DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Teaching and Learning

Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HHIP) Parent Guidebook

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Overview: What is HHIP?

The DC Public Schools (DCPS) Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HHIP) provides interim instructional support to students who have a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition that is acute or catastrophic in nature that confines them to the home or hospital for two (2) weeks or more from the time a referral is submitted during the traditional school year.

A student is considered to be medically confined when there is:

- A medical necessity;
- An inability to leave home. Any absences from home are infrequent, of relatively short duration, or to receive health care treatment; AND
- Active medical treatment which interferes with daily school attendance (e.g., inpatient treatment; medical appointments that span school day hours for four to five days a week) and prevents the student from participating in the day-to-day activities at home or school.

The primary goal of DCPS' HHIP is the removal of barriers that impede a student's access to the educational environment. It is in the best interest of children to ensure that they remain members of their school community whenever possible. The Central Services HHIP Office works to ensure that the student's educational needs are supported by the school-based HHIP Team before moving the student to a more restrictive learning environment. When the student's medical needs have an impact on school attendance, the HHIP Team will attempt to address the student's needs with appropriate accommodations.

HHIP services are not based on a student or family's preference to receive their education at home. DCPS does not have a homeschooling program. HHIP is based on the necessity of medical confinement to prevent significant medical impairment. DCPS will work with the treating physician/medical provider to obtain current medical data that demonstrates the medical need for the student's inability to access instruction in the school building. It is important to note that submission of a HHIP referral does not automatically guarantee the approval of HHIP services for a student. DCPS must determine if the barriers to attending school can be removed.

When the barriers to attending school cannot be removed and a student is found eligible for HHIP services, the HHIP Team will utilize multiple modalities to keep students anchored to their classrooms and classroom teachers to the extent possible with the goal of a successful transition back to their respective school.

Reminder: HHIP is Not Homeschooling

It is important to note that while both HHIP and homeschooling can involve students accessing instruction from home, they serve very different purposes. DCPS provides HHIP services to DCPS students who are medically confined as defined in this document. Parents and guardians who wish to homeschool their students are not required to demonstrate a medical necessity for the student to remain at home; they must meet the homeschooling requirements by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and notify OSSE of their intent to homeschool. Parents and guardians interested in homeschooling their students can find more information at https://osse.dc.gov/service/homeschooling-district-columbia.

Who is This Guide Designed to Support?

This guide is for parents and guardians of DCPS students who have at least one (1) of the following situations:

- Medical confinement or an anticipated confinement to the home or hospital for two (2) weeks or more from the time that the referral is submitted to the HHIP Office that prevents the student from participating in the day-to-day activities at home or school; or
- The need for maternity leave.

Referral Process & Medical Certification Requirements

The HHIP referral process begins when a parent/guardian contacts their school's principal or HHIP designee because their child may require HHIP services for a current or anticipated medical confinement or maternity leave. Within two (2) school days of receiving a request for HHIP services, the school's principal or HHIP designee will make the necessary forms available to the parent and provide information on the process for submitting a HHIP request.

A HHIP referral requires the completion of five (5) forms, which the HHIP designee for your child's school will share. The forms and the party responsible for completing them are:

Form Name	Completed By
School Request for Service	School HHIP designee
Proof of Immunization	School nurse
Physician/Medical Provider Verification	Student's physician/medical provider who is treating the confining diagnosis
Parent/Guardian Agreement	Parent/guardian
Consent to Share	

The treating physician/medical provider, including a licensed nurse practitioner, clinical psychologist, mental health counselor or therapist, or physician assistant, for the medical condition that is confining the student to the home or hospital must complete the HHIP Physician/Medical Provider Verification form. For example, if a student's diagnosis is cancer, the HHIP Physician/Medical Provider Verification form must be completed by the student's oncologist, not their primary care provider. Once the form is completed and submitted, the HHIP Office will reach out to the treating physician/medical provider. A determination of eligibility for services will be made within five (5) calendar days once all forms are submitted, and the parent/guardian will be notified of the determination. However, any delays in speaking with the physician/medical provider may delay the determination of eligibility for services.

