

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014

Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) submission to the NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into home schooling

Introduction

This submission is made by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW ('the BOSTES'). The BOSTES administers the provisions of the NSW *Education Act 1990* ('the Education Act') for home schooling registration.

This submission responds to the Select Committee's Terms of Reference as relevant to the responsibilities of the BOSTES under the Education Act and the BOSTES' processes for administering the provisions of the Education Act for home schooling registration.

Where the Select Committee's Terms of Reference provide for issues that are outside the scope of the BOSTES' responsibilities under the Education Act, a nil response is provided. The items with a nil response from the BOSTES are:

- 1(b) The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:
 - (ii) financial costs
 - (iv) extent of and reason for unregistered home schoolers.

The BOSTES' response is numbered according to the Select Committee's Terms of Reference, noting that the Terms of Reference do not include 1(c)(v).

Approval

The submission has been approved by the BOSTES President, Tom Alegounarias.

Contact

David Murphy, Executive Director, Regulation and Governance
(02) 9367 8171

1(a) The background of home schooling including comparison of practices with other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand

The regulation of home schooling in each Australian and New Zealand jurisdiction is governed by separate statutes. In the case of NSW, the relevant statute is the Education Act.

In summary, the Education Act provides¹ that a parent may apply to have the parent's child registered for home schooling for renewable periods of up to two years². That provision also requires the Minister to obtain the advice of an 'Authorised Person' in relation to the application and for the Authorised Person to make a recommendation in relation to the application to the Minister. An Authorised Person is defined by the Education Act as a Board Inspector³ or a person appointed by the Minister, or the Minister's delegate, for that purpose⁴.

The underlying condition imposed by the Education Act for children to be registered for home schooling is that they 'receive instruction that meets the relevant requirements of Part 3 relating to the minimum curriculum for schools'⁵.

Part 3 of the Education Act provides for the minimum curriculum for the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12. The minimum curriculum is described in terms of courses based on and taught in accordance with BOSTES syllabuses in the various learning areas in Kindergarten to Year 10 and BOSTES syllabuses for the Higher School Certificate ('HSC') curriculum in Years 11 and 12.

The Education Act provides that the Minister is to register a child for home schooling having regard to a recommendation of an Authorised Person and if the Minister is satisfied that the conditions to which registration is subject will be complied with.

The Education Act also provides for the parent of a child wishing the child to receive home schooling, to give notice of a conscientious objection to registration on religious grounds and to be granted exemption from registration on that basis.

The Education Act provides⁶ that the objection may be accepted, if, having considered the report of an Authorised Person, the Minister is satisfied that the Minister would be required to register the child for home schooling if an application had been made for such registration, and if the conscientious objection is held on religious grounds. That is, if the objection to registration is accepted, the applicant is

¹ The Education Act at section 71.

² The Education Act at section 73(3).

³ The Education Act at section 70.

⁴ The Education Act at section 3.

⁵ The Education Act at section 73(2)(b).

⁶ The Education Act at section 77.

required to produce the same range of evidence as if registration were being sought. This provision of the Education Act is intended to address the concerns of parents who, on religious grounds, object to the principle of a government issuing certificates of registration in relation to their children.

The Education Act also provides⁷ appeal processes for applicants for whom the Authorised Person has recommended refusal of an application for, or cancellation of, registration.

Since the creation of the (then) Board of Studies NSW in 1990, Board officers have administered home schooling on behalf of the Minister. In 2003, this responsibility was expanded to encompass all of the Minister's functions under delegation under the Education Act⁸ in relation to home schooling with the exception of determining the requirements for registration. The Minister's approval is still required for that function. These requirements take the form of the *Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package* ('the Information Package').

The Information Package was most recently revised and approved by the Minister in July 2013 and published on the BOSTES' website in August 2013. A copy of the Information Package is attached (**Appendix 1**).

The 2013 Information Package was updated primarily in relation to the new BOSTES syllabuses to be introduced from 2014 and to respond to feedback from parents requesting clarification about the requirements for registration. The updated Information Package also had regard to the suggestions made by the NSW Ombudsman to improve the openness and transparency of the registration process and to raise awareness of home schooling applicants of the ways in which home schooling is monitored in NSW.

The 2013 Information Package sets out the requirements for home schooling registration. The requirements are that:

- (a) the educational program is based on the curriculum provided by the Act, that is, the minimum curriculum for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6), the minimum curriculum for secondary education (Years 7 to 10) or the curriculum for beyond Year 10 (Years 11 and 12)
- (b) the educational program is based on and taught in accordance with the relevant BOSTES syllabuses
- (c) the educational program identifies the intended learning outcomes based on the relevant BOSTES syllabuses and relevant content

⁷ The Education Act at section 107.

⁸ The Education Act at section 119.

- (d) the educational program is suitable to cater for the identified learning needs of the child
- (e) there is an adequate system of planning, supervising and recording teaching and learning experiences
- (f) there is an adequate system for recording the child's progress and achievement
- (g) the time allocated to learning is sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum and is comparable to the time allocated by schools
- (h) the home learning environment is suitable for effective home schooling
- (i) the resources within the home and those accessed externally are adequate to support the learning needs of the child.

These requirements have not materially changed since 2010 when the Education Act was amended to raise the minimum school leaving age so as to provide for children in Years 11 and 12 to be registered for home schooling.

Further information about current registration processes pursuant to this statutory framework is provided later in this submission.

1(b) The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:
(i) outcomes of home schooling including in relation to transition to further study and work

Currently, the BOSTES is conducting research to examine the relative impact of home schooling compared to other forms of schooling on academic achievement. The terms of reference for this research are:

Research into Academic Attainment of Home Schooled Students
Terms of Reference

The research will explore the academic attainment of students who have been home schooled compared to students attending school. In particular, the research will include:

- 1. A literature review of existing research on academic outcomes of home schooled students, both in Australia and overseas*
- 2. Achievement of home schooled students in NAPLAN tests (approximately 100 home schooled students undertake NAPLAN tests annually)*
- 3. Participation, completion and achievement of students who were previously home schooled and subsequently attended school, including (where applicable):*
 - NAPLAN tests*
 - Record of School Achievement*
 - Higher School Certificate*
- 4. If available, university entrance information for home schooled students.*

This research was suggested by the NSW Ombudsman in 2013 and agreed to by the BOSTES. The BOSTES anticipates completion of the research by October 2014.

There are some major caveats around this research, as only about 10% of home schooled students undertake the NAPLAN tests each year, on a voluntary and user-pays basis. Other data is restricted to students who were previously home schooled and have subsequently undertaken NAPLAN, School Certificate or HSC examinations at school.

1(b) The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:
(iii) demographics and motivation of parents to home school their children

Demographics

The following provides an overview of the demographics of children who were registered for home schooling at 31 December 2013. More detailed information is attached (**Appendix 2**).

- At 31 December 2013, there were 3,238 children registered for home schooling from 1,878 families. Of these children and families, 163 children from 80 families were issued with an exemption from registration.
- The majority of home schooling families (55%) at 31 December 2013 have a single child registered for home schooling.
- At 31 December 2013, there was a fairly even distribution of registered children between ages 6 and 13 years, with about 300 registered students at each age. The largest age groups were 9 and 10 years, with numbers progressively declining after 14 years. These figures are inclusive of children with exemption from registration.
- The largest numbers of home schooling families are in the Greater Sydney areas of Outer West and Blue Mountains and Inner South West, followed by the Central Coast, the Capital Region and the Richmond-Tweed area.
- When compared to the population distribution of the total NSW population, home schoolers are proportionally over-represented in areas outside of the Greater Sydney area, which contains 36% of the overall NSW population but nearly 50% of registered home schoolers.
- While home schooling families are located in localities with a range of SES profiles, there is a proportional over-representation from more disadvantaged localities (in particular deciles 2, 3 and 4) and under-representation from more advantaged localities (particularly deciles 9 and 10).

Motivation to home school

The BOSTES' application forms for home schooling registration include an optional section for an applicant to outline the reason for applying for home schooling registration.

This section of the application form was completed for 55% of the children registered for home schooling at 31 December 2013.

Since 2010, when the BOSTES commenced collection of this information, the pattern of response has consistently shown that the most frequently cited reason is philosophical choice followed by special learning needs of the child and religious reasons.

The category of 'other' is also selected frequently by applicants. Where 'other' is selected, the applicant is invited to specify the particular reason. In reviewing responses in the 'other' category, the reasons generally relate to the following categories: dissatisfaction with school, bullying at school, distance from school, and/or short-term medical issues.

Under the Education Act, a parent is not required to state a reason for applying for home schooling registration. Accordingly, the BOSTES' administration of the provisions of the Education Act for home schooling registration does not require a parent to provide a reason.

1(b) The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:
(v) characteristics and educational needs of home schooled children

Characteristics

In addition to the information provided in response to 1(b)(iii) of this submission in relation to the demographics of home schooled children, the following provides additional information about the characteristics of home schooled children as relevant to the BOSTES' responsibilities. All figures are inclusive of children with exemption from registration.

- The number of children registered for home schooling has shown a steady increase since 2010. The following provides an overview:

2009/10	2,443 children from 1,419 families
2010/11	2,763 children from 1,611 families
2011/12	2,924 children from 1,686 families
2012/13	3,327 children from 1,922 families

- For the children registered at 31 December 2013, 38% children were registered for an initial period of registration whilst 62% of children were registered for a renewed period of registration,
- At 31 December 2013, the following shows the percentage of children registered for varying periods.

1 – 3 months	0.3%
4 – 6 months	4.5%
7 – 12 months	29%
13 – 24 months	66.2%

- At 31 December 2013, 1.6% of the children registered for home schooling identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- At 31 December 2013, 46% of registered children were female and 54% were male.

Educational needs

Under the provisions of the Education Act, a child may be registered for home schooling during the compulsory years of schooling, that is, from the age of 6 up to turning 17 years. During these ages, children may be registered for primary or secondary education or for a particular Year or Years of schooling, as relevant to the learning needs of the child.

For the purpose of compulsory schooling and the responsibility of the BOSTES, the educational needs of children are prescribed by Part 3 of the Education Act.

Beyond compulsory schooling, the characteristics and educational needs of each home schooled child are specific to the child and the child's family.

The BOSTES considers each application for home schooling registration on its individual merits in relation to the requirements for registration and the parent's plan for providing an education in accordance with the Education Act to meet the learning needs of the child.

1(b) The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:
(vi) comparison of home schooling to school education including distance education

Under the Education Act, home schooling means schooling in the child's home, other than distance education provided by a government or registered non-government school in which the child is enrolled. Although both forms of education take place in the home, the onus of responsibility for the child's education is different with each form of education.

If a child is home schooled, the parent is responsible for developing, delivering and resourcing the child's educational program. The parent is also responsible for assessing the child's learning and providing any intervention necessary to support the child's progress and achievement. Subject to the requirements for home schooling registration being met, a home schooling parent has ultimate discretion and flexibility in making decisions about his or her child's learning according to the parent's preferences, the child's interests and the learning context of the home.

In contrast, when a child is enrolled in a government or registered non-government school, including distance education provided by a government or registered non-government school, the school is responsible for developing, providing and resourcing the child's educational program. The school and its teaching staff are responsible for assessing the child's progress and providing any intervention necessary to support the child's learning and progress. Although the means of delivery is different between a 'day' school and distance education school, in both cases, the school determines the teaching processes, learning sequence, content, resources and assessment tasks. The child's enrolment in the school is subject to any conditions of enrolment imposed by the school. Distance education providers, like conventional schools, must have mechanisms in place to ensure their student welfare obligations are met and to ensure the authentication of student work.

A further key difference between home schooling and school education, including distance education provided by a government or registered non-government school, relates to the requirements regarding teaching qualifications.

In the case of school education, teaching staff must have the necessary qualifications and experience having regard to teacher accreditation under the *Teacher Accreditation Act 2004*.

In contrast, parents are not required to have formal teacher training or teaching experience to apply for home schooling registration. The capacity of a parent to plan and provide for the educational needs of his or her child is assessed by a BOSTES Authorised Person based on the documented educational program prepared by the applicant.

1(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:
(i) current registration processes and ways of reducing the number of unregistered home schoolers

The BOSTES' Information Package provides administrative guidelines to elaborate the requirements of the Education Act for home schooling registration and to describe the BOSTES' registration requirements and process.

The Information Package is published on the BOSTES' website
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/pdf_doc/home-edu-info-pack-13.pdf>.

Additional information about home schooling registration in the form of 'Questions and Answers' is also published on the BOSTES' website
<<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/home-schooling/home-schooling-info-qa.html>>. A copy of the 'Questions and Answers' is attached (**Appendix 3**).

The BOSTES registration process is consistent with the Information Package and the 'Questions and Answers'. The following provides an overview of this process.

Application

Under the Education Act, a parent of a child may apply for registration of the child for home schooling. Home schooling registration is sought by completing an application form and submitting it to the BOSTES. Application forms are available on the BOSTES' website <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/home-schooling/pdf_doc/form-1-app-for-initial-rego.pdf>.

Attached is a copy of an application for initial home schooling registration (**Appendix 4**) and a copy of an application for renewal of home schooling registration (**Appendix 5**).

An application for home schooling registration may be submitted to the BOSTES at any time. Applicants for renewal of home schooling registration are notified and advised to apply three months prior to the date of expiry of the current registration period.

The Information Package states that it may take up to three months to process an application for home schooling registration. However, where an applicant has documented an educational program and is ready for the application to be assessed by an Authorised Person, the process typically takes about six to eight weeks from receipt of application to the issue of a certificate of home schooling registration.

Assessment

On receipt of an application for home schooling registration, the BOSTES follows the process described in Part 3 of the Information Package.

Details of the application are recorded in the BOSTES' database and the application is allocated to an Authorised Person for assessment.

