

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

HOME SCHOOLING (Policy Statement: Home Schooling)

Purpose

The purpose of these procedures are to outline the limited responsibilities of the Board staff regarding Home Schooling and to support a positive home schooling experience for home schooled children.

References

The Education Act and Regulations
Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 131

Procedures

1. Definitions:

1.1 CURRICULUM

- a) The Curriculum can be accessed on the Ministry of Education website:
www.edu.gov.on.ca

1.2 PART-TIME ENROLMENT

It is preferred for students to be enrolled full-time. If a parent requests part-time enrolment, arrangements must be made with the principal of the student's community school. Part-time student expectations in regards to attendance, course work and assessment and evaluation are the same for all students. The students will be enrolled on the part-time register.

1.3 FULL-TIME ENROLMENT/RETURN TO SCHOOL

Should a home schooled child wish to return to school on a full-time basis, parents must meet with the principal of the school. The principal will determine whether an assessment will be required for educational placement.

1.4 PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR) (SECONDARY ONLY)

Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school. Where such learning has occurred outside Ontario classrooms, students enrolled in Ontario secondary schools and inspected private schools may have their skills and knowledge evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma. This formal evaluation and accreditation process is known as PLAR. PLAR procedures are carried out under the direction of the school principal, who is responsible for granting credits.

2. Procedures for Parents/Guardians:

- 2.1 Parents who decide to provide home schooling for their child(ren) should notify the Director of Education of their intent in writing. Parents should provide the name, gender and date of birth of each child who is receiving home schooling and the telephone number and address of the home. The letter should be signed by the parent(s).
- 2.2 Parents may use the letter provided in Form A of this policy. If the home address changes, parents should notify the school board of the change of address.
- 2.3 If parents decide to continue to provide home schooling in subsequent years, they should give notification each year in writing prior to September 1 to the school board in whose jurisdiction their child last attended school. The letter should contain the same information as that in the initial letter described above.

3. Procedures for the Board:

- 3.1 When parents give the Board a written notification of their intent to provide home schooling for their child, the Board will consider the child to be excused from attendance at school, in accordance with subsection 21(2), clause (a), of the Education Act. The Board will accept the written notification of the parents each year as evidence that the parents are providing satisfactory instruction at home. The Board will send a letter each year to the parents, acknowledging the notification (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 Normally, the Board will not investigate the matter. However, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the child is not receiving satisfactory instruction at home, the Board will take steps to determine whether the instruction is satisfactory, as outlined in the next section.

4. Board Investigations of Home Schooling:

4.1 REASONS FOR AN INVESTIGATION

- (a) As stated above, it is the responsibility of the Board to excuse children from attendance at school when home schooling is provided, in accordance with subsection 21(2), clause (a), of the Education Act. However, where the Board has

reasonable grounds to be concerned that the instruction provided in the home may not be satisfactory, the Board will investigate the matter.

- (b) The following is a list of some of the reasons that may give the Board cause to investigate a particular instance of home schooling:

- refusal of a parent to notify the Board in writing of the intent to provide home schooling;
- a credible report of concern by an appropriate third party with respect to the instruction being provided in the home;
- evidence that the child was removed from attendance at school because of ongoing conflicts with the school, not for the purposes of home schooling;
- a history of absenteeism by the child prior to the parent(s) notifying the Board of the intent to provide home schooling.

4.2 GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION

- (a) In conducting an investigation, the appropriate Superintendent may meet with the family or ask the parent to submit information about the home schooling in writing.

- (b) Whether meeting with the family or reviewing information submitted in writing, the Superintendent recognizes that the methodology, materials, schedules and assessment techniques used by parents who provide home schooling may differ from those used by educators in the school system. For example, the parent may not be following the Ontario curriculum, using standard classroom practices in the home or teaching with the standard school day or school year. Determining whether instruction is satisfactory should, therefore, focus on the following:

- a plan for educating the child;
- plans to ensure literacy and numeracy learning at developmentally appropriate levels; and
- plans for assessing the child's achievement.

