



**Home Schooling**

**Board Received:** October 26, 2015

**Review Date:** November 2019

**Accountability:**

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed
2. Criteria for Success – Parental requests are submitted in writing.
  - Board provides adequate investigation re: quality of home schooling.
  - Students/parents encouraged to stay connected with schools.

**Procedures:**

**Background**

Children between the ages of 6 and 18 are required to attend school. A child may be excused from attendance at school if “the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere” [Education Act, S.21(2)(a)]

Home schooling is an option available to children of compulsory school age. It is one of the legitimate excuses from compulsory attendance.

Parents who wish to school their children at home are required to notify the Board of their intention to do so.

***Home schooling is not to be confused with “Home Instruction”.***

**Purpose**

The purposes of this procedure are:

- to outline the limited responsibilities of Board staff regarding home schooling,
- and to support a positive home schooling experience for home schooled children.

**Comments and Guidelines**

**1. Legislation:**

- a) “Elsewhere” commonly refers to a school setting. Most private secondary schools are inspected by the Government; few, if any, private elementary schools are inspected by the Government.

“Satisfactory instruction” is not defined in the Education Act or its Regulations. The courts have not defined it. However, the Ministry of Education website [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca) contains information for parents.

- b) “Home schooling” is a commonly accepted term which is generally understood to mean that one (or more) of the parents is providing instruction to one or more of their children.
- c) Home schooling is a choice any parent may make for a child. A board has no power to deny the exercise of this choice.

## 2. **Home School Procedures:**

### a) Procedures for Parents

Parents who decide to provide home schooling for their child(ren) should notify the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling 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). Appendix A is a sample letter that parents can use to notify the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling.

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 Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling. The letter should contain the same information as that in the initial letter described above.

### b) Procedures for the School Board

Upon receiving written notification from parents expressing 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 section 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. A letter each year to the parents from the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling (Appendix B) will acknowledge receipt of the parent notification.

## 3. **Board Investigation of Home Schooling:**

### a) Reasons for an Investigation

Where a school principal, social worker, school attendance counselor or area Superintendent has reasonable grounds to be concerned that the instruction provided in the home may not be satisfactory, the board will investigate the matter.

The following is a list of some of the reasons that may give a 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 a 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 purpose 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.

### b) Guidelines for Conducting an Investigation

In conducting an investigation, the Principal will meet with the family or ask the parent to submit information about the home schooling in writing (Appendix C).

Determining whether instruction is satisfactory should therefore focus on the following:

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

The following questions and requests may 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, 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.
- Please 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?
- Please feel free to provide any other information that would help the board determine whether instruction is satisfactory.

If the Principal is unable to determine from this investigation whether the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home, the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling may take further action by making an inquiry to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor (see Section 6 of this procedure).

c) The Role of Home Schooling Support Associations in an Investigation

When the Principal is conducting the investigation, a member of a recognized support group for parents who provide home schooling may be present. These support groups include the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents, the Ontario Christian Home Educators' Connection, and the Home School Legal Defence Association of Canada.

4. **Access to Resources for Parents Providing Home Schooling:**

a) Assessments and Tests Administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office

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. These parents must contact the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling by September 30 of the year in which the assessments/tests are being conducted for information about the dates, times, and locations. No fees may be levied against parents for their children's participation in any of these EQAO assessment/tests. Schools that have been notified by the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling will provide space for these children at the time and on the dates when assessments/tests are being administered to the school's regular day 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 date, time, and location of the assessment/test. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation for the child to and from the site.

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 children who are receiving home schooling will not be included in school and board reports generated by the EQAO or by the schools and boards.

- b) Courses Offered Through the Independent Learning Centre  
Parents may wish to enrol a child of compulsory school age in courses offered through the Independent Learning Centre (ILC). To enrol the child with the ILC, the parent must submit the enrolment form to the ILC, along with a letter from the school board (Appendix B) indicating that the child is receiving home schooling and is excused from attendance at school.
- c) Ministry of Education Curriculum Material  
Parents 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](http://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.
- d) Support Services Offered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Families in which children are receiving home schooling have access to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care school health support and personal support services (and equipment) through the local community care access centres (CCACs) of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Regulation 386/99 under the Long-Term Care Act sets out the eligibility criteria for these services. Again parents must provide the local CCAC with a letter from the school board (Appendix B) indicating that the child is excused from attendance at school because the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home.

#### 5. Clarification of Related Policy:

- a) Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)  
Section 7.2.5 "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)", of *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2011* will also apply to students enrolled in an Ontario secondary school, other than mature students (*as defined in Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2011*), who are entering secondary school after having received home schooling.
- b) 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 pro-rated according to the amount of time the student is in attendance at the school.
- c) 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. Refer to the Instructions section of the appropriate register for details.

#### 6. Clarification by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor:

When a Principal is unable to determine whether a child is receiving satisfactory instruction, a request to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor can be made by the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for home schooling. 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 School Attendance Counsellor orders that the child attend school, the school board must determine the appropriate action to be taken.

Before requesting an inquiry by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor, the board should ensure that it has:

- Taken appropriate steps to determine whether the child is receiving satisfactory instruction;

- Retained documentation of its communication with the parents, including written communication, notes on telephone calls and other verbal communication, a record of types of communication (eg. telephone calls, registered letter), and a record of the number of attempts to communicate;
- Retained documentation on the nature of the information and material provided by the parent in response to the board's investigation;
- Prepared a factual summary of its investigation, including a conclusion, which will be forwarded to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor (PPM 131).