The allocation is based on the region where the applicant lives and the availability of a regional Authorised Person or Sydney based Authorised Person who may be working in a particular area at the time an application is to be allocated.

Guidelines for Authorised Persons in relation to assessing applications and making recommendations relating to home schooling registration are provided in the BOSTES' *Registration for Home Schooling - Authorised Persons Handbook* ('the AP Handbook').

The AP Handbook is published on the BOSTES' website
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/auth-person-handbook.pdf>. A copy of the AP Handbook is attached (**Appendix 6**).

Initial contact

When an application for home schooling registration is received by an Authorised Person, the initial step for the Authorised Person is to make contact with the applicant. The purpose of the initial contact is to advise the applicant of the assessment process including the documentation to be made available during a home visit to demonstrate that the requirements for registration are being, or in the case of a new applicant, will be, met.

During this initial discussion, the Authorised Person also checks the 'readiness' of the applicant by confirming that the applicant has read the Information Package and prepared an educational program, as recorded by the applicant on the signed application form. If an applicant identifies that more time is required, an assessment may be delayed for a short time, usually no more than two weeks. Alternatively, an applicant may choose to withdraw the application and re-apply at a later time or proceed with the assessment.

Assessment visit

Applications for home schooling registration are assessed by a home visit from a BOSTES Authorised Person. The BOSTES expects that the child for whom registration is being sought is present in the home during the assessment.

During an assessment by home visit, the Authorised Person considers the applicant's plan for developing and implementing an educational program for the child in accordance with the requirements for registration identified in response to 1(a) above and in Part 2 of the Information Package.

If the child is already registered, the Authorised Person also considers any documentation provided by the applicant to demonstrate implementation of the child's current educational program in accordance with the requirements for registration and the condition of home schooling registration under section 73(2)(b) of the Education Act that the child receive instruction that meets the relevant requirements of Part 3 of the Education Act relating to the minimum curriculum for schools.

There is no prescribed format for documenting a home schooling educational program. Applicants may choose an approach according to their particular context and preference, the learning needs of the child and the method of delivery.

Part 6 of the Information Package provides some examples of varying approaches to documenting an educational program. Common documentation includes a combination of checklists, timetables, weekly schedules, portfolios, work sheets, text books, diaries, project plans, 'work unit' or programming templates and other formats readily available from the internet and home schooling associations.

In reviewing the various materials provided by an applicant, an Authorised Person considers how the materials relate to and form an overall educational program for the child to be delivered in accordance with the conditions of home schooling registration under the Education Act.

Within the totality of the various materials comprising the educational program, the Authorised Person also seeks evidence that the program is based on and will be taught in accordance with the relevant BOSTES syllabuses. Many applicants provide such evidence by referencing aspects of the syllabus such as objectives, stage statements, outcomes and/or content in the educational program. Many applicants also use elements of the syllabuses as a checklist to be completed periodically and/or draw on commercially available text books and resources which have identified links to the relevant BOSTES syllabuses.

Regardless of an applicant's preferred approach, the Authorised Person considers whether the educational program complies with the registration requirements or, in the case of an application for initial registration, whether the educational program demonstrates a capacity to comply with the requirements.

The Authorised Person's professional discernment of the available information during an assessment is critical to being assured that a recommendation for home

schooling registration is based on a documented plan for schooling the child according to the provisions of the Education Act. Such assurance is reasonable given the critical nature of the recommendation being made in relation to the child's education and well-being.

Report and recommendation

Following the assessment of an application for home schooling registration, the Authorised Person submits a report to the BOSTES.

The report, based on a template provided by the BOSTES, contains the Authorised Person's findings and recommendations relating to home schooling registration.

The findings of an Authorised Person during an assessment of an application for home schooling registration determine the recommendation made by the Authorised Person.

The process of making a recommendation in relation to an application for home schooling registration relies on the professional discernment and on balance judgement of the Authorised Person. The AP Handbook describes this process and provides guidelines to assist Authorised Persons on pages 9 to 11 and in Appendix B.

If an Authorised Person recommends home schooling registration, the Authorised Person will also specify a recommended period of registration up to a maximum period of two years in accordance with section 73 of the Education Act.

If an applicant for initial home schooling registration demonstrates a capacity to comply with the requirements for registration, the period of registration is typically less than the maximum possible under the Education Act. The reason for this is that whilst most aspects of the requirements can be demonstrably met prior to an initial period of registration, others can only be prospectively addressed. For example, while prior evidence can be obtained relating to the requirement that the educational program *will be* based on the relevant BOSTES syllabuses, evidence that the educational program *is being* taught in accordance with BOSTES syllabuses can only be made available subsequently. A shorter period of initial registration provides for a review of evidence of the educational program that is being delivered prior to any longer periods of registration being considered.

If an Authorised Person forms the opinion that an applicant for home schooling registration demonstrates a capacity to comply with the requirements but there is limited forward planning and/or some areas for improvement, an Authorised Person may recommend a period of registration that is less than the maximum possible. This approach provides an opportunity for the applicant to implement the educational

program and make the necessary improvements prior to any longer periods of registration being considered. This approach also reduces the risk of a child not being delivered an educational program in accordance with the Education Act for any sustained period.

If home schooling registration is approved, a certificate of registration is issued to the parent, specifying the conditions of home schooling registration including the child's name, home address, period of registration and the curriculum to be studied.

Recommendation to refuse home schooling registration

If an Authorised Person finds that an applicant has not demonstrated that the requirements for home schooling registration are being or will be met, the Authorised Person will prepare a report for the BOSTES recommending that home schooling registration be refused for that reason.

The AP Handbook, at page 11 and in Appendix B, provides guidance for Authorised Persons in making such a recommendation.

Part 3 of the Information Package describes the BOSTES' process if an Authorised Person recommends that an application for home schooling registration be refused.

The process involves issuing a written notice to the parent advising of the recommendation to refuse home schooling registration and the reasons for the recommendation. In these circumstances, a parent is also advised of the right to seek an internal review of the Authorised Person's recommendation.

If requested, an internal review is conducted by an Authorised Person who was not involved in making the original recommendation to refuse home schooling registration.

If the Authorised Person undertaking the internal review independently recommends that home schooling registration be refused, the BOSTES notifies the applicant in writing and provides the reasons for the Authorised Person's recommendation. The applicant is advised of the right to seek a review of the recommendation with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Relative to the number of applications received, very few applications are refused for the reason of failing to demonstrate compliance with the requirements for home schooling registration during an assessment of the application.

The following shows the percentage of applications refused for this reason for each year since 2010.

2010	0.04% of the applications received
2011	0.25% of the applications received
2012	0.14% of the applications received
2013	0.36% of the applications received

Unregistered home schoolers

Under section 22 of the Education Act, it is the duty of a parent of a child of compulsory school age to cause the child:

- (a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government or a registered non-government school, or
- (b) to be registered for home schooling under Part 7 of the Act and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

Under section 21B of the Education Act, compulsory school age is defined as above the age of 6 and below the minimum school leaving age, which is defined as the age at which the child completes Year 10 of secondary education or the age of 17 years, whichever occurs first.

Where parents fail to meet their obligations in relation to the schooling of a child of compulsory school age, the NSW Department of Education and Communities ('the DEC') may take legal action on behalf of the Minister.

The Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW (the Hon James Wood) released in November 2008 recognised the importance of compulsory schooling to the welfare and protection of children. In response to the recommendations of the report, the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* ('the Care and Protection Act') was amended to include educational neglect as a reason for a child or young person to be at risk of significant harm.

Under the Care and Protection Act, a child is at risk of significant harm if the child is required to attend school in accordance with the Education Act and the child's parents have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive an education in accordance with the Education Act.

'Unregistered home schoolers' are not receiving a compulsory education in accordance with the Education Act. Under the Care and Protection Act, 'unregistered home schoolers' are at risk of significant harm due to educational neglect.

Authorised Persons are subject to the mandatory reporting requirements of the Care and Protection Act. If an Authorised Person has a concern that a child may be at risk of significant harm, the Authorised Person must report the concern to the Department of Family and Community Services ('Family and Community Services'). On that basis, if information about 'unregistered home schoolers' is known to an Authorised Person or to the BOSTES, a report is made to Family and Community Services and to the DEC.

Chapter 16A of the Care and Protection Act provides for agencies with responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or well-being of children or young persons to be able to provide and receive information that promotes the safety, well-being or welfare of children or young persons. Chapter 16A also provides for such agencies to work collaboratively so as to facilitate the provision of services relating to the care and protection of children and young persons.

Under Chapter 16A, the BOSTES routinely provides and receives information relating to children and young persons. Since 2010, the BOSTES has exchanged information with other relevant agencies, mainly the DEC, in relation to 346 children from 283 families.

With regard to possible 'unregistered home schoolers', the BOSTES provides on a fortnightly basis information to the DEC in relation to the registration status of home schooled children, including those registered, refused registration, ending a period of registration without being renewed, withdrawn from being registered and/or where an application for registration has been withdrawn.

This information is provided to assist the DEC identify possible unregistered home schoolers and pursue any parents who may be failing to provide for the compulsory schooling of their children in accordance with the Education Act.

1(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:
(ii) training, qualifications and experience of Authorised Persons

The Education Act defines an Authorised Person as a Board Inspector or a person appointed by the Minister, or the Minister's delegate, for that purpose.

The BOSTES employs 16 Board Inspectors and three Senior Registration Officers all of whom are authorised as Authorised Persons for the purpose of home schooling registration under the Education Act. Although these officers are Sydney based, they travel across NSW in the course of their work in relation to non-government schools and home schooling registration.

The BOSTES also currently employs 18 Authorised Persons based in various regions across NSW.

The selection criteria for the position of BOSTES Authorised Person are:

- formal teaching qualifications
- evidence of successful teaching experience and curriculum leadership
- recent experience in supporting the implementation of the Board's curriculum
- demonstrated understanding of a range of approaches to teaching and learning
- knowledge of the minimum curriculum requirements K-12 for children in NSW between the ages of six and seventeen years
- understanding and appreciation of home schooling as a viable educational alternative
- high level interpersonal and written communication skills
- capacity to use information and communication technologies to prepare reports

All of the BOSTES' Authorised Persons are highly qualified and experienced educators who have held senior leadership roles in government or registered non-government schools. Authorised Persons bring a breadth and depth of professional experience to their role in discerning whether a documented educational plan demonstrates a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child in accordance with the Education Act. Demonstrated understanding of the BOSTES syllabuses and an appreciation of the diversity of approaches to teaching and learning are essential criteria for the position.

All newly appointed Authorised Persons complete an induction process to provide initial training for undertaking the role. An overall aim of the induction is to ensure that new Authorised Persons are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for conducting the regulatory function of their role in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the unique home environment of each applicant. The induction also

includes a focus on the process for assessing applications for home schooling registration and making recommendations accordingly. Participation in home schooling visits with more experienced Authorised Persons, supervised assessments of applications, discussion with home schooling families and ongoing mentoring are part of the induction process.

The BOSTES provides regular training and support for its Authorised Persons. Recent professional learning sessions have focussed on the new BOSTES syllabuses, the assessment process, making recommendations, digital and other curriculum resources, obligations under child protection legislation, children with special needs and common approaches used by home schooling families. These sessions have included workshops, case studies and input from relevant external agencies or groups including the Home Education Association, Macquarie University (Autism research) and the DEC's Student Welfare Directorate. Feedback from home schooling families routinely forms part of the ongoing training of Authorised Persons.

The BOSTES experiences a very low turnover rate of its Authorised Persons. The ongoing employment of highly skilled and experienced Authorised Persons enhances their overall development and strengthens their professional knowledge, expertise and consistency of judgement.

1(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:
(iii) adherence to delivery of the New South Wales syllabuses

Part 3 of the Education Act provides for the minimum curriculum for the Years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12. As stated in the response to 1(a) above, the minimum curriculum is described in terms of courses based on and taught in accordance with BOSTES syllabuses in the key learning areas for Kindergarten to Year 10 and BOSTES syllabuses for the HSC curriculum in Years 11 and 12.

Part 4 of the Information Package describes the curriculum requirements of Part 3 of the Education Act for home schooling parents.

The BOSTES syllabuses are published on the BOSTES website
<<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>>.

Section 73 of the Education Act provides for the registration of a child for home schooling to be subject to the conditions specified in the certificate of registration. Under the Education Act, the conditions include provision for the child to receive instruction that meets the relevant requirements of Part 3 of the Education Act relating to the minimum curriculum for schools.

The specific method of providing instruction that meets the relevant requirements of Part 3 of the Education Act may be determined by each home schooling parent. The Information Package does not prescribe or preclude any particular approach.

There are multiple ways a parent may demonstrate that the child's educational program is based on and taught in accordance with the relevant BOSTES syllabuses. For example, the parent's educational program may reference the syllabus stage statements or objectives, syllabus outcomes might be identified for teaching and assessing, and/or syllabus content may form part of a teaching unit.

Providing an educational program that is based on and taught on accordance with the BOSTES syllabuses does not preclude the use of additional programs from other sources. For example, a parent may develop or reference learning outcomes, skills, content and/or resources that are additional to those specified by the BOSTES syllabuses.

Similarly, home schooling parents may continue to provide the curriculum of Part 3 of the Education Act whilst:

- integrating learning across a range of key learning areas;
- providing common themes or topics for children of multiple learning stages;

- selecting content, projects, resources and learning activities according to the child's learning needs and interests;
- making adjustments according to individual learning rates;
- planning learning activities and excursions that occur outside of the home; and/or
- following a particular learning philosophy or approach.

The BOSTES' website contains a diverse and extensive range of support documents and resources in relation to the NSW curriculum. These documents provide assistance for all providers of education in NSW, including home schooling families.