- (c) If the Superintendent meets with the family, the following questions and requests will be used as a guide for the discussion:

- Do you have an instructional plan, regularly planned instructional time and a daily work schedule? Please provide details.
- What subjects are you teaching?
- What do you expect to accomplish with your child in English, Mathematics, Religion & Family Life and other subjects this year?
- Is your instructional program based on the Ontario curriculum or on a different curriculum?
- If you follow the Ontario curriculum, which documents do you use?
- If you do not use Ontario curriculum documents, please describe the curriculum documents you do use.

- Describe the typical kinds of activities that you provide for your child in the subjects you are teaching. Please provide samples of your child's work in each subject area.
- What types of materials do you use to assist you in accomplishing your plans (e.g., encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, television programs, materials on the internet, computer programs)?
- Please describe the techniques you use to assess your child's learning.
- Do you use community resources to support your instruction? If so, which ones?
- Do you network with other parents who provide home schooling? How?
- Feel free to provide any other information that would help the Board determine whether instruction is satisfactory.

(d) If a written submission from the parent is requested, the Superintendent will ask the parent to complete Form B.

5. **Assessments and Tests Administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office**

- 5.1 Parents providing home schooling may wish their child(ren) to participate in assessments for students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 and/or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (normally given to students in Grade 10), all of which are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). These parents must contact the School Board by September 30 (or another date specified by the School Board) of the year in which the assessments/tests are being conducted for information about the dates, times and locations. Parents who wish their children to participate in any of these assessments/tests will not be charged a fee either by the Board or by EQAO.
- 5.2 The Board should provide space for these children at a local school at the time and on the dates when assessments/tests are being administered to the Board's regular day school students. The school will request sufficient assessment/test materials from the EQAO so that the children who are receiving home schooling can participate. The school will also inform the parent of the dates, times and locations

of the assessment/test. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation for the child to and from the site.

- 5.3 The EQAO will send the results of children who are receiving home schooling to the school where they participated in the assessment/test. Schools will send these children's results directly to the children's homes. The results of the children who are receiving home schooling will not be included in the school and board reports generated by the EQAO or by the schools and boards.

6. Ministry of Education Curriculum Material

Parents who are providing home schooling may download curriculum policy documents and curriculum support material produced by the Ministry of Education free of charge from the Ministry's Website at www.edu.gov.on.ca. This material may also be obtained through Publications Ontario. Parents may contact Publications Ontario by calling its toll-free telephone number: 1-800-668-9938 or they may visit its website at www.publications.gov.on.ca for more information.

7. Courses Offered Through the Independent Learning Centre

A parent who wishes to enroll a child of compulsory school age in courses offered through the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) may do so, provided that the parent has notified the School Board of the intent to provide home schooling. To enroll the child with the ILC, the parent must submit the enrolment form to the ILC, along with a letter from the school board (such as the sample letter in Appendix 2) indicating that the child is receiving home schooling and is excused from attendance at school. Students taking courses through the ILC pay an administration fee that applies to every course offered by the ILC, including full-credit, half-credit, and non-credit courses. Parents may obtain information about fees and enrolment forms directly from the ILC.

8. Funding for Part-Time Attendance

The Ministry of Education provides funding to boards for students who attend school on a part-time basis. The per-pupil grants are prorated according to the amount of time the student is in attendance at the school.

9. Enrolment Registers

A school will not record a child who is receiving home schooling on a full-time basis in the enrolment register for full-time day school students. If, however, a student is receiving some instruction at a school operated by a board, the student's enrolment for this instruction will be recorded in the appropriate register. Details are provided in the Instructions Section of the appropriate register.

10. Clarification by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor

When a school Superintendent is unable to determine whether a child is receiving satisfactory instruction, a request to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor can be made. The Provincial School Attendance Counsellor will appoint an Inquiry Officer to conduct an inquiry. If the inquiry determines that the child is not receiving satisfactory instruction and the Provincial Attendance Counsellor orders that the child attend school, the school board must determine the appropriate action to be taken.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Response to Parent re Home Schooling (Sample)

Forms

Form A: Notification of Intent to Provide Home Schooling
Form B: Investigation – Home Schooling

Approved: January 28, 2008

Reviewed: April 2019