



HOME SCHOOLING

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being</i>
Legal References:	<i>Education Act: Section 21(2) (a); Long-Term Care Act: Regulation 386/99</i>
Related References:	<i>Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999 (OSS); Administrative Procedure 1170 Home Instruction; IS-07-KK Home Schooling – Notice of Intention; Ministry of Education PPM 131, Home Schooling</i>
Revisions:	<i>March 2016</i>
Reviewed:	<i>March 2016</i>

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The procedures that follow provide guidelines regarding home schooling and half-time/part-time home schooled students in both elementary and secondary schools.

2. Key Components:

- 2.1 Parental requests are submitted in writing;
- 2.2 Board provides adequate investigation re: quality of home schooling;
- 2.3 Students/parents encouraged to stay connected with schools;
- 2.4 Annual report completed and submitted to Ministry of Education.

3. Background

- 3.1 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)] [Learning to Age 18, 2006]
- 3.2 Home schooling is an option available to children of compulsory school age. It is one of the legitimate excuses from compulsory attendance.
- 3.3 Parents who wish to school their children at home are required to notify the Board in writing of their intention to do so.
- 3.4 Home Schooling is not to be confused with “Home Instruction”.

4. Comments and Guidelines

- 4.1 Legislation
 - 4.1.1 With some refinements in the *Education Act*, it is basically a legal requirement to attend school after becoming six years of age and until becoming 18 years of age.
 - 4.1.2 There are several legal reasons and conditions that excuse a child of compulsory age from attending school. One of these is that “the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere”.

- 4.1.3 “Elsewhere” commonly refers to a school setting. The Government inspects most private secondary schools; the Government inspects few, if any, private elementary schools.
- 4.1.4 “Satisfactory instruction” is not defined in the Education Act or its Regulations. The courts have not defined it. However, the Ministry of Education website contains the following comment about teaching a child at home:
How do I make arrangements to teach my child at home?
Every school board has staff responsible for liaison with parents or guardians who chose to teach their children at home. Parents or guardians can set up a home-based course of study with the assistance of their local school board, which must be satisfied that the course outline meets the requirements for an educational program. If your child is already in school, the principal of the school may also be willing to assist you, or recommend resources.
- 4.1.5 “Home schooling” is a commonly accepted term that is generally understood to mean that one (or more) of the parents is providing instruction to one or more of their children.
- 4.1.6 Home schooling is a choice any parent may make for a child. A board has no power to deny the exercise of this choice.

5. Home School Procedures

5.1 Procedures for Parents

Parents who decide to provide home schooling for their child(ren) should notify the Principal of the school identified as their “neighbourhood school” according to address location (consult <https://www.wects.ca/> to identify the appropriate school). Parents will be asked to complete *IS-07-KK Home Schooling – Notice of Intention* to indicate their intention to home school. This procedure should be repeated in each subsequent year that parents choose to continue to provide home schooling.

5.2 Procedures for the School Board

Upon receiving the *Notice of Intention*, principals will forward one copy to the Administrative Assistant of the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being. 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 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. A letter will be sent each year from the office of the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being to the parent acknowledging receipt of notification of intent to home school.

6. Board Investigation of Home Schooling

6.1 Reasons for an Investigation

Where a school principal or social worker communicates to the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being that there are reasonable grounds to be concerned that the instruction provided in the home may not be satisfactory, the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being or designate 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:

- 6.1.1 Refusal of a parent to notify the board in writing of the intent to provide home schooling;
- 6.1.2 A credible report of concern by a third party with respect to the instruction being provided in the home;
- 6.1.3 Evidence that the child was removed from attendance at school because of ongoing conflicts with the school, not for the purpose of home schooling;
- 6.1.4 A history of absenteeism by the child prior to the parent’s notifying the board of the intent to provide home schooling.