1(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:
(iv) potential benefits or impediments to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing

School attendance has been the subject of significant reform in NSW in recent years. The Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW (the Hon James Wood) released in November 2008 recognised the importance of compulsory schooling to the welfare and protection of children. Subsequently, the Care and Protection Act was amended to include educational neglect as a reason for a child or young person to be at risk of significant harm. The NSW Government's *Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing* was also introduced to facilitate the sharing of information about the welfare, including compulsory schooling, of children between all relevant agencies in the government and non-government sectors.

Under the Education Act, it is legitimate for parents to choose home schooling registration as the preferred method for the compulsory schooling of their children. The Education Act does not provide for the BOSTES to consider whether the preferred option of the parent is valid or acceptable. The BOSTES' responsibility is to administer the provisions of the Education Act.

If home schooling registration is the preferred option and an application is made, the BOSTES' role is to assess the application and, on the basis of the information available and the recommendation of an Authorised Person, either approve or refuse home schooling registration.

In undertaking this role, the BOSTES implements processes to ensure that legislative obligations in relation to child protection are met.

All Authorised Persons are required to have a working with children clearance under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.

Authorised Persons are advised of their obligations as mandatory reporters under the Care and Protection Act and provided with updated information and training regularly.

The Care and Protection Act also provides for inter-agency sharing of information and collaboration in relation to children who may be at risk of significant harm, including at risk of educational neglect. On that basis, the BOSTES has processes for providing and receiving information about home schooled children with other NSW government and non-government agencies including the DEC, government and non-government schools, the NSW Police, the NSW Ombudsman and Family and Community Services.

The BOSTES regularly provides updated information to the DEC in relation to the registration status of home schooled children, including those registered, refused registration, ending a period of registration without being renewed, withdrawn from being registered and/or where an application for registration has been withdrawn. Such information may be considered by the DEC in relation to parents who may not be meeting their obligations for the schooling of children of compulsory school age in accordance with the Education Act.

At times, an Authorised Person will have regard to information provided by Family and Community Services, the DEC, the NSW Police and other relevant agencies in considering an application for home schooling registration as relevant to the requirements for registration.

One of the requirements for home schooling registration is that the home learning environment is suitable for effective home schooling. If an Authorised Person is concerned that a child may be at risk of significant harm, the suitability of the home environment for effective home schooling is also of concern. If, on that basis, registration is refused, or if, on the same basis, an applicant withdraws an application due to the BOSTES' concern that the requirements for registration would not be met, the BOSTES ensures that a report is made to Family and Community Services and that the DEC is advised.

Of concern in relation to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing is that each year the BOSTES receives a small number of applications for home schooling registration where the applicant does not respond to repeated efforts by telephone, email and mail to make an appointment to assess the application. In these circumstances, the BOSTES notifies the applicant in writing of the recommendation to refuse registration and advises the applicant of the right to seek an internal review.

In the period from 1 January 2013 to 30 June 2014, the BOSTES refused 53 applications for the reason of the applicant being unavailable to assess the application. Of these applications, 49 were for initial registration and four were for renewal of registration. Of the 53 applications, one applicant, for renewal of registration, sought an internal review. The outcome of the internal review was that registration was refused as the applicant failed to be available for assessing the application during the internal review despite repeated efforts by the Authorised Person and the BOSTES to make arrangements for an assessment.

Applications refused because the applicant failed to be available to assess the application are concerning in relation to the risk of significant harm and possible educational neglect. The BOSTES reports details of refused applications to the DEC. Based on information exchanged with the DEC, it appears that, in some of these cases, the catalyst for applying for home schooling registration is DEC action with regard to the unsatisfactory attendance or non-attendance of the child at school.

These cases are particularly concerning as it appears that the parent is unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to attend school and that the parent is also unable or unwilling to provide evidence of an educational program for the child during an assessment for home schooling registration. The BOSTES' administration of the Education Act must contain adequate rigour and appropriate safeguards to avoid the risk of home schooling registration becoming a means for a parent to fail to meet his or her obligations for the compulsory schooling of the child in accordance with Education Act.

1(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:
(vi) appropriateness of the current regulatory regime and ways in which it could be improved

The current regulatory model is designed to administer the law as it stands. Since the current regulatory regime commenced in 1990, the BOSTES has received relatively few representations from either end of the regulatory spectrum of views (that is, that the current regulatory regime is either too burdensome or it is not rigorous enough).

Over 2012 and 2013, the Ombudsman conducted a review of the BOSTES' administration of home schooling. The Ombudsman's 2012-13 Annual Report stated:

We were initially concerned about whether the arrangements to monitor ongoing compliance with certain requirements were adequate. The requirements were that:

- the educational program must be taught in accordance with BoS's syllabuses*
- the material being taught is suited to the learning needs of the child.*

The BoS responded positively. They agreed to make a number of changes to the registration form including:

- recording information about the evidence considered when making an assessment*
- making it clear that the child or children must be present during an assessment visit.*

They also agreed to take a range of other actions. These included:

- reviewing how they could better ensure the requirements of registration are complied with throughout the period of registration – including possibly introducing ongoing monitoring and home visits.*
- starting to collect data on whether children who apply to be home schooled are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.*
- working with the Department of Education and Communities to see how to better identify and resolve dissatisfaction with a school – to avoid a child's removal in circumstances where home schooling is not a positive choice but a response to unresolved difficulties.*
- researching the academic attainment of homeschooled students compared to children who attend public or private schools.*
- assessing whether there is any link between children known to Community Services and those being home schooled.*

As the BoS agreed to all of our suggestions, we decided to discontinue our formal investigation. We will continue to monitor the changes and assess whether any further work is needed.

If the regulatory model is to be loosened or tightened, legislative change will be required either way. Any change to the regulations for home schooling will have a ripple effect on the resources allocated to the undertaking of the registration process for home schooling.

1(d) Support issues for home schooling families and barriers to accessing support

Under the Education Act, the BOSTES has a regulatory role in administering the provisions of the Education Act for home schooling registration. Accordingly, the role of Authorised Person has a clear regulatory purpose under the Education Act.

In delivering this regulatory purpose, the BOSTES' Authorised Persons are required to conduct assessments for home schooling registration in a manner that is supportive, open to the diversity of home schooling family situations and resourceful in the provision of helpful feedback and advice. Authorised Persons are also required to be mindful of balancing the regulatory purpose of the role with the provision of support so as to ensure that the primary regulatory purpose of the role is not confused with an advisory or supportive role.

The BOSTES is also responsible for developing the curriculum to be taught to children in NSW. The BOSTES' syllabuses for Kindergarten to Year 12 are published on its website. The website also contains an extensive range of materials to support the teaching, learning and assessment of NSW children. In particular, the BOSTES' *Program Builder* and *Assessment Resource Centre (ARC)* are two significant resources to support delivery of the BOSTES' syllabuses. The *Program Builder* provides access to an online programming tool and many units of work from teaching programs developed by other users. *Program Builder* access is also linked to *Scootle* which is a national repository containing thousands of digital resources to the delivery of the school curriculum. The *Assessment Resource Centre (ARC)* provides guidance in assessment practices and includes samples of student work that have been assessed, identifying how the assessment criteria were applied. These support materials are available to all providers of the NSW curriculum, including home schooling families.

The BOSTES is aware that in addition to the resources available through the BOSTES, many home schooling families establish support networks or join home schooling associations, some of which are online through social media, to assist home schooling families in establishing teaching and learning routines, keep records, share teaching ideas and access resources.

The BOSTES is also aware of the increasing availability of educational resources, planning formats and learning activities via the internet and that these resources provide an easily accessed source of support.

1(e) Representation of home schoolers within Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)

The BOSTES Board ('the Board') has been designed to represent the full breadth of school education in NSW. All educational groups have the opportunity to have their views represented on the Board.

The consultative arrangements established as part of the new BOSTES have proper regard to the interests of all children, including those who are registered for home schooling. These arrangements include consultation meetings held by the President and other senior officers with a wide range of groups, on both regular and special-purpose bases. This is the most appropriate means of consulting with home schoolers.

That said, the BOSTES already receives the views of home schooling families through a number of avenues.

Authorised Persons have regular interactions with home schooling families through visits and their assessment of applications, and the views of these home schooling families is communicated through to the staff working at the BOSTES. These regular interactions with home schoolers ensure that issues raised by home schooling parents are considered by BOSTES staff.

Individual home schooling families have communicated with BOSTES directly through correspondence, email and phone calls. These enquiries most frequently are related to specific questions, or feedback on, the registration process.

The BOSTES has received the views of two bodies that represent some home schooling families, including the Home Education Association ('the HEA') and Sydney Home Education Network ('SHEN') in face-to-face meetings and correspondence over many years.

The BOSTES is not able to attest to how many parents are represented by each group. Each of the 1,878 home schooling families in NSW is unique, and while many identify with the HEA or SHEN, many other home schooling families do not. As such, it is not conclusive that home schooling families in NSW have a single representative voice or position on a range of issues.

The BOSTES would like to maintain contact with home schooling bodies through regular, comprehensive meetings, similar to those held with other education groups. For example, in 2013, the BOSTES met with representatives of the HEA and advised the HEA of the further availability of BOSTES officers to meet to consider issues raised by the HEA. To date, the HEA has not accepted this offer.

This kind of feedback, interaction and consultation is typical of the engagement the BOSTES has with the wide range of educational interest groups that do not have direct representation on the Board.

The composition of the Board is prescribed by the *Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Act 2013* ('the BOSTES Act').

Section 5 of the BOSTES Act prescribes:

Members of the Board

- (1) The Board consists of the following members:
 - (a) the President,
 - (b) 3 persons nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Education and Communities who together have knowledge and expertise in primary and secondary school education and vocational education and training,
 - (c) 19 members appointed by the Minister.
- (2) The appointed members are as follows:
 - (a) one nominee of the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors' Committee,
 - (b) 2 nominees of the Council of the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales:
 - (i) one representing parents of primary school children and being a parent of a child attending a primary government school, and
 - (ii) the other representing parents of secondary school children and being a parent of a child attending a secondary government school,
 - (c) one nominee of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales,
 - (d) one nominee of the Association of Independent Schools,
 - (e) one non-government school teacher (other than a principal), being a nominee of the New South Wales Independent Education Union,
 - (f) one parent of a child attending a non-government school, being a nominee of the Council of Catholic School Parents and the New South Wales Parents' Council,
 - (g) 2 principals of government schools, one being a nominee of the New South Wales Primary Principals Association and the other being a nominee of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council,
 - (h) 2 nominees of the New South Wales Teachers Federation, one being a primary government school teacher (other than a principal) and the other being a secondary government school teacher (other than a principal),
 - (i) one person with knowledge and expertise in early childhood education,
 - (j) an Aboriginal person with knowledge and expertise in the education of Aboriginal people,
 - (k) 6 other persons having, in the Minister's opinion, the qualifications or experience to enable them to make a valuable contribution to primary or secondary education in New South Wales.
- (3) Schedule 1 contains provisions relating to the members and procedure of the Board.

The table below shows the nominal constituency represented by each of the appointed Board members. It can be seen that these constituencies are typically in the tens or hundreds of thousands of persons. For example, the parents of non-government school students, including both Catholic and independent schools, have a single member on the Board representing about 400,000 non-government students and 900 non-government schools. By comparison, at 31 December 2013, there were 3,238 children registered for home schooling registration from 1,878 families.

Nominating Body	Representing (approx.)
NSW Department of Education and Communities (3 ex-officio members)	750,000 students and 60,000 teachers in 2200 government schools 520,000 TAFE students and 10,000 teachers in 140 TAFE campuses
Catholic Education Commission NSW	250,000 students and 20,000 teachers in 600 Catholic schools
Association of Independent Schools of NSW	150,000 students and 15,000 teachers in 330 Independent schools
NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee	350,000 students and 40,000 FTE staff in 13 universities
Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations – parents of primary school children	Parents of 450,000 government primary school students
Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations – parents of secondary school children	Parents of 300,000 government secondary school students
Council of Catholic School Parents & Parents' Council	Parents of 400,000 non-government school students
Primary Principals' Association	Principals of 1800 government schools with 450,000 students
Secondary Principals' Council	Principals of 400 government secondary schools with 300,000 students
NSW Teachers' Federation – primary	30,000 government primary school teachers
NSW Teachers' Federation – secondary	30,000 government secondary school teachers
Independent Education Union	35,000 non-government school teachers
One person with knowledge and expertise in early childhood education	500,000 NSW children aged 3 to 8 years
An Aboriginal person with knowledge and expertise in the education of Aboriginal people	60,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NSW schools
6 other persons having, in the Minister's opinion, the qualifications or experience to enable them to make a valuable contribution to primary or secondary education in NSW	

It is not feasible to have representatives from every stakeholder or community group on bodies such as the Board. There are many groups with a direct interest in the functions of the BOSTES which do not have a nominated representative on the Board.

For example, in 2013 there were 11,040 enrolments across all the language courses in Stage 5 (Years 9-10), along with more than 7,300 entries into HSC language courses. Similarly, in 2013, more than 8,300 HSC students undertook the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Hospitality course. These are substantial areas of educational interest with a significant stakeholder presence. However the Board would not seek membership at a level of granularity so as to only serve the interests of the individual language education or hospitality sectors on the Board. It is, however, the Minister's clear expectation that the BOSTES will enhance the learning outcomes for all children, whether enrolled in a government or registered non-government school or registered for home schooling.

The Minister has six ministerial representatives on the Board who are deliberately selected for their strategic skills to complement the educational expertise from the educational stakeholder groups.

