

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

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Dear committee

Hello, my name is . I am 12 years old and I am a home schooler. I will be turning 13 next month. I wanted to write to you and tell you about why I love home school. Also, my mum is typing up this letter for me, because I have dyslexia and find it really hard to do a long letter.

So when I was young, I went to school for a few years and it was really dreadful for me. I was very badly bullied by lots of other boys, but especially badly by one of them. I also couldn't learn in class, there was too much noise, too much going on, and I just couldn't concentrate. I felt really stupid because all the other kids seemed to learn ok but I couldn't. I also felt stressed all the time because of how much I was getting bullied, and no one seemed able to stop it.

I begged Mum not to send me to school every day because I hated it. After a while my mum got really mad with my school because kids kept bullying me, and so when I was in class 2 she said that she would let me do home school. I felt so relieved to not go anymore. But it took me ages to feel ok again. I felt pretty stressed for a long time afterwards, and I also felt really stupid and thought that I would never be able to learn anything or have any friends.

Then mum started to take me out to stuff with other home school kids and what do you know? They played with me and didn't bully me. I started to make friends and I started to feel happy again and not worry about having to go back to school anymore. Also mum discovered that I have some learning disabilities called dyslexia and dyscalculia – it basically means that it is really hard for me to read and write for long periods of time (it takes me ages to do a small amount), and it is really hard for me to do maths, and for me to remember and concentrate on some kinds of stuff. And because mum found that out, she started teaching me in a different way, and then I started to finally learn. By the time I was 9 years old Mum taught me how to read and it felt really good to be able to read at last, and I knew then that I wasn't stupid after all.

But even with home school I still find some learning really hard. Maths is really tricky for me, and I haven't caught up yet, but I just keep going and know that I am doing my best. I listen to a lot of audio books because that is much better for me than trying to read all the time – which gives me bad headaches because of how hard it is to concentrate. Typing is easier than writing, but still pretty hard because of the concentration that I need to do it for a long time, putting the sentences together in ways that make sense, and spelling and grammar is pretty hard still too, but I am getting better at that and I practice a lot. So I try to learn a lot of things from stories, like history, and English. And mum helps me by making things as fun as she can and I get to do a

whole heap of activities that I love, like musical theatre classes, glee club, ice skating, and be in community theatre. I get to do classes and excursions with other home schoolers too which is heaps of fun.

I have been doing home school now for about 5 years and I am really happy. I don't want to go back to school. I feel socially accepted by all my home school friends and I have some really good friends now. I do also have some friends now who are school kids, from some of my weekly activities and community theatre. I feel sorry for them because they seem stressed by all their homework and some of them get bullied sometimes. And some of them feel jealous that they can't be home schooled like me!

When I am older I want to keep doing community theatre and looking after animals. When I am older maybe I'll be a zoo keeper or a vet nurse or an actor. I'm not sure yet.

I also wanted to tell you what I think about getting registered to do home school. The first time I was only young so I don't remember much, but I do remember that the man seemed really nice and helpful, and he told us about where we could meet with other home schoolers, and Mum was really happy after we had that meeting. Then last year we had another meeting and I remember mum being really stressed for a long time before we had it. I felt worried for the first time in ages that I might have to go back to school. In the meeting, the lady was nice to us but seemed very strict about wanting me to write more. Mum told her that it was hard for me because of my dyslexia but she didn't seem to care about that. Mum and I both told her that I would write more because we felt scared that she would not give us the registration for home school anymore. After she left, Mum and I were worried for a long time about it, and Mum was feeling angry with me sometimes if I couldn't do as much writing as that lady wanted me too. After a while though, mum just told me not to worry about it anymore, that it would be ok, and just to learn the way I always do. So I feel ok about it now.

I wanted to tell you that I feel like it is really unreasonable to make home schooling harder for kids like me. I don't want mum and me to be stressed all the time because I can't learn like kids at school do. I can't do that kind of learning and it makes me really frustrated that the board of studies are trying to make home schooling harder for mum as well. I know she works really hard teaching me and preparing all the stuff so that I can learn things, and that takes a lot of time, and she doesn't have extra time to do the stuff that they want her to do that I can't even learn from.

So I just wanted to say that I get so much joy from doing home school and learning things that I enjoy in a way that doesn't stress me out, and I love having good home school friends who I really get along with and who don't bully me.

Thanks, from