters are left to the member schools.

Transfer:

1. After participation at the first member school, any changes within member schools shall be governed by the transfer rule.
2. Once a student establishes an athletic record either as an enrolled student at a member school or as a home school student, any subsequent transfers to or from home school to a member school must meet the TSSAA transfer rule, even if the student will be participating for the same team.
3. Any student who withdraws from a regular school program, which for the purpose of this policy is defined as a member school, to enroll in a home school education program and who is ineligible at the time of withdrawal from the regular school program due to his/her failure to meet academic or behavioral eligibility standards shall be ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletic competition as a home education athlete until such time as he/she has satisfied this home school bylaw as well as all other eligibility bylaws of TSSAA.

Frequently Asked Questions Home School Rule

1. Who is eligible to tryout, as a home school athlete, for a TSSAA member school team?

Only those who meet all ten criteria outlined within TSSAA's Home School Bylaw are eligible.

2. Are there any requirements that the parent conducting the home school must meet for purposes of the TSSAA Bylaws?

Yes. First, the home school athlete must meet all ten criteria outlined within TSSAA's Home School Bylaw. Additionally, the parent-teacher must satisfy all state law requirements in order for the home school student to be eligible to try out for a TSSAA member school team.

3. What are the academic requirements for a home school athlete?

The academic courses must be approved by the local board of education (or private school) in compliance with state law. TSSAA does not regulate where or how any student athlete receives credit toward graduation. TSSAA is concerned with the following: (1) Are the participants enrolled in a minimum of five academic courses which have been approved by the school and/or school system? And (2) If taken at a member school would the course count towards graduation? If the answer to both questions is "yes", the home school athlete would meet the requirements set forth in the "Academic Rule" and "Home School" Bylaw.

4. What if a student takes four of the five academic courses at an independent home school, but registers and attends a non-public school for the fifth credit (i.e. science lab,) would this potential home school athlete be eligible under the Home School Bylaw?

Yes, provided the student meets the definition of a home school student according to state law.

5. What is the last date that a home school student can make application for participation in athletics to the principal of the member school in which the athlete wishes to tryout and possibly participate?

The parent or guardian must make application for participation in athletics to the principal of the member school in which the home school athlete wishes to try out and possibly participate before the first official practice date for that sport.

6. Can a home school student tryout for a team prior to meeting all requirements of the rule in the TSSAA Bylaws?

No. All requirements of the rule must be met prior to the home school student trying out for a team, with the exception of the participation fee. If a participation fee is imposed by the LEA, the home school student would only be required to pay that fee only if they become a member of the team.

7. What type of insurance, if any, does a home school athlete participating on a TSSAA member school team need to maintain?

The home school student must provide proof of liability insurance coverage which names the TSSAA as an insured party or the administration of the school must submit to TSSAA a copy of the TSSAA Indemnity Form signed by the guardian(s). TSSAA Catastrophic Insurance will extend to the home school athlete as it does with all other student-athletes participating at a member school.

8. If the LEA imposes a participation fee, could the home school athlete be responsible for any additional monetary payments after he/she makes a particular team?

Yes, but this will be left to the LEA, and not TSSAA. Many LEAs charge an additional fee to all the athletes participating in a particular sport, such as golf. Some LEAs charge an equipment fee or uniforms fee, while other LEAs require athletes to raise a certain amount of money with fundraising. If the non-home school student athlete is being held responsible for monetary contributions, the home school athlete can be held responsible for those same monetary contributions, which will vary within LEAs.

9. If a home school athlete makes the roster of a TSSAA member school team in football, basketball, and baseball, what is the participation fee?

The answer will vary by LEA. The maximum amount that the home school athlete could pay shall not exceed the fees or costs charged to or borne by students enrolled at the school.

10. If a home school athlete wants to participate on a TSSAA member private school team, what must the home school athlete do?

(1) The parent or guardian must make application for participation in athletics to the principal **prior to the first official practice date for that sport**. (2) Additionally, the home school athlete must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules.

11. If a student has dropped out, withdrawn, or been expelled from a TSSAA member school, will that student be eligible to participate at another TSSAA member school as a home school athlete?

No. If the student was expelled then he/she would be carrying a discipline record which makes them ineligible for one year or until the disciplinary charges have been removed. If the student dropped out or withdraws from school he/she would be subject to the TSSAA's transfer rules.

12. If a home school athlete tries out for a TSSAA member school team, is the home school athlete automatically on the roster?

No, like all sports rosters, the ultimate decisions are left to the member schools regarding the athletes that make the team as well as the amount of playing time that each athlete receives.