The experience and knowledge of these Board members strengthen the ability of the Board as whole to execute its responsibilities. In particular, the BOSTES' responsibilities in terms of the accreditation of teachers, the registration of all schools, and the accreditation of schools offering HSC and ROSA credentials requires acumen in areas such as finance, governance, research and human resources. Ministerial appointments may also be selected for their understanding of a broader community or industry perspective that is relevant to all school students, such as employment, social welfare, the global economy and marketplace and the requirements and expectations of employer groups. This is becoming increasingly relevant in the modern educational environment where there is a demand for the expectations of industry to be more closely matched by the achievements of school leavers.

The skills brought by Ministerial appointments to the Board, joined with the educational expertise of other Members, is critical in providing balanced and robust direction for BOSTES, and advice to the Minister on significant issues.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Registration for Home Schooling in NSW - Information Package

Appendix 2: Demographics of Home Schooling students and families

Appendix 3: Information Package 'Questions and Answers'

Appendix 4: Application for initial home schooling registration

Appendix 5: Application for renewal of home schooling registration

Appendix 6: Authorised Persons Handbook

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014



Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package

August 2013

© 2013 Copyright Board of Studies NSW for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.
This document contains Material prepared by the Board of Studies NSW for and on behalf of the State of New South Wales.
The Material is protected by Crown copyright.

All rights reserved. No part of the Material may be reproduced in Australia or in any other country by any process, electronic or otherwise, in any material form or transmitted to any other person or stored electronically in any form without the prior written permission of the Board of Studies NSW, except as permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968*.

When you access the Material you agree:

- to use the Material for information purposes only
- to reproduce a single copy for personal bona fide study use only and not to reproduce any major extract or the entire Material without the prior permission of the Board of Studies NSW
- to acknowledge that the Material is provided by the Board of Studies NSW
- not to make any charge for providing the Material or any part of the Material to another person or in any way make commercial use of the Material without the prior written consent of the Board of Studies NSW and payment of the appropriate copyright fee
- to include this copyright notice in any copy made
- not to modify the Material or any part of the Material without the express prior written permission of the Board of Studies NSW.

The Material may contain third party copyright materials such as photos, diagrams, quotations, cartoons and artworks. These materials are protected by Australian and international copyright laws and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any format without the copyright owner's specific permission. Unauthorised reproduction, transmission or commercial use of such copyright materials may result in prosecution.

The Board of Studies has made all reasonable attempts to locate owners of third party copyright material and invites anyone from whom permission has not been sought to contact the Copyright Officer, ph (02) 9367 8289, fax (02) 9279 1482.

Published by
Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

Tel: (02) 9367 8111
Fax: (02) 9367 8484
Internet: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

First published February 2006
Revised September 2006
Revised August 2009
Revised February 2010
Revised October 2011
Revised August 2013

20130398

Contents

	Introduction.....	4
Part 1	Registration for home schooling: an overview.....	5
	About home schooling.....	5
	Eligibility for registration.....	6
	Years of schooling.....	6
	Completion of Year 10.....	7
	Record of School Achievement and Higher School Certificate.....	8
	Registration for full-time home schooling.....	8
	Objection to registration.....	9
Part 2	Requirements for registration.....	10
Part 3	The registration process.....	11
	Overview of the registration process.....	11
	Initial registration.....	11
	Renewal of registration.....	15
	Changes to registration details.....	18
	Recommendation to refuse registration.....	19
	Registration process flow charts.....	20
Part 4	Curriculum requirements.....	23
	Curriculum requirements for primary education.....	23
	Curriculum requirements for secondary education.....	24
	New Board of Studies syllabuses for Kindergarten to Year 10.....	25
	Program Builder.....	26
	Curriculum requirements beyond Year 10.....	26
Part 5	Frequently asked questions.....	28
Part 6	Sample approaches to record keeping.....	31
Part 7	Resources for home schooling.....	39
Part 8	Application forms.....	41

Introduction

Under the *Education Act 1990*, home schooling is recognised as a legitimate way of providing for the educational needs of children in NSW.

Parents who choose to home school their children do so for a variety of reasons. Successful home schoolers demonstrate a high level of commitment, time and energy in providing for their children's education.

In NSW, parents who decide to home school their children must have the approval of the Minister for Education or the Minister's delegate. Approval to home school is through registration. The Office of the Board of Studies is responsible for administering the home schooling registration program and has been delegated the authority to register children for home schooling.

This information package identifies the requirements to be met in order to be registered for home schooling and describes the processes for assessing applications for home schooling registration. Information and resources for parents can be found on the Parents Page on the Board of Studies website <www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/home-schooling.html>.

Questions about home schooling registration may be directed to the Home Schooling Unit on 02 9367 8149 or email <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au>.

Part 1 Registration for home schooling: an overview

About home schooling

Home schooling is education delivered in a child's home by a parent or guardian. In this information package, a reference to a parent includes reference to the legal guardian of a child.

Under the *Education Act 1990*, the parent of a child of compulsory school-age has a duty to ensure that the child is enrolled at, and attending, a government school or registered non-government school or that the child is registered for home schooling and receiving instruction in accordance with the conditions of registration for home schooling.

Registration for home schooling requires that parents accept responsibility for developing, implementing and assessing their child's educational program as based on Board of Studies syllabuses. The educational program upon which a child's registration is based must be delivered in the child's home.

Home schooling, also referred to as home education, requires a parent to deliver the NSW Board of Studies curriculum.

Home schooling is different to distance education. Distance education is where a child is enrolled in a school which delivers all or a significant majority of the educational program through such means as mail, email, telephone and/or other electronic communication. In this case, the educational program is developed, delivered and assessed by the distance education school.

Purpose of registration

Registration is a legal requirement for home schooling while a child is of compulsory school-age and not enrolled in, and attending, a school.

The Office of the Board of Studies is responsible for administering the registration program and has been delegated the authority to act on behalf of the Minister in relation to home schooling registration.

Registered home schooled children are authorised to be home schooled in accordance with the conditions specified on the relevant certificate of registration including the home address, the period of registration and the Year or Years of schooling, as relevant to the educational program to be delivered.

In NSW, home schooling is subject to the registration requirements and processes outlined in this package.

Eligibility for registration

Children are eligible to be registered for home schooling during the compulsory years of schooling.

In NSW, the compulsory years of schooling are from the age of 6 years until the minimum school leaving age specified in the *Education Act 1990*. Children who are not of compulsory school-age are not eligible for home schooling registration.

In June 2009, the *Education Act 1990* was amended to raise the minimum school leaving age effective from 1 January 2010.

Under the amended legislation, the minimum school leaving age subject to the following participation requirements is the age at which the child completes Year 10 of secondary education or the age of 17 years, whichever comes first.

A child who completes Year 10 of secondary education before turning 17 years of age is of compulsory school-age unless the child participates on a full-time basis in approved education or training or, if the child is of, or above, the age of 15 years, in paid work or a combination of approved education or training or paid work for the equivalent of a full-time basis.

The completion of Year 10 of secondary education is the completion of Year 10 of secondary education in NSW whether by education at a school or by registration for home schooling.

If approved, a student may complete the equivalent of Year 10 by undertaking an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) vocational Certificate II delivered by TAFE NSW or by undertaking a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship. These provisions are explained later in this part of the Information Package.

Years of schooling

A certificate of registration for home schooling will specify a Year or Years of schooling for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6), secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10) or for the curriculum beyond Year 10 (Year 11 and Year 12).

The specific Year or Years of schooling recorded on the certificate of registration will be based on the educational program to be delivered in the home and the period of registration.

Discussion with an Authorised Person when assessing an application for home schooling registration may be part of the process for determining the Year or Years of schooling to be recorded on the certificate.

Completion of Year 10

Certificate of completion of Year 10

Home schooled children who have completed Year 10 may apply to the Home Schooling Unit for a certificate of completion of Year 10.

Eligibility for such a certificate is based on the child having been registered for secondary education (Year 10) and the provision of evidence showing completion of the educational program upon which registration was based, including records of the educational program, learning progress and samples of student work. The student must have completed an educational program based on the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses for Year 10 (Stage 5) in the twelve month period prior to applying for a certificate of completion of Year 10.

An Authorised Person will assess an application for a certificate of completion of Year 10. A written application must be submitted to the Home Schooling Unit <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au>. Information about the application form is provided in Part 8 of this package.

Completion of Year 10 at TAFE NSW

Section 21B(5)(b) of the *Education Act 1990* provides for a student to complete the equivalent of Year 10 at a TAFE NSW Institute, subject to the approval of the relevant TAFE Institute Director.

A student wishing to pursue this pathway must have completed Year 9 and be a minimum of 15 years of age. Contact should first be made with the relevant TAFE Institute to discuss the availability and appropriateness of the Certificate II course being considered as equivalent to Year 10. Information about TAFE's eligibility requirements is available on the TAFE website <https://www.tafensw.edu.au/courses/enrol/entry_requirements.htm#equivalents_to_entry_requirements>.

As part of TAFE's enrolment procedures for students who are registered for home schooling and seeking to complete the equivalent of Year 10 at TAFE, an Authorised Person from the Office of the Board of Studies must first sign the application form for the TAFE course. Sections A and B of the TAFE application form must be completed by the parent and then sent to the Home Schooling Unit. An Authorised Person from the Office will contact the parent to discuss the application and to make arrangements for signing the application form. The form will be forwarded to the relevant TAFE by the Office's Home Schooling Unit.

It should be noted that any decision regarding the enrolment of a student in a TAFE course is at the discretion of the particular TAFE.

Details of the application process and a link to TAFE's application form can be found on the Board of Studies' website at <<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/equivalent-alternative-study-students-yr10-tafe.html>>.

Completion of Year 10 by a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship

Section 21B(5)(b) of the *Education Act 1990* provides for a student to complete Year 10 of secondary education by undertaking a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship, subject to the student having a signed full-time apprenticeship or traineeship contract and a training plan proposal.

Students who are registered for home schooling and wishing to pursue this pathway must have completed Year 9 and be a minimum of 15 years of age. Once the student has a signed full-time apprenticeship or traineeship contract and a training plan proposal, the parent may apply to the Home Schooling Unit for an exemption from the student having to be enrolled in and attend school whilst the student is undertaking the full-time apprenticeship or traineeship. A copy of the signed full-time apprenticeship or traineeship contract and training plan proposal must be submitted with the application to the Home Schooling Unit. On receipt of an application, an Authorised Person from the Office will contact the parent to discuss the application. Parents will be advised of the outcome of the application.

Details of the application process can be found on the Board of Studies' website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/equivalent-alternative-study-students-apprenticeship.html.

Record of School Achievement and Higher School Certificate

Home schooling does not provide for a child to be eligible for the award of the Record of School Achievement or the Higher School Certificate. To be eligible for either of these awards, a child must have attended a government school, a registered and accredited non-government school or a college of TAFE in order to complete the prescribed study, assessments and examinations for the awards.

Registration for full-time home schooling

Children registered for home schooling for Kindergarten to Year 10 must be undertaking a full-time educational program delivered in the home. Part-time home schooling is not possible for children registered for Kindergarten to Year 10. All children of compulsory school age must be enrolled in a school (government or non-government) or registered for home schooling on a full-time basis.

Children registered for home schooling beyond Year 10 may be approved to undertake a program based on part-time home schooling in combination with approved education or training and/or paid work. Participation in all aspects of the approved program, in total, must be equivalent to a full-time load.

Objection to registration

The *Education Act 1990* provides for a parent of a child wanting the child to be home schooled to give notice that the parent conscientiously objects to registration under the Act on religious grounds. The conscientious objection may be accepted if there is satisfactory evidence that registration would be granted if an application for registration had been made. If the objection is accepted, a certificate of exemption from registration is issued. To be accepted, there must be satisfactory evidence that registration would be granted if an application had been made for such registration and the objection to registration is conscientiously held on religious grounds. The requirements and processes for registration described in this package also apply to applicants seeking a certificate of exemption from registration.

Part 2 Requirements for registration

Requirements for home schooling registration

The requirements for home schooling registration must be complied with at all times during a period of registration. The requirements for home schooling registration are that:

- the educational program is based on the curriculum provided by the *Education Act 1990*, that is, the minimum curriculum for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6), the minimum curriculum for secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10) or the curriculum for beyond Year 10 (Year 11 and Year 12) (Note: The minimum curriculum is the curriculum provided by the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses. Part 4 of this package details the curriculum requirements.)
- the educational program is based on, and taught in accordance with, the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses
- the educational program identifies the intended learning outcomes based on the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses and relevant content
- the educational program is suitable to cater for the identified learning needs of the child
- there is an adequate system of planning, supervising and recording teaching and learning experiences
- there is an adequate system for recording the child's progress and achievement
- the time allocated to learning is sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum and is comparable to the time allocated by schools
- the home learning environment is suitable for effective home schooling
- the resources within the home and those accessed externally are adequate to support the learning needs of the child.

The parent of a registered child is responsible for maintaining evidence of delivery of the educational program in the child's home including records relating to complying with the requirements for registration.

A parent does not need formal teacher training or teaching experience for his or her child to be registered for home schooling. To be eligible for initial registration, an applicant must demonstrate a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child. This is demonstrated by providing evidence that the requirements for registration, as stated above, would be met if registration was granted. To be eligible for renewal of registration, an applicant must demonstrate a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child. This is demonstrated by providing evidence that the requirements for registration, as stated above, have been met during the current period of registration and that the requirements for registration would be met if any further period of registration was granted.

Part 3 The registration process

Overview of the registration process

The process of registering for home schooling involves the following key steps:

- parent submits application
- Authorised Person assesses application by home visit
- Authorised Person makes a recommendation
- if the application is approved, a certificate of registration is issued specifying the conditions of registration
- if the application is not approved, the decision may be appealed.

The registration process may take up to three months from the time an application is made to receipt of a certificate of home schooling registration.

The following information details the process for applying for initial registration and applying for renewal of registration. The same process and requirements for registration apply for applicants who conscientiously object to registration on religious grounds.

