

Home Schooling Guidelines

Diocese of Davenport

As primary educators of their children, parents have the right and responsibility to choose the best means of educating them. Historically, Catholic parents have focused on Catholic schools and parish Faith Formation programs. Currently, some parents are choosing other means such as home schooling to educate their children. Canon law, however, clearly stipulates that the Bishop of the Diocese approves any and all faith formation programs if they are to be “Catholic”. While home schooling may be a necessary and viable option for a variety of reasons, faith formation is also the responsibility of the parish school and parish faith formation programs. All faith formation programs are the responsibility of the local pastor.

The following guidelines have been formulated to give pastors and other parish faith formation and educational leaders direction in relating to parents who choose to home school their children.

1. Parishes, utilizing Diocesan guidelines, should specify and articulate faith formation requirements to parents who choose to home school. Regular meetings are encouraged between home school families and parish directors/coordinators of faith formation.
2. Parents have an obligation to observe the faith formation requirements outlined by the faith formation education leadership in the parish (pastor, director/coordinator of faith formation, principal).
3. For the reception of the sacraments, parishes should provide guidance, identify resources and materials, and incorporate children who are home schooled into the parish preparation and celebration.
4. Only Diocesan approved faith formation texts should be used in the faith formation of children who are home schooled. All other faith formation texts need to be approved by the pastor or by the Office of Catechism of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
5. Students who were home schooled and who wish placement in a Catholic school or parish school of faith formation program will be assessed for placement at the appropriate grade level. The final decision in regard to this grade placement rests with the principal or director/coordinator of faith formation.
6. Schools and parish schools of faith formation are not obligated to provide instructional materials for use in the home schooling situation nor are they obliged to enroll children in part of the educational program of the school (fine arts classes, physical education classes, etc.). However, care should be taken to reach out to these families, and, in the area of faith formation, approved materials could be provided.
7. If a parent chooses to remove a child from a Catholic school or from the parish faith formation program for the purpose of home schooling, the pastor or director/coordinator of faith formation is not required to inform Diocesan or state officials of this action or maintain any records in regard to the child’s program or progress in the home schooling situation. It should be noted on the child’s cumulative record that he/she has been removed from the school/parish school of religion for the purpose of home schooling. The date of withdrawal should also be noted on the cumulative record.
8. The principal is required to send the child’s cumulative record to the school district in which the child resides, if the child is withdrawn from the parish or regional Catholic school.