If HHIP services are required for longer than the initial 60 days, a new HHIP Physician/Medical Provider Verification form must be submitted by the treating physician/medical provider who completed the initial form. If the student's treating physician/medical provider changes, the Physician/Medical Provider Verification form from the new treating physician/medical provider will be processed as a new referral for HHIP services.

Additionally, a new referral for HHIP services, including all HHIP forms, must be submitted every school year to receive HHIP services.

When a student receives HHIP services, the student remains enrolled at their school of record. This is the case for all students, including students who are receiving treatment outside of D.C.

Services Provided

HHIP services are individualized to meet the needs of the student. When a student is approved to receive HHIP services, DCPS will develop a plan that outlines what services a student will receive and the modality to be used. HHIP is not a tutoring service or a virtual school; therefore, services may *not* include one-on-one instruction.

Academic Instruction

HHIP aims to provide students with access to their classroom and/or classroom teacher to the extent possible. DCPS will work to remove barriers that prevent the student from attending school in person. DCPS utilizes varying modalities to provide access to instruction, and DCPS will work with the school-based HHIP Team to determine the modality that best anchors the student to their classes. HHIP services may be provided after school hours, including the weekends.

All students must receive instruction from a DCPS teacher and complete assignments and assessments. All classes follow the DCPS scope and sequence, including subject areas for students with more profound and severe disabilities. Students receiving HHIP services are required to complete the same work that their peers are required to complete in school, including the same number and rigor of assignments. Additionally, HHIP services do not automatically increase the amount of time to complete the work.

Although it is our goal to support students in order to mitigate learning loss associated with medical absences, there is a possibility that the typical progression in school may be impacted. We are guided by what is in the best interest of students and understand that there are medical issues that may prevent students from fully participating. In cases where there are medical barriers to educational access, the HHIP Office will meet with the school-based HHIP Team to discuss an appropriate educational plan. In some cases, the inability to participate in instruction may impact graduation.

The medical condition/diagnosis and symptom(s) will be considered when the school-based HHIP Team creates a plan of support for the student. This plan of support may include accommodations, such as elevator access, breaks, gradual transition not to exceed one (1) week, etc.

Based on the student's medical status, DCPS may recommend discussing a student's academic courseload to set them up best for success with their coursework, while maintaining the student's necessary focus on their health and accounting for medical complexities.

For courses that a student has already failed due to previously accrued unexcused absences[1] or those in which there is insufficient remaining time in the term to receive all missed instruction and complete all missed required work (e.g., three weeks before a term ends and the student has completed no work for a course), instruction may be provided but a passing grade and credit will not be assigned. Additionally, credit recovery courses are not supported.

When a student is no longer confined to the home or hospital, they must attend school in-person. In some cases, a student's medical condition may persist after they are no longer confined. For instance, a student with a fractured femur may initially be confined to the home due to the nature and location of the fracture. However, once the student is weight bearing or has the appropriate mobility device,

[1] In DCPS, secondary students automatically fail a course when they accrue more than 30 unexcused absences. For

additional information, see Section H of the *Attendance and Truancy Policy* at https://dcps.dc.gov/node/1556811.

the student is cleared to attend school with accommodations even though the femur is still healing. A student with cancer could be confined to the hospital when they are receiving inpatient chemotherapy treatments. However, in between treatment cycles when the student does not have medical appointments, they are no longer confined to the home or hospital and are cleared to attend school until their next cycle of treatment.

Related Services

Students prescribed related services on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan are also eligible to receive related services when medically appropriate. DCPS will work with the student's medical providers to determine what is in the best interest of the student based on their medical needs. In some cases, after the HHIP Team has considered the continuum of services, the Team may determine that it is not appropriate for a student to receive all prescribed services and the student's IEP or 504 team may decide to temporarily amend the student's IEP or 504 plan.