Initial registration

Initial decision to home school your child

The decision to seek registration for home schooling is significant for the education of your child. Registration for home schooling requires a parent to take responsibility for developing and delivering all aspects of the educational program and for assessing student progress and achievement.

Some of the points to consider and investigate before applying for registration are:

- your child's individual needs, abilities and special interests
- how you would address the requirements for registration as stated in Part 2 of this information package
- your capacity to develop, deliver and assess an appropriate educational program
- the demands on your time and energy, including the time to research the curriculum to be taught, prepare and deliver the educational program and assess and keep records of learning progress
- how you will prepare and document the educational program and your approach to record keeping
- the resources you will need and their availability
- the home learning environment to be used for delivery of the educational program
- when you intend to commence (it may take up to three months for an application to be processed)
- how much lead time you will need for planning and resource gathering.

As with other forms of education, there is no single approach to home schooling. Regardless of the approach to teaching, the educational philosophy that might be adopted and/or the learning context for each child, the requirements for registration must be met at all times during any period of registration.

You may wish to discuss home schooling with experienced home schoolers to gain insight into home schooling. Contact details of the Home Education Association are provided in Part 7 of this package.

The following checklist may assist in determining whether you wish to proceed with an application for initial home schooling registration and, if so, whether you are ready to apply.

Have you:

- (a) read the requirements for registration (see Part 2 of this information package)
- (b) documented a plan for ensuring that the requirements for registration would be met if your child is registered
- (c) reviewed the curriculum requirements and the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses to be taught
- (d) written a plan or outline of the educational program you intend to deliver to your child including the intended learning outcomes and content
- (e) prepared a written plan or method for recording the teaching and learning experiences to be completed by your child
- (f) prepared a written plan or method for assessing and recording your child's achievement and progress in each course or key learning area to be studied
- (g) planned sufficient time to allow coverage of the required curriculum that is comparable to the time allocated by schools
- (h) arranged for access to sufficient resources and facilities to support delivery of the educational program in your child's home
- (i) identified a location in your home suitable for educational purposes
- (j) planned a method for maintaining records of all aspects of the delivery of the educational program during a period of registration?

Answering 'yes' to all of the questions may demonstrate a readiness to apply for home schooling registration. Answering 'no' to any one of the questions above, indicates that further consideration and/or preparation is required in order to plan for complying with the requirements for home schooling registration prior to making an application.

The application

To apply for initial registration you must complete *Form 1: Application for initial registration for home schooling*. Information about how to access the application form is provided in Part 8 of this package. A separate application form must be completed for each child for whom registration is sought.

The application form is required to be signed by one parent. If the child is the subject of a court order, a copy of the court order must be attached to the application. The Office of the Board of Studies will have regard to the provisions of the court order as part of the assessment process.

The completed application form may be emailed, faxed or mailed to the Home Schooling Unit of the Office of the Board of Studies as stated on the form. You are not required to send supporting documentation with your application as this documentation will be assessed by home visit.

Applications are processed by the Home Schooling Unit and forwarded to an officer (the Authorised Person) who has been authorised to assess applications for home schooling registration.

The Authorised Person will contact you to arrange a mutually acceptable time to visit you in your home to discuss your application and assess whether the proposed educational program and other documentation you have prepared in support of your application demonstrates that the requirements for registration would be met. It is expected that the child for whom registration is being sought, will be present during the assessment.

It may take up to three months for the assessment of an application to be finalised.

If, following repeated attempts to arrange an assessment by home visit, you are not available, the Office may commence a process to refuse your application.

If you change your mind and wish to withdraw your application for home schooling registration, you must notify the Office of the Board of Studies in writing by email <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au> , by fax to 02 9367 8475 or by mail to the Home Schooling Unit, Office of the Board of Studies, GPO Box 5300, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

Assessment by an Authorised Person

Applications for initial registration for home schooling are assessed by an Authorised Person during a home visit.

The Authorised Person will consider the documented evidence that you provide to show how you intend to meet the requirements for registration as stated in Part 2 of this information package.

The assessment process involves assessing the educational program and other documentation you have developed. The visit provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate that the educational program you plan to deliver will comply with the requirements for home schooling registration. In relation to the identified learning needs of the child, the Authorised Person will also consider information related to the previous educational attainment of the child, including a history of the child's education, educational reports and participation in testing programs such as NAPLAN, as relevant.

During the home visit, the Authorised Person will assess whether the evidence shows that the requirements for registration would be met if registration were to be granted. The evidence to be considered includes:

- the written plan for the proposed educational program showing how it is based on Board of Studies syllabuses and identifies intended learning outcomes and content (see Part 4 of this information package)
- the suitability of the proposed educational program, including the intended outcomes and content, to cater for the identified learning needs of the child

- the proposed system for planning, supervising and recording teaching and learning experiences
- the proposed system for assessing and recording learning progress and achievement
- the time intended to be allocated to student learning and whether this is sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum and is comparable to the time allocated by schools
- the suitability of the home learning environment for effective home schooling
- the adequacy and availability of resources to support delivery of the educational program
- the proposed method for maintaining records of all aspects of delivery of the educational program during a period of registration.

The assessment of an application for initial home schooling registration is based on determining whether the information provided by the applicant demonstrates evidence of a capacity to comply with the requirements for registration should registration be granted.

Whilst most aspects of the requirements can be demonstrably met prior to a period of initial registration being recommended, other aspects can only be addressed once the program is being delivered during a period of initial registration. For example, while prior evidence can be obtained that a proposed educational program will be based on and taught in accordance with Board of Studies syllabuses, evidence that the educational program is based on and being taught in accordance with the Board syllabuses can only be made available subsequently, when the program is being delivered. For this reason, initial registration is generally for a period that is less than the maximum possible so that evidence of the program being taught in accordance with the requirements can be reviewed prior to any longer periods of registration being considered.

Recommendation of the Authorised Person

At the conclusion of the home visit, the Authorised Person will discuss with you the recommendation to be made. The recommendation is not an official notification of registration. It is an indication of the recommendation that the Authorised Person intends to make to the Home Schooling Unit.

If an applicant for initial registration currently has another child registered for home schooling and that child has been registered for at least two successive periods of the maximum two years for each period, consideration may be given to an initial period of registration of more than one year for another child.

The Authorised Person will outline to you the reasons for recommending a particular period of registration. The recommendation will specify the Year or Years of schooling for home schooling registration. Any areas for improvement in relation to compliance with the requirements for registration will also be identified at this time.

Following the visit, the Authorised Person will report to the Home Schooling Unit. The report identifies the findings and recommendation of the Authorised Person in relation to the evidence provided to demonstrate a capacity to comply with the registration requirements.

If your application is approved, a certificate of registration will be issued for the registered child. Receipt of the certificate authorises home schooling to commence. Parents are responsible for advising the registered child's previous school that the child is registered for

home schooling. Most schools will require a copy of the certificate of home schooling registration for the school's records.

You are advised to retain the certificate of home schooling registration as it specifies the conditions for registration and provides formal proof of registration and a record of your child's home schooling. It may also be an important document if enrolment is sought in a school, TAFE college or other educational institution at some future time.

You must notify the Home Schooling Unit if you decide to discontinue home schooling or change the home address as specified on the child's certificate of registration, or if you intend to deliver an educational program for Years of schooling other than those specified on the certificate of registration and/or you change your contact details. See 'Changes to the conditions of registration' later in this part of the information package.

From time to time the Office may monitor compliance with the requirements for registration. When this occurs, an Authorised Person contacts the parent to organise a home visit to review evidence relating to compliance with the requirements for registration.

In the case of a recommendation not to register, you will have the reasons for this decision outlined and confirmed in writing. Your right to seek a review of the decision and the review process will be explained. The review process is described later in this part of the information package.

A child of compulsory school age who has not completed Year 10 and who is not registered for home schooling must attend a government or registered non-government school. Until your child is registered for home schooling, he or she must attend school.

A flow chart showing the key steps in the initial registration process is provided at the end of this part of the package.

Renewal of registration

Renewal notice

Approximately three months before a period of registration is due to expire you will receive written notification from the Home Schooling Unit that you need to apply for renewal of home schooling registration if you intend to continue home schooling your child.

If you apply for renewal of home schooling registration, you will need to complete *Form 2: Application for renewal of registration for home schooling*. Information about how to access the application form is provided in Part 8 of this information package. A separate application form must be completed for each child for whom renewal of registration is being sought.

The application form must be signed by one parent. If the child is the subject of a court order, a copy of the court order must be attached to the application. The Office of the Board of Studies will have regard to the provisions of the court order as part of the assessment process.

The completed application form may be emailed, faxed or mailed to the Home Schooling Unit as indicated on the form. You are not required to send supporting documentation with your application as this documentation will be assessed by home visit by an Authorised Person.

If, following repeated attempts to arrange an assessment by home visit, you are not available, the Office may commence a process to refuse your application.

If you change your mind and wish to withdraw your application for home schooling registration, you must notify the Office of the Board of Studies in writing by email <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au>, by fax to 02 9367 8475 or by mail to the Home Schooling Unit, Office of the Board of Studies, GPO Box 5300, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

Renewal process

An application for renewal of registration is processed by the Home Schooling Unit and allocated to an Authorised Person to assess.

The Authorised Person will contact you to arrange a mutually acceptable time to visit you in your home to assess your application and the evidence supporting your application. It is expected that the child for whom registration is being sought will be present during the assessment.

During the visit the Authorised Person will assess whether there is evidence demonstrating that the requirements for registration have been met during the current period of registration and would be met if a renewed period of registration were granted. For this reason, the Authorised Person will assess documentation relating to the current educational program and your proposed educational program for your child.

In relation to the identified learning needs of the child, the Authorised Person will also consider information related to the educational attainment of the child, including records of progress and participation in testing programs such as NAPLAN, as relevant.

Specifically, the Authorised Person will assess:

- the current educational program demonstrating how it is based on Board of Studies syllabuses and identifies intended learning outcomes and content (see Part 4 of this information package)
- the written plan for the proposed educational program demonstrating how it is based on Board of Studies syllabuses and identifies intended learning outcomes and content (see Part 4 of this information package)
- records demonstrating the suitability of the current educational program, including outcomes and content, to cater for the identified learning needs of the child
- the suitability of the proposed educational program, including the intended outcomes and content, to cater for the identified learning needs of the child
- records for the current period of registration demonstrating implementation of the current system for planning, supervising and recording teaching and learning experiences
- the proposed system for recording learning progress and achievement
- the time that has been allocated to student learning during the current period of registration and whether this has been sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum and is comparable to the time allocated by schools

- the time intended to be allocated to student learning and whether this will be sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum and is comparable to the time allocated by schools
- the suitability of the home learning environment for effective home schooling
- the adequacy and availability of resources to support delivery of the current and proposed educational program
- records of implementation of the current method for maintaining records of all aspects of delivery of the educational program during the current period of registration
- the proposed method of maintaining records of all aspects of delivery of the educational program during a renewed period of registration.

In some cases, for experienced and successful home schoolers and following a recommendation from the previous Authorised Person, the Office may consider assessing an application by documentation. Assessment by documentation will not be recommended where a home visit has not occurred in the past two years.

Recommendation of the Authorised Person

At the conclusion of the home visit, the Authorised Person will discuss with you the recommendation to be made. The recommendation is not an official notification of registration. It is an indication of the recommendation that the Authorised Person intends to make to the Home Schooling Unit.

Registration may be recommended for a period up to a maximum of two years. The Authorised Person will outline to you the reasons for recommending a particular period of registration. The recommendation will specify the Year or Years of schooling for home schooling registration. Any areas for improvement in relation to compliance with the requirements for registration will also be identified at this time.

Following the visit, the Authorised Person will report to the Home Schooling Unit. The report identifies the findings and recommendation of the Authorised Person in relation to the evidence provided to demonstrate compliance with the registration requirements.

If your application is approved, a certificate of registration for home schooling will be issued.

You are advised to retain the certificate of home schooling registration as it specifies the conditions for registration and provides formal proof of registration and a record of your child's home schooling. It may also be an important document if enrolment is sought in a school, TAFE college or other educational institution in the future.

You must notify the Home Schooling Unit if you decide to discontinue home schooling or change the home address as specified on the child's certificate of registration, or if you intend to deliver an educational program for Years of schooling other than those specified on the certificate of registration and/or if you change your contact details. See 'Changes to the conditions of registration' later in this part.

From time to time the Office may monitor compliance with the requirements for registration. When this occurs, an Authorised Person contacts the parent to organise a home visit to review evidence that the requirements for registration continue to be met.

In the case of a recommendation not to register, you will have the reasons for this decision outlined and confirmed in writing. Your right to seek a review of the decision and the review process will be explained. The review process is described later in this part.

A child of compulsory school age who has not completed Year 10 and who is not registered for home schooling must attend a government or registered non-government school. Unless your child is registered for home schooling, he or she must be enrolled in, and attend, a government or registered non-government school.

A flow chart showing the key steps in the renewal process is provided at the end of this part.

Changes to registration details

A child's certificate of home schooling registration specifies the period of registration, the home address for home schooling, the registration period and the Year or Years of schooling as relevant to the educational program being delivered. If these conditions change, you must notify the Office of the Board of Studies in writing as soon as possible but no later than within 14 days of making the change.

All notifications are to be made, in writing, by email <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au>, by fax to 02 9367 8475 or by mail to the Home Schooling Unit, Office of the Board of Studies, GPO Box 5300, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

The specific matters requiring notification to the Office of the Board of Studies are explained below.

If, during a period of registration, you decide to discontinue home schooling you must notify in writing the Home Schooling Unit providing details of the name and location of the government or registered non-government school your child will be attending or advice that your child will no longer be residing in NSW.