**Appendix A**

**Sample Letter Indicating Notification of Intent to Provide Home Schooling**

To the Grand Erie District School Board:

I/We herewith provide the names, gender and date of birth for *each child* of compulsory school age for whom I/we intend to provide home schooling.

First and Last Name	Gender	Date of Birth	Last School Attended

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from home address): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We wish to notify the Grand Erie District School Board that I/we will be providing home schooling for our child(ren) starting in \_\_\_\_\_. I/We understand our responsibility under the Education Act to provide satisfactory instruction for our school-age child(ren) and do hereby declare our intent to do so.

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send to: Superintendent of Education (with responsibilities for home schooling)  
 Grand Erie District School Board  
 349 Erie Avenue  
 Brantford, ON N3T 5V3

**Appendix B**

**Sample Letter in Response to a Parent’s Notification**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for notifying the Grand Erie District School Board of your intent to provide home schooling for your child(ren):

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Your child(ren) is/are excused from attendance at school for the school year \_\_\_\_\_ under subsection 21 (2), clause (a), of the Education Act, because you have indicated that you understand your responsibility under the Education Act to provide satisfactory instruction for your child(ren) and that you have declared your intent to do so.

If you would like your child(ren) to participate in the assessments for students in Grades 3, 6, and 9, and/or in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (normally given to students in Grade 10), that are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), you should contact the school board by September 30 for information about the dates, times, and locations.

Enclosed please find a copy of Policy/Program Memorandum No. 131, “Home Schooling”, issued by the Ministry of Education.

Sincerely,

Signature of School Board Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of School Board Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy to: Home School Principal; OSR  
Attendance Counsellor

Attachment

Appendix C

Sample of Form for Gathering Information in an Investigation

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
Address: \_\_\_\_\_
Name of Parent/s: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and return it to the school board, along with the additional material requested below. If you need more space, attach additional sheets.

Program Planning

This section is intended to give the board information on your short- and long-range plans for your child's education.

Please describe your plan for your child's learning by answering the following questions:

Do you make instructional plans? YES G NO G
Do you spend regularly planned instructional time with your child? YES G NO G
Do you have a daily work schedule for your child's home schooling? YES G NO G
If yes, please describe it.

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

What subjects are you teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you expect to accomplish with your child in English, mathematics, and other subjects this year?

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

Instructional Program

This section is intended to give the board information on the curriculum you follow.

Is your instructional program based on any of the elementary or secondary curriculum policy documents published by the Ontario Ministry of Education? YES G NO G

If yes, please check the appropriate boxes below.

Elementary Curriculum Policy Documents

- Language G
Mathematics G
Science and Technology G
Social Studies/History and Geography G
The Arts G
Health and Physical Education G



French As a Second Language	G
<i>Secondary Curriculum Policy Documents</i>	G

Please specify:

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*Note:* Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents and curriculum support material may be downloaded free of charge from the ministry’s website, at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca) This material may also be obtained through Publications Ontario. Contact Publications Ontario by using its toll-free telephone number, 1-800-668-9938, or visit its website, at [www.publications.gov.on.ca](http://www.publications.gov.on.ca) for more information.

*Other Materials*

Please list any other curriculum documents that you use to help you design your instructional program.

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**Instructional Activities**

This section is intended to give the board information on the types of planned activities that you provide for your child to help him or her meet the learning expectations you have established.

Please describe the typical activities you use to help your child learn. For example, what types of activities does your child do while learning English, mathematics, and other subjects? Please include samples of your child’s work in each subject area.

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**Instruction Materials**

This section is intended to give the board information on the types of materials you use to help your child meet the learning expectations you have established.

Please indicate the resources you use to support your instruction. Encyclopedias/reference books (please list):

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Textbooks:

English	G	
Mathematics	G	
Other subjects	G	Please list:

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Names of textbooks used:

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<b>Supplementary materials used:</b>	Very Often	Often	Seldom	Never
Magazines	G	G	G	G
Newspapers	G	G	G	G
Science kits	G	G	G	G
Videos	G	G	G	G
Photos	G	G	G	G
Audio	G	G	G	G
Maps	G	G	G	G
Charts	G	G	G	G
Models/mock-ups	G	G	G	G
Television programs	G	G	G	G
Radio programs	G	G	G	G
Posters	G	G	G	G
Computer programs	G	G	G	G

Other supplementary materials (please specify):

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**Assessment of Student Learning**

This section is intended to give the board information on how you evaluate your child's progress in learning:

What techniques do you use to assess student learning? Please describe them.

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**Resources**

This section is intended to give the board information on the resources you use to support your instructional program.

Please indicate the community and other resources you use.

- Public library G
- YMCA/YWCA G
- Community centre G
- Local gym facilities G
- Public swimming pool G
- Museums G
- Art galleries G
- Recreational/educational/social groups (eg., Scouts, Guides) G
- Nature interpretive centres G
- Camping areas G
- Youth groups G Please specify:

Networking with other families that provide home schooling can offer valuable support. Please indicate if you are a member of any of the following provincial associations.

- Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents G
- Ontario Christian Home Educators' Connection G
- Other organizations or groups G Please specify:

**Other Information**

Please provide below any other information that would help the board determine whether the instruction is satisfactory.

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**Parent's/guardian's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed forms to:  
 Superintendent of Education (with responsibilities for home schooling)  
 Grand Erie District School Board  
 349 Erie Avenue  
 Brantford, Ontario N3T 5V3