- 6.2 Guidelines for Conducting an Investigation
In conducting an investigation, the board designate will meet with the family or ask the parent to submit information about the home schooling in writing.
Determining whether instruction is satisfactory should therefore focus on the following:
- 6.2.1 A plan for educating the child;
 - 6.2.2 Plans to ensure literacy and numeracy at developmentally appropriate levels;
 - 6.2.3 Plans for assessing the child's achievement.
- 6.3 The following questions and requests may be used as a guide for the discussion and are referenced in Appendix A "Home School Investigation Form":
- 6.3.1 Do you have an instructional plan, regularly planned instructional time, and a daily work schedule? Please provide details.
 - 6.3.2 What subjects are you teaching?
 - 6.3.3 What do you expect to accomplish with your child in English, mathematics and other subjects this year?
 - 6.3.4 Is your instructional program based on the Ontario curriculum or on a different curriculum?
 - 6.3.5 If you follow the Ontario curriculum, which documents do you use?
 - 6.3.6 If you do not use Ontario curriculum documents, please describe the curriculum documents you do use.
 - 6.3.7 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.
 - 6.3.8 What types of materials do you use to assist you in accomplishing your plans (i.e., encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, television programs, materials on the Internet, computer programs)?
 - 6.3.9 Please describe the techniques you use to assess your child's learning.
 - 6.3.10 Do you use community resources to support your instruction? If so, which ones?
 - 6.3.11 Do you network with other parents who provide home schooling? How?
 - 6.3.12 Please feel free to provide any other information that would help the board determine whether instruction is satisfactory.
- 6.4 If the board designate is unable to determine from this investigation whether the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home, the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being may take further action by making an inquiry to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor who 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.
- 6.5 The Role of Home Schooling Support
When the board designate 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.

7. Access to Resources for Parents Providing Home Schooling

- 7.1 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 home school 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 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.

- 7.2 **Courses Offered Through the Independent Learning Centre:**
Parents may wish to enroll a child of compulsory school age in courses offered through the Independent Learning Centre (ILC). 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 indicating that the child is receiving home schooling and is excused from attendance at school. This letter may be received by contacting the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being.
- 7.3 **Curriculum Materials:**
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. 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. It should be noted, however, that the Waterloo Region D.S.B. is not responsible for providing curriculum resources or textbooks to students receiving full-time home school instruction.
- 7.4 **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 indicating that the child is excused from attendance at school because the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home.**

8. Accessing Regular Day Schools on a Part-Time Basis:

- 8.1 **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. Further guidelines regarding access by home schooled students to day school programs on a part-time basis are provided in sections 9 to 11.
- 8.2 **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.

9. Part-Time Home Schooling – Elementary Schools

- 9.1 **Organization**
The principal will timetable for the whole school and home-schooled part-time students must "fit into" the school's schedule. The principal is responsible for all students attending school and will decide the scope of the part-time home schoolers' involvement.
- 9.2 **Space Available**
If there is no space available at a student's neighbourhood school, then the school superintendent will look for alternative space for the program being sought.
- 9.3 **Attendance**
All attendance procedures apply. When the student attends for a portion of the day, the student is required to take all classes in that portion of the day.

- 9.4 Nutrition Break Supervision
If the student will not be attending classes subsequent to a nutrition break, it is expected that the student will not be in the school for the nutrition break. This is because of supervision and safety issues.
- 9.5 School Activities/ Hours
If a student attends in the morning, the student has access to activities prior to the beginning of the school day and, if the student attends in the afternoon, the student can participate in after-school activities. Nutrition Break activities will not be available, unless prior arrangements have been agreed upon by the principal. Once the part-time portion of the day is over, students must leave school property, unless a mutual arrangement is in place to accommodate specific activities.
- 9.6 Access
Part-time home schoolers who are registered with the Board:
- Will be supplied with textbooks where available, for the subjects they are taking in Board schools;
 - Will have access to materials from teachers for the subjects for which they are attending;
 - Will have access to the library for the portion of the day that they attend school;
 - Will have access to the computer lab, if available, for the portion of the day that they attend school.
- 9.7 Boundaries
Students will attend their home school, which may also be French Immersion or a designated French Immersion school, where space is available. If there is no space available, or the program desired is not offered, then refer to 9.2 above.
- 9.8 Special Education
Part-time students may have access to Special Education services if deemed eligible through the IPRC process.
- 9.9 Transportation
The Board is unable to provide transportation for part-time students.
- 9.10 Special Events
Part-time students are welcome to attend any event held at the school during the time that the student is in attendance, and/or that pertain to the student's courses of study.
- 9.11 Field Trips
Students are welcome to attend Field Trips related to the student's course of study with the permission of the principal.
- 9.12 Liaison
Parents who are home schooling on a part-time basis must continue to provide their annual *Notice of Intent* to continue part-time home school studies. Only home schooled students registered with the Waterloo Region District School Board can register for a part-time program.
- 9.13 Registration
In order to facilitate planning in elementary schools, all part-time students must register by the end of January, with the exception of students interested in a French Immersion program in Grade 1. The current registration procedures for that program require registration in December prior to the year the student will begin Grade 1. Part-time students will be accommodated, if possible, after full-time registration is completed.
- 9.14 All part-time home schooled students will be subject to all Board policies and procedures.
- 9.15 Report Cards
Elementary teachers will report on the courses for which the child is attending, and for the home schooled course teachers will enter "Home Schooled". The Learning Skills section

will reflect the courses assessed at the school. Teachers should only report on subjects for which there is sufficient evidence.