If your child's home address changes from the home address specified on the child's certificate of registration, you must advise in writing the Home Schooling Unit providing details of the new home address. On receipt of notice that the home address of a registered child has changed, an Authorised Person will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to assess the new home for its suitability for home schooling registration. If suitable for home schooling, a certificate of registration specifying the new home address will be issued.

If, based on your child's identified learning needs and achievement, you wish to deliver an educational program in advance of the Years of schooling specified on the child's certificate of registration, you must notify in writing the Home Schooling Unit providing details of the proposed change. On receipt of such notice, an Authorised Person will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to assess the proposed new educational program. If the proposed educational program satisfies the Authorised Person that the requirements for registration will be met, a certificate of registration specifying the new Years of schooling will be issued.

If you change contact details such as your phone number or email address during a period of registration, you must contact the Home Schooling Unit in writing providing details of the new contact information.

Recommendation to refuse registration

If an Authorised Person notifies you of the intention to recommend refusal of initial registration or renewal of registration, you will be advised in writing of the recommendation and the reasons for the recommendation. You will also be informed of your right to seek an internal review of the recommendation.

Formal written notification of the Authorised Person's recommendation will be mailed to you from the Office of the Board of Studies. You will have 30 days from the date of the notification in which to seek an internal review of the recommendation.

If you seek a review, a different Authorised Person will be appointed to consider the internal review. The review process may involve a second assessment by home visit by the new Authorised Person to clarify matters that remain unresolved and to assess the documentation you have in support of your application as relevant to compliance with the requirements for registration.

If it is found that your application satisfies the registration requirements, a revised report and recommendation will be made to the Home Schooling Unit.

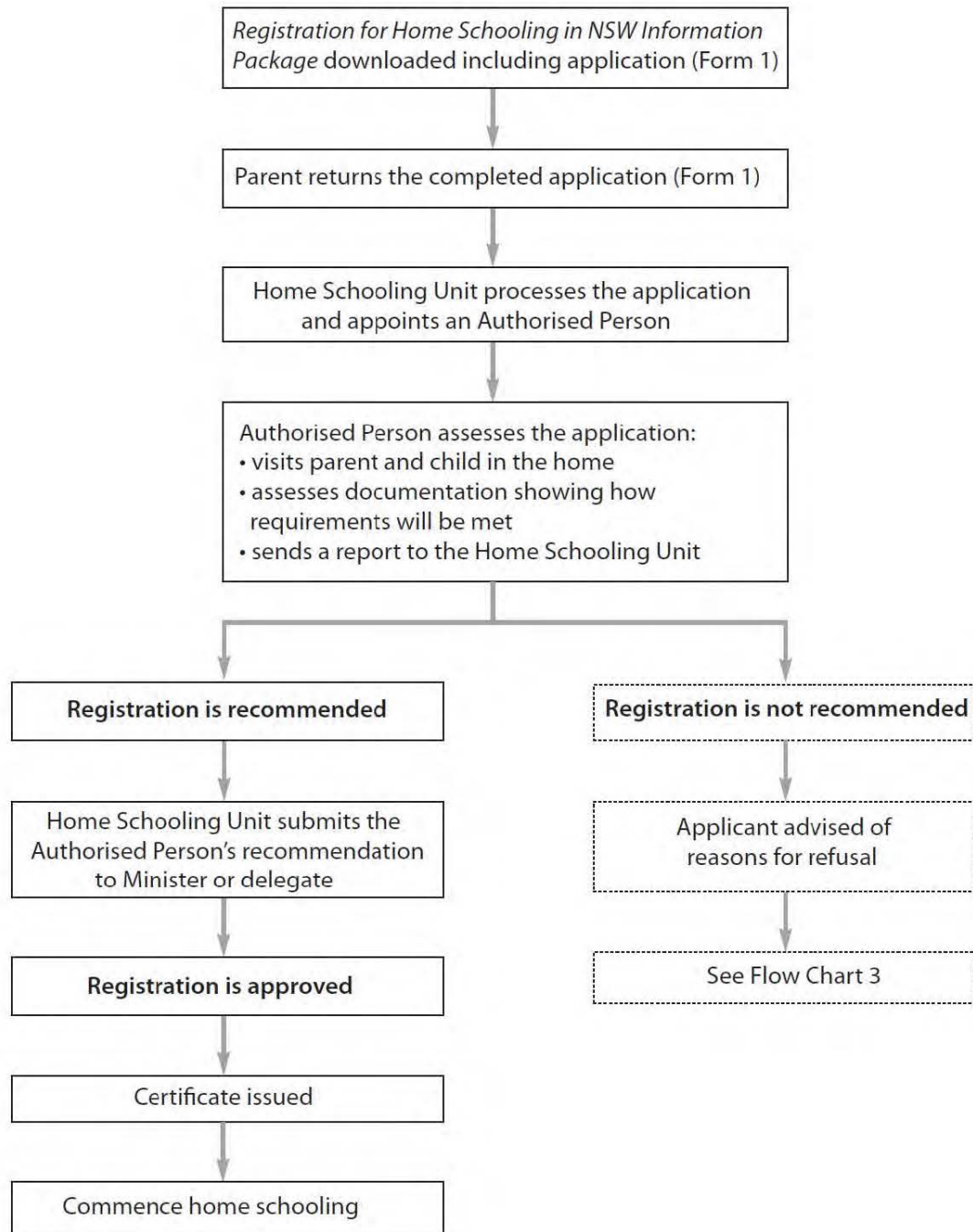
If the new Authorised Person independently arrives at a decision that agrees with the original recommendation you will be advised of your right to seek a further review before the Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT). An appeal to the ADT must be lodged with the ADT within 28 days of your being notified of the outcome of the internal review. Following the ADT's determination of the appeal, a recommendation will be provided for the consideration of the Minister or delegate.

A decision to refuse registration does not preclude a subsequent application and registration if all requirements are met.

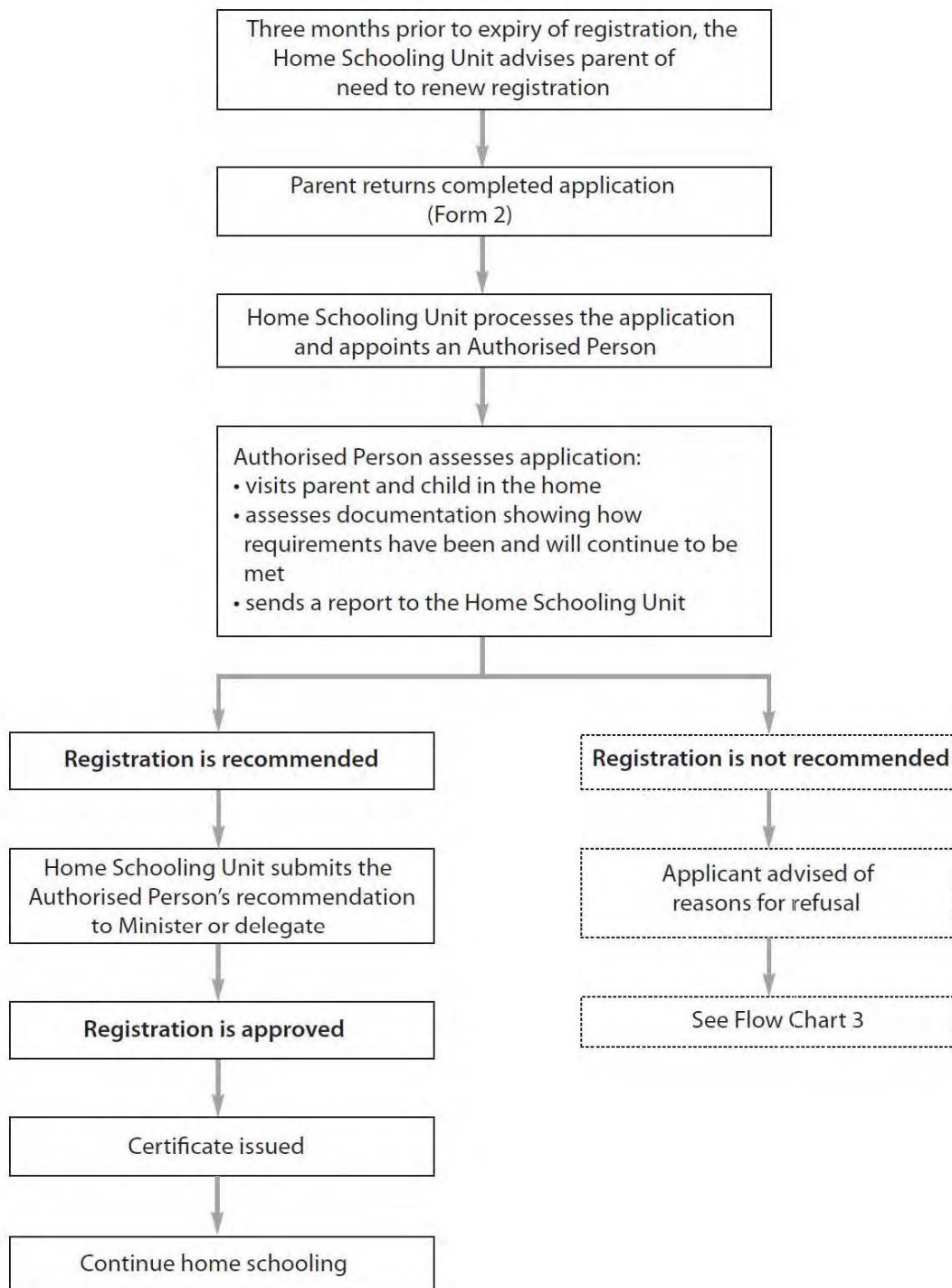
A flow chart showing the key steps in the review process is provided at the end of this part of the information package.

Registration process flow charts

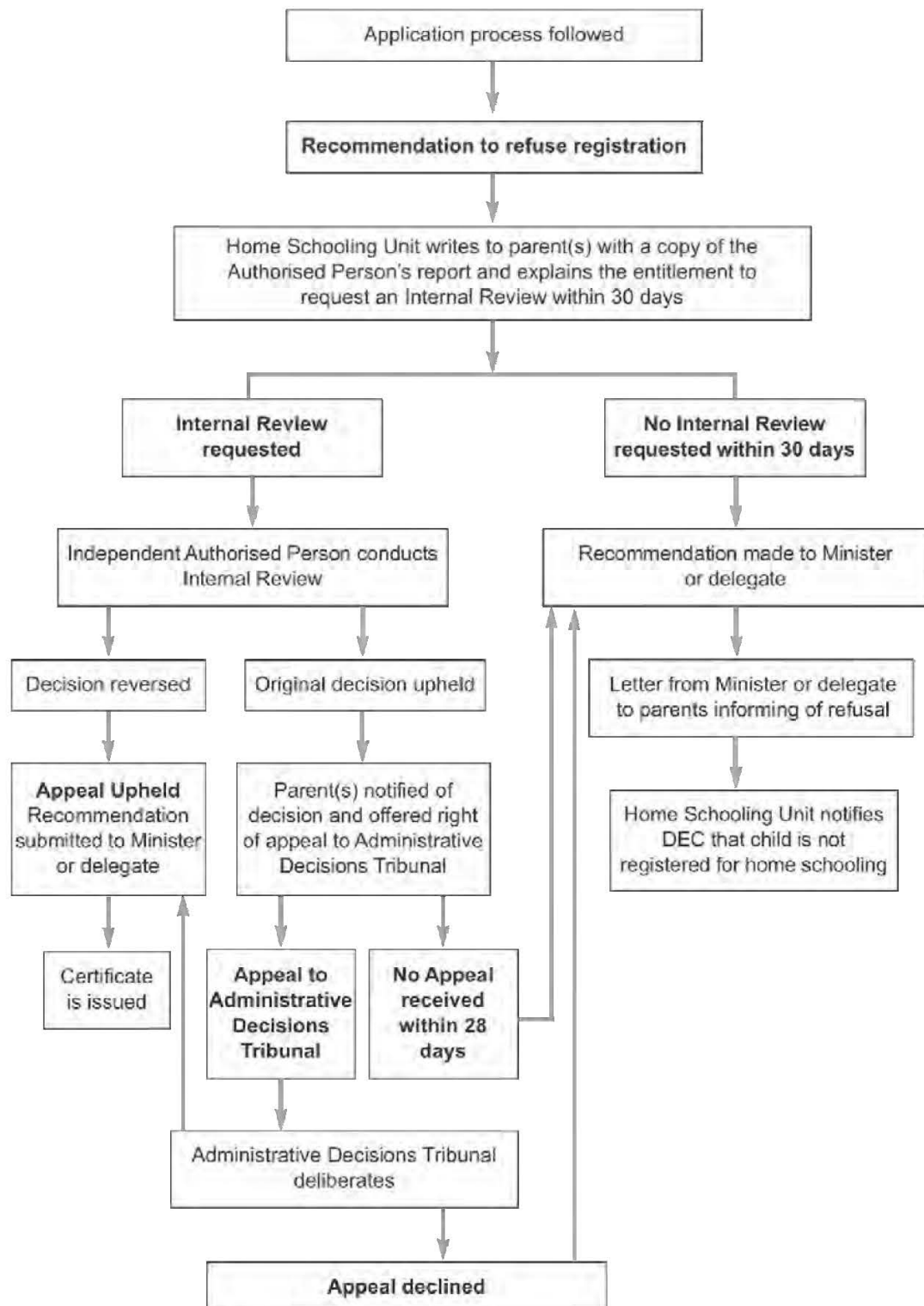
Flow Chart 1: Initial registration for home schooling



Flow Chart 2: Renewal of registration for home schooling



Flow Chart 3: Review of a recommendation to refuse registration for home schooling



Part 4 Curriculum requirements

The curriculum requirements for home schooling registration are detailed in this part of the information package in relation to:

- primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6)
- secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10)
- beyond Year 10.

