

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 23/07/2014

Partially Confidential

NSW Inquiry into Homeschooling
Select Inquiry Chairman (Paul Green MLC)

Date: 23rd July 2014

To whom it may concern,

As a little bit of background on my situation: I have 3 children whom I happily have placed in the schooling education system. Coming from Ireland, homeschooling was not an option that we wanted or ever considered, it is not so popular over there. It was important to us that our children integrated into their community. Therefore its very interesting for me to end up teaching children that are homeschooled.

1) How long have you been working with the home educating community?

I have been teaching children from the home educating community for almost 4 years.

2) What kinds of activities have you been involved in with the home educating community?

I started teaching the students in Gosford Youth Arts Warehouse where I was engaged to teach a digital storytelling course. This involved working with for 8 weeks once a week to train them in how to create their own digital story. Shortly after that I was engaged to teach visual arts classes in the same venue. I now teach visual arts at my own studio to home educated students.

3) What comments would you make about home educated kids in your classes? How do you find this compares with their counterparts in the school system?

I found this students extremely polite and willing to experiment on many different subjects. As they don't follow a restricted curriculum I can give them a much broader view of what and how to draw. They each complete their own individual projects in class and do not all have to complete the same work, this means the subject matter keeps their interest for a lot longer.

I do feel more of a religious tone to the children s conversations and the content of their drawings. While I would encourage children to draw the human body, the school system students may have a bit of a giggle but will draw and eventually get over their shyness. Whereas the home schooled children wont even entertain life drawing and will cover up any little bit of flesh in a drawing. It is possible that this is due to their religious beliefs.

That is the only restriction I have felt in subject matter. The students are happy to experiment with techniques and art materials. They also seem to have a very strong family base and seem to do a lot of activities together, more than I would have witnessed with school going children.

4) How do you find the interaction amongst home educated students?

They all seem to know eachother very well, whether through church groups or from family friendships. When there were students that they didnt know in the class, they were extremely welcoming.

5) How do you find the interaction of home educated students with yourself?

Very respectful - possibly unaware of some social boundaries, for example some of them have surprised me with a hug - while I personally think that there is nothing wrong with this, it would be very much frowned upon in public schools but the home educated students seem to be unaware of these boundaries.

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6) Are there any further comments you'd like to make about your experience with the home educating community?

Sometimes I do find it frustrating that the children voice their opinions on school educated children with quite a lot of ignorance. They seem to think that they all take drugs, use unpleasant language and are bullied. I am constantly correcting them and letting them know that while that can happen in some schools, not every single child is subjected to that and this has not been my childrens experience of schooling. They are also not promiscuous, as has been stated to me on occasion by the children, but have a good education on sexual norms.

I think that both systems work and I admire parents that willing to take on the role of homeschooling their children, I think that it is a difficult job. It seems to give them the freedom to teach their religious and spiritual beliefs. I certainly dont think that the homeschooled children are deprived of a good social understanding and they seem to mix and cope well with new friendships.

Please feel free to contact me should there be any more information that I can supply in support of my application. I am contactable by phone or email.

Yours sincerely,

July 23, 2014



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