Related service providers assigned to the student while on HHIP may differ from the school-based providers.

Planning for Transition Back to School

Students are required to return to school when they no longer meet the criteria for confinement.[2] This may occur prior to the end date listed on the Physician/Medical Provider Verification form. The goal is for the student to fully transition back to school as soon as possible. Accommodations, such as ADA accessibility, will be considered by DCPS to ensure that the student can transition back to school.

Pregnant Students

Students who are or become pregnant are required to continue attending school until they are admitted for delivery or are hospitalized due to pregnancy complications. Students experiencing pregnancy symptoms, such as nausea; fatigue; physical discomfort; or swelling, are expected to attend school, though DCPS will consider appropriate accommodations for pregnant students as necessary. For instance, pregnant students may be eligible for the following accommodations:

- Use of elevator,
- Availability of snacks or water bottle during class,
- Use of a pillow,
- Elevating feet,
- Movement breaks,
- Lunch in a separate area,
- Extra transition time between classes,
- Preferential seating,
- Breaks in the nurse's suite,
- Use of non-student restroom, or
- Permission to wear non-uniform clothing (e.g., comfortable pants).

Some students may experience decreased ability to remain focused in class due to symptoms associated with pregnancy. DCPS can work with the school-based HHIP Team to ensure that teachers and staff are aware of the various barriers that may be impacting the student and work to create adjustments that alleviate discomfort to the extent possible.

[2] For the definition of "confinement," see section *Overview: What is HHIP?* above.

Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is permitted for previously pregnant students for six (6) weeks from the baby's birth date. It is extended to eight (8) weeks when a cesarean section is performed. Maternity leave cannot be extended due to individual circumstances, such as a lack of childcare. The New Heights Coordinator (if one is assigned) and school-based HHIP Team will work with the student to create an action plan when the student is experiencing barriers that are impacting their return to school. All students are expected to return to school at the conclusion of their maternity leave and HHIP services.

During maternity leave, a student's academic schedule may be adjusted. HHIP considers how the demands of school and parenthood are likely to impact the student's ability to receive instruction and complete assignments in all courses. In the situation that one or more classes are paused, the student will be required to make up all missed assignments upon transition back to school. The HHIP Office will work with the school-based HHIP Team to create a make-up plan so that the student has the opportunity to earn a final grade in the course.

Students Receiving Psychiatric Care

Students who participate in intensive psychiatric treatment programs during the school day, such as an inpatient hospitalization program or partial hospitalization program, may not be available to access their education during their treatment. The HHIP Team will work with the school's psychiatric team to determine when it is medically appropriate to initiate education services as well as the appropriate number of courses that the student can access while in treatment. In some cases, hospitalization may impact the student's promotion status or their projected graduation date.

Students participating in an intensive outpatient program (IOP) that begins in the afternoon must attend school during the day. Typically, IOPs begin after the traditional school day to ensure that students are attending as much of the school day as possible. The HHIP Office will work with the school-based HHIP Team to create a plan of support for afternoon courses that may be impacted by the IOP start time.

Students who are in psychiatric crisis, as evidenced by hospitalization, may be unable to access the education. In these cases, educational services will be paused until it has been determined that the student is sufficiently medically stable to access services. When it is determined that the student can access the education, a plan of support will be created.

Students who are not actively participating in an inpatient or partial hospitalization program must transition to school. The HHIP Office will work with the school-based HHIP Team to create a transition plan of no more than six (6) weeks. If the student is unable to transition to a full school day within six (6) weeks, the transition plan will be paused and reevaluated. DCPS will request to meet with the medical team and family to discuss relevant data, observations, and any underlying medical concerns that are not being met by the current medical treatment plan or if the current medical treatment plan is sufficient. Please note that it is not within the purview of DCPS staff to provide medically-based support (e.g., therapy) to students. Support provided by DCPS staff is focused on a student's ability to access the education.