Curriculum requirements for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6)

The *Education Act 1990* establishes minimum curriculum requirements for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6). Part 3, Division 1, Section 8 of the Act provides that the primary curriculum must meet the following requirements:

- (a) courses of study in each of the six key learning areas for primary education are to be provided for each child during each Year
- (b) courses of study relating to Australia are to be included in the key learning area of Human Society and Its Environment
- (c) courses of study in both Art and Music are to be included in the key learning area of Creative and Practical Arts
- (d) courses of study in each key learning area are to be appropriate for the children concerned having regard to their level of achievement and needs
- (e) courses of study in a key learning area are to be provided in accordance with any relevant guidelines developed by the Board and approved by the Minister
- (f) courses of study in a key learning area are to be based on, and taught in accordance with, a syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board and approved by the Minister.

The curriculum for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6) is based on the following six key learning areas:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Science and Technology
4. Human Society and Its Environment
5. Creative and Practical Arts
6. Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

The educational program for a home schooled child must be based on the six Board of Studies syllabuses for the six key learning areas for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6). These syllabuses are available on the Board's website <www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>.

The Board's *NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements* provide a summary of the outcomes for primary education, which may be useful in preparing an educational program.

The stage statements contained in the primary syllabuses also provide an overview of the learning for each stage for each key learning area. The stage statements are summaries of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes developed by students as a result of achieving the outcomes for the relevant stage of learning. More information about the Board's curriculum resources is provided in Part 7 of this package.

Curriculum requirements for secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10)

The *Education Act 1990* establishes minimum curriculum requirements for secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10). Section 10 of the Act provides that the curriculum for secondary school children during Year 7 to Year 10 (other than for candidates for the Record of School Achievement) must meet the following requirements:

- (a) courses of study in six of the eight key learning areas for secondary education are to be provided for each child
- (b) courses of study in the key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Human Society and Its Environment are to be provided during each Year, but courses of study in the other key learning areas need not be provided during each Year
- (c) courses of study in each key learning area are to be appropriate for the children concerned having regard to their level of achievement and needs
- (d) courses of study in a key learning area are to be provided in accordance with any relevant guidelines developed by the Board and approved by the Minister
- (e) courses of study in a key learning area are to be based on, and taught in accordance with, a syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board and approved by the Minister.

The eight key learning areas for secondary education are:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Human Society and Its Environment
5. Languages other than English
6. Technological and Applied Studies
7. Creative Arts
8. Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

The educational program for a home schooled child must be based on six of the eight Board of Studies key learning areas for secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10). The program must include English, Mathematics, Science and Human Society and Its Environment and courses in another two of the Board's key learning areas.

The syllabuses for secondary education are available on the Board's website

<www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc>.

The Board's syllabuses for Years 7 to 10 provide stage statements which may be useful in preparing an educational program. The stage statements are summaries of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes developed by students as a result of achieving the outcomes for the relevant stage of learning.

More information about the Board's curriculum resources is provided in Part 7 of this package.

Home schooled children registered for secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10) are not eligible for the award of the Record of School Achievement.

New Board of Studies syllabuses for Kindergarten to Year 10

In 2012, the Board of Studies published new syllabuses for English, Mathematics, Science and History for Kindergarten to Year 10. The new syllabuses are published on the Board of Studies website <www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/new-nsw-k10-syllabus/>.

The new syllabuses become effective incrementally from 2014. The following schedule details the timeline for implementation of the new syllabuses.

Primary education – Kindergarten to Year 6

Syllabus	2013	2014	2015	2016
English K–10	Familiarise and plan	K–6		
Mathematics K–10		Optional	K–6	
Science K–10		Optional	K–6	
History K–10			Optional	K–6

Secondary education – Years 7 to 10

Syllabus	2013	2014	2015
English K–10	Familiarise and plan	Years 7 and 9	Years 8 and 10
Mathematics K–10		Years 7 and 9	Years 8 and 10
Science K–10		Years 7 and 9	Years 8 and 10
History K–10		Years 7 and 9	Years 8 and 10

The implementation schedule for introducing the new Board of Studies syllabuses applies to the educational programs for children who are registered for home schooling.

In the following specified circumstances, a parent may seek approval to bring forward the introduction of a new syllabus to provide for teaching the same new syllabus to two or more of the parent's children who are registered for consecutive Years of secondary schooling and in the same curriculum stage. For example, a parent with a child registered for Year 7 and a child registered for Year 8 may seek approval to base the educational programs for both children on the new English syllabus in 2014. A parent seeking approval to bring forward the introduction of the new syllabuses, must provide evidence to the Authorised Person assessing the application for home schooling registration that all other requirements for home schooling will be met. The Authorised Person will make a recommendation in relation to approval for bringing forward the introduction of the new syllabus.

Program Builder

Program Builder has been developed by the Board of Studies to support the implementation of the new Kindergarten to Year 10 English, Mathematics, Science and History syllabuses. With Program Builder, teachers and home schooling parents can select outcomes and content from the new syllabuses to create teaching programs.

To access Program Builder, home schooling parents need to establish a 'Scootle' account. Scootle is a content discovery portal containing more than 16,000 teaching resources. Access to Scootle provides access to the Board's Program Builder and assists teachers and home schooling parents to plan and organise lesson content and resources.

To establish a Scootle account, email <help@scootle.edu.au>. You will need to provide the home schooling registration number for your child ('HS/XX'), as issued by the Office.

Further information about Program Builder can be found on the Board's website at <<https://pb.bos.nsw.edu.au/>>.

Curriculum requirements beyond Year 10

The *Education Act 1990* establishes the curriculum for students beyond Year 10 (Year 11 and Year 12). Section 12 of the Act provides that the curriculum must meet the following requirements:

- (a) courses of study of a general description determined by the Minister on the recommendation of the Board are to be provided for each student in each Year
- (b) those courses of study are to include a course of study in English
- (c) those courses of study are to comply with a pattern of study determined by the Minister on the recommendation of the Board
- (d) those courses of study are to be taught in accordance with a syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board and approved by the Minister.

A pattern of study may include (but is not limited to) the number of courses to be studied, the sequence in which particular courses are to be taught and the number of units of study that a course is to contain.

The courses of study are to be based on NSW Board of Studies Stage 6 courses and taught in accordance with the relevant Stage 6 syllabus.

Home schooled children registered for the curriculum beyond Year 10 are not eligible for the award of the Record of School Achievement or the Higher School Certificate.

The courses

The Stage 6 courses of study include Board Developed Courses and Board Endorsed Courses. A list of courses is available on the Board's website < <http://ace.bos.nsw.edu.au/higher-school-certificate> >. The syllabus for each Stage 6 course is also available on the website <www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/>.

Each Stage 6 syllabus identifies a Preliminary course, typically undertaken in Year 11, and a HSC course, typically undertaken in Year 12.

Pattern of study

A home schooled child registered for learning beyond Year 10 must follow a pattern of study using Stage 6 syllabuses.

Each syllabus identifies the unit value of each course. The pattern of study for home schooling must include at least 12 units for the Preliminary (typically Year 11) course and 10 units for the HSC (typically Year 12) course. The pattern must include at least:

- 2 units of English
- 6 units of Board Developed courses
- 3 courses of 2 units value or greater, and
- 4 subjects.

If you are considering home schooling beyond Year 10 you are advised to contact the Home Schooling Unit on telephone 02 9367 8149 for advice about planning a pattern of study.

Part 5 Frequently asked questions

Is home schooling the same as distance education?

No. Home schooling requires that the educational program for a child is developed, delivered and assessed by the parent in the child's home in accordance with the requirements for registration as stated in this information package and that the child is registered by the Office of the Board of Studies for the period of home schooling.

Schooling by distance education involves enrolment of the child in a school providing distance education. In this case, the program is developed, delivered and assessed by teachers from the school using 'distance education' means such as mail, email or other electronic means.

For information about distance education through the NSW Department of Education and Communities, including eligibility requirements, please contact the Department directly on 02 9561 8000 or 02 6334 8072.

Can I register my child for home schooling if I plan to reside overseas or outside NSW for a period of time?

No. Registration for home schooling applies only to children of compulsory school-age residing in NSW. If you are planning to reside temporarily outside NSW or travelling for periods longer than the typical school holiday periods, you may be eligible to apply for distance education through the NSW Department of Education and Communities on telephone 02 9561 8000 or 02 6334 8072.

When should I apply for registration for my child who is turning six?

An application for the initial home schooling registration of a child turning six may be submitted three months prior to the child turning six.

What should I do if I cease home schooling and send my child back to school?

If, during a period of registration, you decide to discontinue home schooling you must notify in writing the Home Schooling Unit providing details of the name and location of the government or registered non-government school your child will be attending or advice that your child will no longer be residing in NSW. The notification should be made, in writing, within 14 days of making the change, by email <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au>, by fax to 02 9367 8475 or by mail to the Home Schooling Unit, Office of the Board of Studies, GPO Box 5300, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

What should I do if I change my address/contact details?

If your child's home address changes from the home address specified on the child's certificate of registration, you must advise in writing the Home Schooling Unit providing details of the new home address. When that advice has been received, an Authorised Person will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to assess the new home for its suitability for home schooling registration. If suitable for home schooling, a certificate of registration specifying the new home address will be issued.

The notification should be made, in writing, within 14 days of making the change, by email <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au>, by fax to 02 9367 8475 or by mail to the Home Schooling Unit, Office of the Board of Studies, GPO Box 5300, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

What is exemption from registration for home schooling?

The *Education Act 1990* provides that a parent who wants a child to be home schooled may give notice that the parent conscientiously objects to registration under the Act on religious grounds. The conscientious objection may be accepted if there is satisfactory evidence that registration would have been granted if an application for registration had been made. If the objection is accepted, a certificate of exemption from registration is issued. To be accepted, there must be satisfactory evidence that registration would be granted if an application had been made for such registration and the objection to registration is conscientiously held on religious grounds. The requirements and processes for registration described in this package also apply to applicants seeking a certificate of exemption from registration.

Can I home school my child who has special needs?

Yes. The program of study based on Board of Studies syllabuses can be adjusted to meet the individual needs of your child. The requirements for registration must be met.

Can I apply for home schooling registration for a child who is a State ward?

Yes, if you have been approved by the Department of Family and Community Services to apply for home schooling registration. Written evidence of consent from the Department of Family and Community Services is required to support the application.

Must I stop home schooling when my child turns 17?

You can continue to educate your child at home. However, a child of post-compulsory school age is not eligible, or required, to be registered for home schooling.

Is a home schooled child eligible for the Record of School Achievement or the Higher School Certificate?

Home schooling does not provide for a child to be eligible for the award of the Record of School Achievement or the Higher School Certificate. To be eligible, a student must have attended a government or registered and accredited non-government school or a college of TAFE in order to complete the prescribed study, assessments and examinations for the awards.

Can a child registered for the curriculum beyond Year 10 undertake the HSC by self-tuition?

Yes. A child who is not attending a NSW government school, a school accredited by the Board of Studies or an Institute of TAFE NSW may study HSC courses by self-tuition. Self-tuition students are not eligible for the Higher School Certificate or Record of Achievement.

Self-tuition students may select courses from a limited range of Board courses.

Self-tuition students are eligible for a Higher School Certificate Results Notice. These results may be used for the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Details about self-tuition can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Board of Studies by telephone on 02 9367 8111.

Children registered for home schooling may undertake the HSC by self-tuition. To be eligible, the requirements for home schooling registration and the conditions for self-tuition must be met. Self-tuition students are not eligible for a Higher School Certificate.

Can a home schooled child participate in work experience?

Individual families may arrange work experience to supplement a comprehensive program that complies with all requirements for home schooling registration. All arrangements for work experience are the responsibility of the family concerned.

Are home-schooled students eligible to sit for national tests such as the NAPLAN literacy and numeracy tests for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and the Year 8 Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA)?

Yes. Children who are registered for home schooling are eligible to sit for these tests.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It assesses the types of skills that are essential for every child to progress through schooling and life, in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy. The assessments are undertaken nationwide, every year in the second full week in May.

A report on the performance of each individual student is provided to each student and parent/carer. NAPLAN test results provide information on how students are performing in the areas of literacy and numeracy against the national average, and can be used to support improvements in teaching and learning.

Information about how to register a child for NAPLAN should be directed to the Board of Studies on telephone (02) 9367 8112 or email <naplan.nsw@bos.nsw.edu.au>.

The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) is a statewide assessment program for students who have completed two years of secondary learning in Science. The ESSA test is an interactive multimedia assessment called ESSAonline. It is based on the NSW Science Years 7–10 syllabus.

A report on the performance of each individual student is provided to each student and parent/carer. Reports on test results provide information about student achievement in relation to scientific knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes and can be used to support teaching and learning programs.

An information and registration package for ESSAonline for home schoolers can be accessed via <<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/essa/index.php>>.

Does the Board of Studies provide financial assistance to home schoolers?

The Office of the Board of Studies does not provide funding for home schooling.

Part 6 Sample approaches to record keeping

Sample approaches to documenting programs of study

The following examples provide ideas about developing a teaching plan to comply with the curriculum requirements. A parent may develop and implement an alternative approach.