10. Part-Time Home Schooling – Secondary Schools

10.1 Organization

The principal is responsible for all students attending school both full-time and part-time and will decide the scope of the part-time home schooled student's involvement.

10.2 Space Available

If there is no space available at a student's neighbourhood school, then the school superintendent will look for alternative space for the program being sought.

10.3 Attendance

All attendance procedures apply. If the student takes only two subjects, the student is expected to leave the school for the balance of the day or go to a designated area agreed upon by the principal.

10.4 Noon Hour Supervision

If the student attends the morning session or the afternoon session, it is expected that they will not be in the school for the lunch hour. This is because of supervision and safety issues.

10.5 School Activities/Hours

If a student attends in the morning the student has access to activities prior to the beginning of the school day and if the student attends in the afternoon, the student can participate in after-school activities. Noon hour activities will not be available, unless prior arrangements have been agreed upon by the principal. Once the part-time portion of the day is over, students must leave school property, unless a mutual arrangement is in place to accommodate specific activities.

Secondary school regulations for the Waterloo County Secondary School Athletic Association and the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association do not permit half-time students to participate on teams. The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association is the governing body for secondary school athletics. Their policies and guidelines are very strict about students on school teams and Waterloo County Secondary School Athletic Association has adopted the policy that only full-time students are participants on school teams.

10.6 Access

Half-time home schooled students who are registered with the Board:

- will be supplied with textbooks, where available, for the subjects they are taking in Board schools;
- will receive materials from teachers for the subjects for which they are attending;
- will have access to the library for that portion of the day that they attend school;
- will have access to the computer lab, if available, for that portion of the day that they attend school;

10.7 Boundaries

Students will attend their home school, which may also be French Immersion or a designated French Immersion school, where space is available. If there is no space available, or the program desired is not offered, then refer to 10.2 above.

10.8 Special Education

Part-time students may have access to Special Education services if deemed eligible through the IPRC process.

10.9 Transportation

The Board is unable to provide transportation for part-time students.

- 10.10 Special Events
Part-time students are welcome to attend any event held at the school during the time that they are in attendance, and/or that pertain to their courses of study.
- 10.11 Field Trips
Students are welcome to attend Field Trips related to the student's course of study, with the permission of the principal.
- 10.12 Liaison
Parents who are home schooling on a part-time basis must continue to provide their annual *Notice of Intent* to continue part-time homeschool studies. Only home schooled students registered with the Waterloo Region District School Board can register for a part-time program.
- 10.13 Exam Schedule
Students must participate in exams and other in-class assessments as required in the courses for which they are enrolled.
- 10.14 Registration
In order to facilitate planning in secondary schools, all part-time students must register by the end of January. These students will be accommodated after full-time registration is completed.
- 10.15 All part-time students will be subject to all Board policies and procedures.
- 10.16 Report Cards
Report Cards will be provided for students for courses in which they are enrolled.

HOME SCHOOL INVESTIGATION FORM

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 NO

Do you spend regularly planed instructional time with your child? YES NO

Do you have a daily work schedule for your child's home schooling? YES NO

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 NO

If yes, please check the appropriate boxes below.

Elementary Curriculum Policy Documents

- Language
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology

Instructional 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):

Textbooks:

- English
- Mathematics
- Other subjects: Please list:

Names of textbooks used:

Supplementary materials used:	Very Often	Often	Seldom	Never
Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science kits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Films	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tape recordings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Models/mock-ups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Posters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other supplementary materials (please specify):

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.

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
- YMCA/YWCA
- Community Centre
- Local gym facilities
- Public swimming pool
- Museums
- Art galleries
- Recreational/educational/social groups (e.g., Scouts, Guides)
- Nature interpretive centers
- Camping areas
- Youth groups

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
- Ontario Christian Home Educators' Connection
- Other organizations or groups Please specify: _____

Other Information

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

Parent's/guardian's name: _____

Date: _____