

## **From the TSSAA Handbook, Pages 22-23**

### **Article II Eligibility**

#### **Section 25: Homeschool Rule**

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

##### **A. Definitions**

1. A “homeschool” is a school conducted by a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for their own child. Parents desiring to homeschool their own children may do so by choosing one of the following three options:

- a. Independent Homeschool - Parents may homeschool their own children pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-3050 by registering with their local school district. The homeschool must be operating in compliance with state law.
- b. Church-related Umbrella School - By authority of the same statute, parents may also homeschool 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 Homeschool 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.
- c. 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 homeschool 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 homeschool 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 homeschool athlete wishes to try out and possibly participate before the first official practice date for that sport.
4.
  - a. The homeschool 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 homeschool to determine that the homeschool student is academically eligible.
  - c. If a homeschool 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 homeschool 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 homeschool student be eligible who has fallen three (3) or more months behind the student's appropriate grade level.
5. The homeschool 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 homeschool 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 homeschool 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 homeschool student must meet all other TSSAA eligibility requirements.
8. Eligibility issues may be appealed in accordance with the Bylaws of the TSSAA.
9. The homeschool 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.

C. 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 homeschool student, any subsequent transfers to or from homeschool 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 homeschool 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 homeschool bylaw as well as all other eligibility bylaws of TSSAA.