

Raven Homeschool Frequently Asked Questions

What Makes Raven Unique?

Q. I'm thinking about homeschooling my students for next year. I've been looking at several programs. How is Raven different?

A. We offer a wide variety of curriculum options so parents can customize their plans to utilize online, paper-based, or a combination of materials. We also have excellent computer and internet benefits as well as fun engagement opportunities and highly-trained staff to support all your homeschooling needs.

Q. Why would I choose Raven over the other homeschooling programs?

A. We have a lot of similarities, but also a lot of additional benefits to other programs. We encourage you to get in touch with your local office to get to know the staff and have a conversation about the specific benefits available to your family through Raven.

Enrollment Questions

Q. How do I enroll?

A. Visit www.ravenhomeschool.com and click the "Enroll Now" button.

Q. When can I enroll?

A. Enrollment is open now for the 2020-2021 school year and continues through September.

Q. Can I enroll and start classes now? I feel like my students need to get started right away.

A. Enrollment is open online to begin the enrollment process and our school year will officially begin on July 1, so your students can start working on classes over the summer if you want.

Q. What if we want to start homeschooling and then move back to my local district school after Christmas once things settle down?

A. We do even under normal circumstances have families who will transition back to the local school at the semester mark after Christmas, so it is not a problem or unusual. What we would do is set you up at the beginning of the year as if you would be continuing the full year for getting your plan together, purchasing curriculum, and all of that. Then, if things are settled down at the school and you want to switch after the Christmas break, we would just close out your records to send grades to the local school and transfer you over there. If homeschooling is going really well for you and you don't feel comfortable heading back to school at that point, we'll already have everything in place for you to continue with us. We totally understand that many things are uncertain for families right now and we want to support you as best we can.

Q. If I decide last minute to switch from my current school to Raven, how long is the enrollment process? (To enroll and receive curriculum)

- A. Once you enroll online, we connect you with an advisory teacher and help you with building your ILP and completing the enrollment paperwork. This can be completed all at the same time, and then we can help you with ordering your curriculum starting July 1 once the school year begins. Different vendors take different amounts of time for shipping, but we will help get you what you need to start as quickly as possible.

Q. Can I select my teacher?

- A. We have highly qualified advisory teachers at each Raven office and do our best to balance out the families between the teachers. If you have a teacher request, just let your office admin know and we will do our best to accommodate.

Q. Can we switch offices easily if we move?

- A. Yes, we will help your transition to be smooth from one Raven office to another so you can be connected with the office closest to you for activities and advisory teacher support.

Q. If a student is 19 and needs 7 credits can he enroll?

- A. A student is still eligible for enrollment if he is under 20 as of September 1. We have wonderful high school counselors who will help with reviewing the credits earned and still needed for graduation, and there are even credit-recovery course options to help students who need to make up credits toward graduation.

Q. How can my student be enrolled in Raven and our private school? Isn't that a lot of classes to have a student take?

- A. Many families who enroll with a private school and Raven will choose to just be enrolled part-time with Raven and take two courses with us rather than a full course load so that they are not overwhelmed with too many classes. Private school students can also work on their courses with Raven over the summer while the private school is not in session.

Q. What if we are going to travel to the lower 48 to help take care of my aging parents?

- A) We have an extended stay form that can be completed so that families can let us know about their needs to be outside of Alaska for a period of time.

Q. We have some friends who plan to move to Alaska in September. Will they be able to enroll?

- A. Yes, we can enroll students all the way through the end of September to still be eligible for a full allotment. We would encourage them to enroll now so we can help them prepare for the year so they are ready to get started as soon as they get here to Alaska.

Activity/Engagement Questions

Q. When will the Raven Offices be reopening and in-person activities happening again?

- A. Our school district is continuing to follow the CDC guidelines for schools and is working on a plan for reopening the offices and will notify families as soon as that is able to happen.

Q. When we travel to Anchorage can we go to the museums there even though we live in Fairbanks?

- A. Yes, we encourage families to take advantage of educational opportunities when they are traveling. You will just want to make sure that the activities align with your students' Individual Learning Plans and that you let your advisory teacher know where you plan to visit.

Q. Do I have to go into the office to attend the PAC meetings? I have all my kids and that would be quite a challenge. Plus we are not quite ready to mix with so many people outside our family.

- A. We are equipped to do video conferences for our PAC Meetings and other activities, so we want everyone to feel comfortable participating virtually if you are not able to or do not want to come into the office for the meetings or activities.

Q. So, if I understand, my student can still be on the local high school basketball team and be fully enrolled in Raven?

- A. That is correct. Students do not need to be enrolled in the local school to be able to participate in after school sports, music, or other activities. There may be an activity participation fee that you would have to pay to participate, but Raven can reimburse that fee if it aligns with the student ILP.

