



INFORMATION BOOKLET

FOR PARENTS APPLYING FOR

HOME EDUCATION

2010

FOREWORD TO PARENTS

The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training recognises that the terms 'home education' and 'home schooling' are often used inter-changeably.

It has chosen to use the term home education in preference to home schooling in recognition of the point of view that home schooling implies a more structured activity and curriculum position akin to school, whereas home education occurs when parents choose to educate their children from a home base.

This choice is based on a principle that home education best meets the needs of the child and is not determined by the inability of the child to attend school because of geography or disability.

Should you wish to make an application for approval of home education, you must complete the application in detail and return it to the Project Officer, School Operations.

On receipt of the application form and recommendation on the suitability of the proposed program you may be granted in-principle approval for home education.

One of the conditions that precedes approval by the Director School Performance for home education is provision for a home visit to ensure that there is a suitable environment, facilities and resources for the child's education. A school principal or other delegated officer may carry out the visit.

You are reminded that, unless you have approval for home education, every child of or above the age of 6 years and who has not attained the age of 15 years must be enrolled at and attend a government or non-government school.

The words and expressions used in this Information Booklet have the same meaning as those defined and referred to in the Northern Territory *Education Act*.

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION OF HOME EDUCATION

These guidelines have been developed to assist parents seeking approval for home education.

They shall have application in respect of the provision of primary education or secondary education for a child in a place other than a government or a non-government school.

Note: Reference to 'the Secretary' in this document means the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Training.

1. Section 21 of the *Education Act* provides that:
 - (1) Subject to sub-section (3), a parent who has the actual custody of a child of compulsory school age -
 - (a) shall enrol the child in -
 - i) a Government school; or
 - ii) a non-Government school which is a registered educational institution within the meaning of Part VII; or
 - (b) may provide education for the child, which is efficient and suitable.

Penalty: \$200

- (2) For the purposes of sub-section (1)(b) -
- (a) the parent shall obtain the consent in writing of the Secretary before providing such education for the child; and
 - (b) whether such education is efficient and suitable or not shall be a matter for the decision of the Secretary who may, if he thinks fit, obtain a report on the education by a person authorised by him in writing to do so.
- (3) Sub-section (1) does not apply to or in relation to a child for whom special arrangement under Part V have been made for the education of the child and the child is complying with those arrangements.

NOTE: A child of compulsory school age means a child of or above the age of six years who has not yet attained the age of fifteen years.

2. Approval for home education will be granted on an annual basis. During this period arrangements may be made for an authorised person to visit the child and provide a report. Continuing approval is based on recommendations made by such authorised persons.
3. A separate application is required for each child in respect of whom permission is being sought.
4. Where a parent seeks permission to undertake home education the following information is required to enable the Department to consider the request:
 - (a) the name and address of the parent and the child and the date of birth of the child;
 - (b) the reason why permission is sought to educate the child other than at a government school or a non-government school, that is, the home educator's aims and the purpose for home education;
 - (c) the manner in which it is proposed to provide for the child's education, ie, the use of tutors and specialists;
 - (d) the curriculum in accordance with which instruction will be provided for the child and its relation to the Board of Studies approved courses of study, in particular provision for learning literacy and numeracy skills;
 - (e) the qualifications, experience and suitability of the person who is to provide education for the child;
 - (f) the place where the child is to be educated and the facilities which will be available for the child's education;
 - (g) the resources available for the education of the child including the availability of text books, reference books, audio visual equipment, personal computer and similar resources;
 - (h) the number of hours per day, specifying the starting and finishing times, the number of days in the week and the number of weeks in the year that the child will be instructed, and the time which will be allocated to each subject;
 - (j) whether the child will be educated on his or her own or in conjunction with other children;
 - (k) if the child is to be educated on his or her own, the opportunities for social interaction with children of similar age; and
 - (l) how records of the child's program will be kept, for example, a parent or student diary, weekly time tables, work samples, test results.
5. The application form contains sections in which this information is completed. On receipt of the application, the officer responsible for home education may grant in-principle approval.

6. Approval to home educate on an annual basis is provided upon the following conditions.
 - (i) This home education choice is exercised with the full knowledge of the parents' responsibilities in relation to the provision of an efficient and suitable curriculum, resources and facilities to support home education
 - (ii) The Department of Education and Training is under no obligation to provide support or resources.

7. It will be a condition preceding approval for home education that the parent agrees to the following:
 - (a) The officer responsible for home education or his or her nominee may if they think necessary:
 - (i) interview the parent, the proposed teacher and the child;
 - (ii) inspect the facilities and resources, which are available for the child's education;
 - (iii) monitor the child's education by inspecting the child's work portfolios annually and the condition of the facilities and resources as often as he or she considers necessary, on which occasions he or she will also discuss the child's progress with the child's parent and teacher;

8. The Director School Performance on receipt of a recommendation by the officer responsible for home education will make a determination in respect of annual approval, and will notify the applicant accordingly. This determination may be made on the basis of information obtained during the home visit.

9. An applicant who feels aggrieved by the determination of the Director School Performance not to approve an application, may request the Chief Executive to review that determination by a request in writing setting forth clearly the grounds on which the applicant considers the Director School Performance's determination should be reviewed. This must be done within thirty days from the date on which the applicant received notification of the Director School Performance's determination and no later.

10. A flow chart outlining the home education approval process is attached.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q. What must I do to be able to teach my child at home?**
 A. You must apply for and receive the consent of the officer responsible for home education in the short term pending annual approval by the Director School Performance.
- Q. How and when do I apply for this consent?**
 A. You must complete the Application Form and provide information and documentation to support the application. You are advised to lodge your application as early as possible prior to the year to which the application applies.
- Q. When can I commence teaching my child at home?**
 A. You may commence a home education program only after you have applied for and have received the in-principle approval. Your child must attend a government or non-government school until consent in writing has been received.

