

How to Homeschool in Westford

So excited that you have chosen homeschooling for your child! I homeschooled both my children from K-12 and loved it. Homeschooling is a lot easier and more fun than doing "school at home." I hope you end up loving it, too.

Homeschooling in Massachusetts is governed by a court case called *The Care and Protection of Charles*. You can find a list of FAQs here:

<https://www.ahem.info/faq.html>

Please don't get worried about the details of the case or the law. Here are the simple steps you need to do:

1. In a simple letter, inform the Director of Curriculum of Westford Public Schools (Kerry Clery) that you intend to homeschool your child for X grade for the 2020-2021 school year. Example:

Kerry Clery
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Westford Public Schools
23 Depot Street
Westford, MA 01886

Dear Ms. Clery,

This letter documents our intention to homeschool our child, *child's name*, for *fill in grade* grade during the 2020-2021 school year.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your address

2. Upon receipt of the letter, WPS will send you some forms to fill out. Complete the forms and return them to WPS. They cannot refuse you your right to homeschool. Doesn't matter if you have a degree in education or a degree at all!
3. One of the things they will ask on the forms is how you intend to evaluate your child's progress. Most of the people homeschooling in town provide a simple narrative report, due at the end of the school year. I can send you the progress report that I used when my child was in the same grade as yours. It's usually just a couple of pages for each child, one paragraph for each subject area, that states what the child has accomplished.
4. They will also require you to prepare a curriculum plan. You do not have to mimic what the school is doing. All they really care about is that your child keeps at grade-level in math and language arts. My curriculum plans were less than one page long. The rest of the subjects can be child-directed. I can send you the curriculum plan I

used. Prepare a plan and send it in. The main thing is to use words like "*We plan to*" and "*We hope to*". This way you have the flexibility to change your mind as the year progresses. I usually did!

5. Then, they will approve your homeschool. Tada! No need to wait for that approval, though. Just get started and have fun. This is you and your child's chance to do it "your way!"

Note: Even though the school requires 900 hours of instruction (or 990 for high school), rest assured that it takes way less time to get the job done at home. Then again, once you settle in to homeschooling, you are really homeschooling informally all the time. Consider the amount of overhead there is in school: settling an entire classroom down, teaching at a speed for the average student, moving between classes, managing behavior, etc. Plus, with fewer distractions, your child can get better work done in a smaller amount of time.