Funding Questions

Q. Do you pay for the belts and robes for Karate?

- A. Yes, we are able to reimburse single purpose PE items such as martial arts uniforms and other specialty equipment/uniforms which do not serve any dual purpose (for example sneakers or sweatpants).

Q. We live very remotely. Do you reimburse more than the \$50? Our internet is very expensive through our provider.

- A. Our internet reimbursement program can provide up to \$50/month per family for internet separate from your allotment (a \$600 value in addition to the regular student allotment). We do also have a MiFi program which might be an option for you if you are able to get AT&T cellular service in your area which could possibly reduce the amount you are paying for internet service. We can help you explore that option if you would like. The MiFi devices should work wherever there is AT&T cellular service.

Q. How much does it cost to enroll?

- A. We are funded by the state as a public school, so it does not cost anything to enroll with us. More information will be shared soon about the breakdown of allotment provided for students who enroll.

Q. Does the allotment generally cover everything needed?

- A. That definitely depends on the grade level and interests of the students, so we do try to help families budget wisely as they build their ILP for the year. Certain curriculums are quite expensive while others are much less costly. Extracurricular activities such as private music lessons, art classes, or PE classes can cost a lot. There are many options available though, so we can help you plan and balance out your expenses to correspond with your priorities.

Q. What if we don't spend all of the allotment for our students?

- A. Unused allotment funds will roll over to the next school year for returning students in a special "savings account" for each student so they can utilize them in the future. This is a great benefit for students to have additional funds saved up for when they get into high school and have potentially more expensive classes.

Q. Are the allotments per quarter/semester or for the whole year?

- A. The allotments are for the entire year and become available starting July 1 once the enrollment process has been completed.

Q. Can Raven purchase curriculum directly from the allotment, or do we have to pay for everything out of pocket and then be reimbursed?

- A. As long as a vendor has agreed to accept purchase orders from Raven, we can pay for curriculum, supplies, and lessons directly without families having an out-of-pocket expense. Contact your local office if you have any questions about whether or not a vendor has completed the paperwork to get paid by purchase order. You are certainly welcome to pay yourself and then get reimbursed if that works best for your family.

Technology Questions**Q. I don't have a computer. How can I start my work?**

- A. We have several computer program options for families with at least one full-time student enrolled. We can provide a computer for you with the cost taken directly from your allotment, or you may purchase your own choice of computers and then get reimbursed on a payment plan.

Q. Can we build a computer and can we get reimbursed for the parts?

- A. We do have families who choose to put a technology course on their Individual Learning Plan so that they can build their own computer rather than choosing to purchase an already built machine. Your advisory teacher can help you with assembling that plan. Yes, we can reimburse the parts up to certain limits. These are details that you will want to get pre-approved by your advisory teacher prior to purchase so they can help you with those details.

Q. Can I take my MiFi device out of state during the holidays so my students can continue their classes?

- A. The MiFi devices should work wherever there is AT&T cellular service. Here is a link to the AT&T wireless coverage map so you can look up the locations where you will be traveling: <https://www.att.com/maps/wireless-coverage.html>

Curriculum/ILP Questions

Q. What is required on an ILP?

- A. The ILP is the plan that you will develop with the support of your advisory teacher for your student for the year. A minimum of four courses are needed for a student to be full-time enrolled with Raven. You will also want to have a balance between core classes and extracurricular so that there are not more electives than core subjects.

Q. What classes are considered core for the ILP?

- A. Core classes include Math, Language Arts, Science, History, Foreign Language, Career and Technical Education, and Technology. Extracurricular courses include Music, Art, and PE.

Q. Does curriculum purchased with allotment have to be returned?

- A. We consider anything under \$200 consumable, so curriculum materials do not need to be returned to Raven. There are guidelines to help with individual items that cost more than \$200, and pre-approval is needed by your advisory teacher for anything like that.

Q. Is faith-based curriculum able to be covered by allotment?

- A. No, as a public school, we are not able to pay for faith-based materials; however, families may pay for the curriculum themselves and then get reimbursed for supplemental supplies to go along with the course such as science experiment kits and math manipulatives which do not have any faith-based content.

Q. Is there a list of approved curriculum?

- A. Your advisory teacher is the best place to start when choosing curriculum. The number of curriculum options available can be quite overwhelming if just looking at a list of names.

Examples of popular curriculum choices can be found on our website, but your teacher will help to narrow down what might work best for you based on a conversation about teaching and learning styles.

Other Questions

Q. Do my students have to take state tests? I'm okay with my older students, but my youngest gets very anxious.

- A. We do participate in the state PEAKS testing for students in grades 3-10 and encourage families to have all students participate to get feedback about student progress. Parents do have the right to withdraw their students from testing though.