Students with IEPs

When a student has an IEP and requires HHIP services, the IEP may be amended due to the needs and abilities of the student while the student is ill. This amendment will apply for the duration of time that

the student is receiving HHIP services. If an IEP is amended while a student is receiving HHIP services, the IEP team will meet to amend the IEP again following the student's return to school.

Scheduling HHIP Services

Many doctor's appointments and medical treatments occur during the hours of the school day. In order to mitigate scheduling conflicts between medical appointments and instructional sessions, HHIP utilizes various modalities when providing services to students, such as support after traditional school hours, during the weekend, or during the school day. Students are expected to be available for these instructional sessions, and students may experience a gap in instructional services provided by HHIP if they do not follow their HHIP service schedule because of conflicts with non-medical appointments.

HHIP sessions are not held on Federal and DC holidays, teacher work/planning days, professional development days, and parent-teacher conference days. HHIP also adheres to DCPS closures and delays due to inclement weather. Sessions that are missed because of school closures and delays will be rescheduled if possible. School delays, closures, breaks, and holidays do not extend HHIP services.

Program Expectations

Attendance

Student absences will be excused from the date of receipt of a completed HHIP referral by the HHIP Office. Once a student is determined ineligible for HHIP services, their absences from in-person attendance will no longer be excused. The school attendance office is notified when HHIP services are terminated and the student is then expected to return to school.

If a student misses three (3) instructional sessions for non-medically excused reasons while receiving HHIP services, the school-based team and parent/guardian will be notified that services will be paused until the barrier impacting attendance is addressed and the student is prepared to participate in HHIP. Until the student can fully participate in HHIP, absences after the third missed session for a non-medically excused reason will not be excused.

If a student's family cannot be contacted and the student is not participating in sessions, the school-based team will be notified that services will be paused and absences will not be excused until contact can be made and the barrier to participation has been addressed.

HHIP services will end immediately if the student is working outside of their home or the hospital.

Location

Sessions are held in the student's home or at the hospital. Parents/guardians may submit a request to the HHIP Office for sessions to be held at another location, such as a relative's home. Such a change in location must be approved by the HHIP Office and is not guaranteed. Services cannot be provided outside of Washington, D.C. Sessions may also include logging into class via computer to access instruction.

Learning Environment

Students and parents/guardians must ensure that the physical area where HHIP sessions will take place is appropriately prepared for learning, including the following:

- The area where the session is taking place must be clean and well lit.

- All potential distractions in the area must be minimized so that the student and staff can focus on the session. This includes TVs, music, video games, loud conversations by others, sibling interruptions, etc.
- All material needed for the instructional session should be accessible by the student.
- The student and all members of the home should be appropriately dressed (i.e., fully dressed, both top and bottom).
- Before the session begins, all pets must be removed from any area where the HHIP provider will be, such as the front door/entry and the room where the session will take place. The provider will not enter the home until pets are secured for the duration of the session.
- Smoking is not permitted in the home when the provider is present.
- Medications, drug paraphernalia, and alcohol must not be present in any area the HHIP provider will enter, unless medication is being administered to the student during the session.
- Students who are logging into their classes from home or the hospital must ensure that their location is free of the above stated distractions prior to logging into class.

If a student or area for the session is not prepared to begin when the provider arrives, the provider will wait. However, additional time may not be added to the session.

DCPS and providers reserve the right to leave the home or hospital and cancel the session immediately when the above expectations are not met. If there are consistent issues meeting expectations, sessions will be paused until a resolution is discussed and agreed upon.

Adult Supervision for Students

When HHIP providers arrive for a session or service at a home, an adult who is responsible for the student must be present in the home during the entire session, even if the student is 18 years old or older. If the adult leaves the home during the session, the HHIP provider will end the session immediately. This requirement does not apply to HHIP sessions or services that occur in a student's hospital room.

If an adult is not home when the HHIP provider arrives, the HHIP provider will wait outside until an adult arrives and attempt to contact the student's parent/guardian. If an adult arrives before the session's scheduled end time, the provider will begin the session and then end it at the scheduled time. The missed time will not be made up. If an adult does not arrive before the scheduled end time, the session will be canceled and not rescheduled or made up.