Q. Do I have to provide a plan of the curriculum to be used?

A. Yes. You will be responsible for providing documentation of a program which, in the opinion of the officer responsible for home education, the General Manager Curriculum, Teaching and Phases of Learning and the Director School Performance, will provide adequately for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of the child. When formulating the program, the curriculum shall:

- have regard for the age, ability, aptitude and development of the child concerned;
- take account and provide continuity of the learning experiences of the child concerned;
- be responsive to the changing needs of the child concerned and reflect current understandings related to the educational and other development of children; and
- emphasise the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.

Q. When does my child have to be taught?

A. You must provide an undertaking concerning the period of time your child is to receive instruction on each school day and the number of school days planned in each year. Schools generally operate for 5 hours and 20 minutes instruction time per day and approximately 40 weeks per year.

Q. Who will notify me whether I am successful in my application for approval for home education?

A. The Director School Performance will make a determination on your application, after the initial monitoring visit by the authorised person if such a visit is deemed necessary. The officer responsible for home education will convey to you the Director School Performance's decision.

Q. May I request a review of my application if it has been unsuccessful?

A. Yes. You have thirty days from the date you received notification of the determination to request the Chief Executive to review your application.

Q. How long does the permission for home education last?

A. Approval to home educate lasts for one year from 1 January to 31 December. A new application for each child must be made for the following year.

Q. If my child continues to be taught at home, will he/she be eligible for certification by Northern Territory accreditation authorities?

A. No, your child will receive no accreditation for home education. If you require certification for future employers, secondary, tertiary or vocational studies, your child must satisfactorily complete a program in a school offering Northern Territory Board of Studies Approved Courses of Study.

Q. Am I eligible for financial assistance from the Department of Education and Training?

A. No. However, the NT government's Back to School Payment Scheme provides financial assistance to parents or guardians who hold current interim registration in the home education program by the end of Term 1, 2010. The scheme helps to offset the cost of purchasing curriculum resources such as textbooks and stationery. Parents or guardians are entitled to receive \$75 per student.

Q. Am I eligible to obtain copies of NT curriculum documents, ie the NT Curriculum Framework, and related support and resource documents?

A. No. However information on the NT Curriculum Framework is available at <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/education/ntcf>

Q. May I return my child to a government or non-government school at any time?

A. Yes. Home education does not prevent you from seeking entry, or re-entry, for your child to a government or non-government school. Normal enrolment procedures would apply.

Q. Do I have to notify the officer responsible for home education if my child is no longer being taught at home?

A. Yes. If you choose to discontinue the home education program for any reason, you must notify the officer responsible for home education. If your child has not attained the age of 15 years, you must enrol the child in a government or non-government school.

Q. If I need more information or an application form, whom should I contact?

A. You should contact the:

Project Officer
School Operations
Department of Education and Training
GPO Box 4821
DARWIN NT 0801

Email schoolsnorth@nt.gov.au

Telephone (08) 8901 1383

Facsimile (08) 8999 5640

CONDITIONS FOR HOME EDUCATION

- Home education choice is exercised with the full knowledge of your responsibilities in relation to the provision of a suitable curriculum, resources and facilities to support the program.
- The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training is under no obligation to provide local support or resources.
- A portfolio of appropriate work samples from the previous year for each child's work will be reviewed during the home visit conducted by the principal or his or her delegate. Ongoing approval for home education will be determined following the visit.
- If the home education program is discontinued during the year, this office must be advised and your child enrolled in a local school within 14 days of ceasing home education.
- Changes to address, phone numbers and/or email address should be notified immediately.

HOME EDUCATION PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

A portfolio of each child's work for the previous year will be reviewed during the home visit conducted by the principal or his or her delegate.

Ideally this portfolio should contain dated and annotated samples of work, which show the progress and achievement for each subject level (eg whether the work is independent and unaided, negotiated, copied or is the culmination of a task). Of particular interest are samples showing progress and achievement in English and Mathematics.

The samples should be collected at the end of each term so that a progression of work can be demonstrated. With some linked or integrated areas you may like to include complete samples of a particular project eg in Science and Studies of Society and Environment.

English Language

Written language for a range of purposes including: samples of different types of writing, eg creative writing (narrative), an information / research report, a recount of an experience, a retell of a favourite story or a letter, showing progress in using:

- punctuation
- grammar
- letter and word understandings / spelling / word building
- comprehension
- handwriting
- the use of literacy in real life contexts, eg developing shopping lists, paraphrasing research from the internet, recording in a personal diary, etc.

Mathematics

- number
- space
- measurement
- the use of numeracy in real life contexts, eg using standard measures such as centimetres, metres, kilogram, etc in craft activities or technology and design productions (woodwork, textiles)

You may also include examples from the following areas.

Science

Studies of Society and Environment

Health

Learning Technology (using computers and electronic devices)

Technology and Design (problem-solving, designing, producing and appraising)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

The Arts (visual and performing)

It is important that all the samples included are dated with the day the tasks were completed, and some relevant observations are included about the way the child was working, the time necessary to complete tasks, the level of involvement with new processes, the ease of understanding of complex tasks, etc.

The most important areas for inclusion are English Language and Mathematics.

If you have any further inquiries about portfolios, contact Project Officer, School Operations on (08) 8901 1383.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (NAP)

If you wish to compare your child's progress in years 3, 5, and 7 with the National Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks you should participate in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Please indicate on the Application Form if you wish to participate in NAP and the Curriculum, Teaching and Phases of Learning division will forward information and tests to you during the year.

Further information on NAP is available at

<http://www.det.nt.gov.au/parents-community/assessment-reporting/nap>

HOME EDUCATION PROCESS