Family Support of Student Academics/Related Services

Parents should encourage their students to participate fully in sessions with providers and complete homework assignments independently as much as possible. Homework assignments should be completed before the next session with the provider.

Cancellations and Missed Sessions

Cancellations by the student or parent/guardian should be made at least 24 hours in advance, whenever possible.

HHIP providers will also provide 24-hour notice before a session cancellation whenever possible. When a provider cancels a session, the missed session will be rescheduled and made up.

If three (3) instructional sessions are missed for non-medical reasons, services will be paused and absences will be unexcused. Services will resume when the barrier to student participation is addressed, and the student is prepared to participate within the timeframe initially scheduled for HHIP services. A pause in services does not extend HHIP services. Missed services may result in a change in schedule that differs from the initial pre-determined schedule.

All absences, cancellations, and pauses in services are reported to the school-based HHIP Team.

Safety Precautions

Providers working with students will use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on student needs and the Department of Health's (DOH) current policy. Families may request that providers wear gloves, gown, booties, or other PPE when working with the student if they feel it is appropriate. The HHIP Office will make these items available to providers, and these items must be disposed of after each use.

Due to the medical complexities and fragility of some of our students, class must be canceled if someone in the home is ill. Class must be canceled if someone in the home has a fever (i.e., 100.4 degrees or higher); a gastrointestinal illness, such as vomiting or diarrhea; or any other illness that causes the person to remain at home. Sessions will resume when the person who had been ill is fever or symptom free for 48 hours without the use of medication. Providers will follow the same protocol when they are ill.

DCPS will follow the DOH's policy with respect to Covid-19.[3] Families receiving services are expected to follow the same policy.

Assignments, Grades, and Progress Reports

Students receiving HHIP services are expected to complete the same work as their peers in typical classes. The teacher(s) of record will provide this work to the HHIP Team. Students are responsible for all necessary material in their classes while receiving HHIP services.

The school of record is responsible for issuing progress reports and report cards for the student while they receive HHIP services.

Questions and Concerns

All questions and concerns on DCPS' HHIP can be directed to the HHIP Office at 202-939-3506 or hip.dcps@k12.dc.gov.

[3] *Available at* https://dcpsstrong.com/covid-19/.

Appeals

DCPS HHIP Office

Students and parents/guardians may appeal a HHIP eligibility decision by contacting the HHIP Office within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the decision. Appeals must include the following information:

- Student information, including:
  - Name,
  - Date of birth,
  - Local ID number,
  - School name, and
  - Grade;
- Reason for the appeal;
- Data or other documentation to support the reason for the appeal, including a new HHIP Physician/Medical Provider Verification Form completed by the treating physician/medical provider. The treating physician/medical provider completing the HHIP Physician/Medical Provider Verification Form for the appeal should be the same physician/medical provider who completed the Form for the initial referral; and
- Physician/Medical Provider's contact information.

The appeal should be sent to the HHIP Office at:

- Email: hip.dcps@k12.dc.gov
- Fax: 202-654-6020
- Mail:
  1200 First St. NE
  8th Floor, Box 34
  Washington, DC 20002

DCPS must speak with the treating physician/medical provider before a determination can be made. The appeal will be acknowledged within five (5) school days unless there are delays in speaking with the treating physician/medical provider.

DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

Students and parents/guardians may appeal a DCPS HHIP eligibility decision by completing OSSE's Home and Hospital Instruction Appeal Form.[4] The form must be submitted to OSSE within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of DCPS' eligibility decision. Upon submission, the person who submitted the appeal will be sent an email confirmation of their submission and a member of OSSE's staff will contact them with next steps on the appeal and mediation.

[4] *Available at* https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=8Unkj5SLt0-ZBm-Tnagtc4fbigKQO8FIiff7C0X0atxUOFNDMVpHVzk3TkxONVUzMU9LVjVMUlpNVi4u.