Sample 1: Overview of a unit of work

Main Focus	Getting along with others (Year 2)
Learning Area	PDHPE HSIE
	1 hour per week for 10 weeks
Key Goals	To recognise positive attributes in others, express needs and feelings appropriately, identify different roles and responsibilities and work effectively with others.
Outcomes	<i>PDHPE Skills Outcomes Stage 1: INS2.3</i> Makes positive contributions in group activities <i>HSIE Foundation Statements Years 1 and 2:</i> Students identify roles, responsibilities and rules within the family, school and community and explore their interaction.
Strategies	Explore similarities and differences among family members and friends in terms of physical attributes, likes, dislikes and capabilities Write about personal qualities including areas for development Identify key tasks performed within the family Analyse roles performed among different groups Practise ways to ask for help in different situations Rehearse procedures for negotiating arrangements Propose action in relation to a range of interpersonal scenarios Work with other members of home education network in a series of problem-solving games
Resources	Photo album Family duty roster Scenario cards Cooperative games book

Sample 2: Overview of a program for a key learning area

Science and Technology

This year our aim is to develop Lindsay's understanding of technology in our daily life. This will involve study of the built environment, information and communication, physical phenomena, and products and services as they relate to transport. The themes will be explored through practical application, observation and research using texts, the internet and interviews.

Theme: Transportation (Year 3)

Outcomes:

UT S2.9 Selects and uses a range of equipment, computer-based technology, materials and other resources with developing skill to enhance investigation and design tasks.

Content

- road transport
- timetables
- water transport
- traffic management facilities
- engines
- ticket machines
- safety.

Learning experiences

- investigate forms of transport in the community
- investigate how gears and cogs make things move
- design and model a means of transport
- experiment with flotation
- design ways to propel an object in water
- investigate the features of the local traffic environment
- construct a model of a method of traffic control
- plan a safe pedestrian route from home to various destinations
- undertake a trip using public transport, attending to timetables and purchasing tickets
- conduct bike safety check and simple maintenance.

Resources

- Roads and Traffic Authority literature and website
- *Move Ahead with Street Sense Kit*, Roads and Traffic Authority
- library references
- *Science and Technology K–6 Teaching Kits*, Board of Studies
- construction materials
- computer drawing program.

Sample approaches to assessment and maintaining records of achievement

You need to have a system that demonstrates what your child has achieved and shows that progress is occurring. Student achievement is monitored through a planned approach to assessment.

There are many methods that you might consider to collect evidence about your child's progress including:

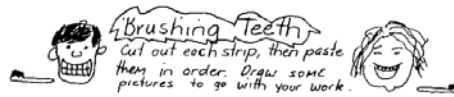
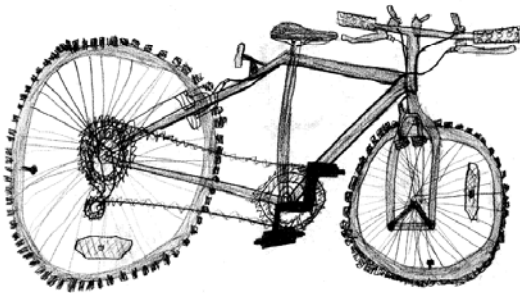
- observing and recording student achievement as it occurs, eg oral presentations, movement skills, participation, language development
- mapping progress through the collection of student work samples over a period of time
- tasks that incorporate the application of understanding and learning processes in a set project (or research assignment)
- analysing work samples such as projects, assignments, art works or design products
- pen/pencil and paper tests.

Examples of some different approaches to recording student progress are provided on the following pages.

Sample 1: Portfolios

One approach is to keep a portfolio of student work. By dating a student's work it is possible to show how learning has occurred over a period of time. You may consider keeping a large sketchbook, visual diary or folder with samples of completed work. Not all work leads to pen and paper products. Other approaches such as videoing of performances, recording oral presentations or some notes about your observations could be maintained.

Duck Report
Ducks have flat bills
and webbed feet They are
birds. Graham



Remove lid from toothpaste

Place some toothpaste on the toothbrush.

Add some water to the toothpaste on the toothbrush

Brush your teeth 4

Fill mouth with water 5

Rinse your mouth 6

Spit water out 7

Wipe your lips with a towel 8

20 biscuits	20 biscuits
4 people	30 people
each person got 5	half each = $40\frac{1}{2}$
each and that	biscuits $3\frac{1}{2}$ each
= 0	= 0
20 biscuits	20 biscuits
10 people	3 people
1 whole each	3 each = 9
10 left 1 more	11 left
each = 0	3 more each



Sample 2: Progress/achievement

Some home schooling families have developed a format for recording a child's progress and achievement over a period. The following is one way that this might be done.

Progress and Achievement Period 2/2/2012 to 29/4/2012

Learning area	Strategies used	Performance observed
English	Report writing Spelling lists	Excellent recount of excursion to public gardens. Progressed to level 3. Having difficulty with some words. Reading and comprehension. Discussion of 'The Cay' showed good comprehension. Reads fluently aloud.
Mathematics	Regular exercises in maths text	Working well with calculations involving whole numbers.
Science and Technology	Weather observations	Made a rain gauge. Successfully measured and interpreted a range of weather data.
HSIE	Project	Researched local area history. Identified a range of significant people in the district's history and can explain their contribution.
PDHPE	Observation	Is participating with enjoyment in soccer. Practising hard to develop skill with left foot.
Creative and Practical Arts	Work samples	Has been creating a range of cartoon characters. Over a series of attempts is showing good development.

Sample approaches to maintaining records of learning experiences

There is a wide variety of approaches that you might consider when choosing how you can maintain records of learning experiences. Some examples are provided below.

Sample 1: Weekly learning log

Learning Log

Week commencing:/...../.....

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Maths Ex 2.2–3 Email overseas friends	Library visit – research and select books for wide reading	Science – continue with garden bed Creative Arts Music practice P2–7	Maths Ex 2.8 Science experiment – magnets	Plant seedlings Prepare observation charts for recording plant growth
Afternoon	English Comprehension passage Science – prepare garden bed	Maths Ex 2.5–7 English Spelling list 3 Punctuation exercises	Behind the news Science – design and make signs for herb garden	Reading Swimming – survival strokes	Analyse newspaper. Started planning our own home newsletter
Additional Activities	Check internet sites for tips on growing plants				Basketball competition
Comments		Showed an interest in a book on space. Might plan a trip to the observatory when we visit Sydney next month			Coping with current novel with ease. Look for something more challenging next time

Sample 2: Student diary

Many children will be capable of keeping a log of their own learning activities. The following example is one of the ways this might be done. Another approach may be a more reflective journal where the child focuses on recording the major achievements of the day or week.

6/5/2013	7/5/2013
9.00 English: Read Chapter 5 ‘Cairo Jim’ 9.30 Spelling practice 9.45 Maths: draw and label triangles 10.30 PDHPE: practise soccer skills 11.15 Break 11.30 HSIE: draft letter to local council on environmental issues 12.15 Creative Arts- Cubist inspired self-portrait 1.00 Break 2.00 Technology project: research different circuits 3.15 Break 3.30 Music- composing for percussion (drum)	9.00 English: comprehension activity 9.30 Science: newspaper review on natural disasters 10.00 HSIE: internet search of local government functions and services 11.00 Break 11.15 PDHPE: poster on benefits of not smoking 12.15 Break 1.00 Maths problems: volume of objects and practical demonstration 2.45 Break 3.00 English: Read Chapter 6 ‘Cairo Jim’
Comments	Comments
100% for spelling. Struggling with Technology project – need to ask Mum and Dad for some advice on circuit design.	Maths difficult. Come back to volume tomorrow.

Sample 3: Registering completion of work

In this sample the student is completing tasks from a chosen activity book. The parent registers work covered by putting the completion date on the table of contents. Other comments may be made where appropriate.

On the Scene			
Table of Contents			
1.	Developing Strategies for Personal Safety	11	<i>Completed all exercises 2/5</i>
	Personal strategies	12	<i>Completed 5/6 – additional role play activity with exercise</i>
	Protecting self and others	14	
	Community assistance	16	
2.	Safety at Home	18	
	Appliances	20	
	Chemicals	23	
	Caring for young children	25	
3.	Safety Outdoors	28	
	Keep in the shade	29	
	Design a safe outdoor area	32	
	Environmental conservation	34	
4.	Safe Play	36	
	Warming up	38	
	Play with skill, Play by the rules	41	
	Water safety	43	

Part 7 Resources for home schooling

Home education organisation

Home Education Association Inc

www.hea.edu.au

Phone: 1300 729 991

Board of Studies online resources

General

Board of Studies website

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Registration for Home Schooling in NSW Information Package

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/home-schooling.html

Assessment Resource Centre (ARC) (includes K–10 student work samples)

<http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>

Primary

Board of Studies primary website

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Parents Guide to the NSW primary syllabuses

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/parents/parents-guide-to-the-nsw-primary-syllabuses

NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/nsw-primary-curriculum-foundation-statements

K–6 primary syllabuses (includes outcomes), resources and support documents

English

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/english

Mathematics

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/mathematics

Science and Technology

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/science-and-technology

Human Society and its Environments (HSIE)

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/hsie

Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/personal-development-health-and-physical-education-pdhpe

Creative Arts

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/creative-arts

Languages

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/languages

Parents Guides to K–6 syllabuses – Introducing each K–6 syllabus to Parents and School Community Members

English

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/english/k6engparents_syl.pdf

Mathematics

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/maths/maths_k6_parents.pdf

Human Society and its Environments (HSIE)

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/hsie/k6hsie_parents.pdf

Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/pdhpe/pdhpek6_parents.pdf

Creative Arts

www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/arts/K6_creatart_parent.pdf

New syllabuses 2014

<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/>

Secondary

Years 7, 8, 9, 10 syllabuses and support materials

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc

Years 11 and 12 syllabuses

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc

New syllabuses 2014

<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/>

Equivalent and alternative courses of study

<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/equivalent-alternative-study.html>

Part 8 Application forms

Form 1: Application for initial registration for home schooling

This form is to be used to:

- apply for registration (or exemption from registration) of a child for the first time
- apply for registration (or exemption from registration) of a child who may have been registered previously but does not have a current certificate of registration.

You must complete a separate form for each child.

Click here to download [*Form 1: Application for initial registration for home schooling.*](#)

Form 2: Application for renewal of registration for home schooling

This form is to be used to apply for renewal of registration of a child with current registration (or current exemption from registration).

For a child who has been previously registered (or had exemption from registration) but does not have a current registration (or exemption from registration) certificate please use *Form 1: Application for initial registration for home schooling.*

You must complete a separate form for each child.

Click here to download [*Form 2: Application for renewal of registration for home schooling.*](#)

Form 3: Application for a certificate of completion of Year 10

This form is to be used to apply for a certificate of completion of Year 10 for an eligible home schooled child.

You must complete a separate form for each child.

Click here to download [*Form 3: Application for certificate of completion of Year 10.*](#)

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014

Demographics of Home Schooled Students and Families

1 Introduction

A total of 3238 students from 1878 families were registered for home schooling or exempt from registration at 31 December 2013. This total comprised 3075 students who were registered and 163 students who were exempt from registration. The statistics in this report relate to both groups of students, who in the remainder of the report are collectively described as “registered for home schooling”.

2 Number of Children in in each Home Schooling Family

Table 1 shows the number of children registered for home schooling in each family at 31 December 2013. Note that Table 1 only includes children registered at that time, not any children previously registered in the family.

Table 1: Number of Registered Children in each Home Schooling Family, 2013

Number of Registered Children	Home Schooled Families	
	No	%
1	1036	55.2%
2	496	26.4%
3	217	11.6%
4	94	5.0%
5 or more	35	1.9%
Total	1878	100.0%

It can be seen from Table 1 that the majority of families (55%) contained a single child registered for home schooling. In 26% of families, two children were registered, in 12% of cases there were three registered children, while in 7% of families four or more children were registered (up to a maximum of seven children).

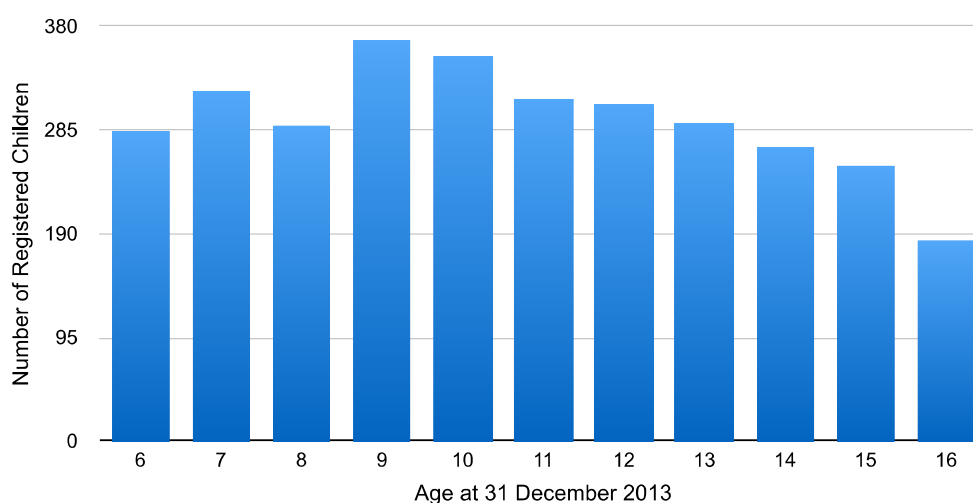
3 Age of Children

Table 2 and Figure 1 show the age (at 31 December 2013) of all children registered for home schooling as at that date.

Table 2: Age of Children Registered for Home Schooling, December 2013

Age (at 31 December 2013)	Home Schooled Children		
	No	%	Cumulative %
6	285	8.8%	8.8%
7	322	9.9%	18.7%
8	290	9.0%	27.7%
9	368	11.4%	39.1%
10	352	10.9%	49.9%
11	314	9.7%	59.6%
12	309	9.5%	69.2%
13	292	9.0%	78.2%
14	270	8.3%	86.5%
15	253	7.8%	94.3%
16	183	5.7%	100.0%
Total	3238	100.0%	

Figure 1: Age of Children Registered for Home Schooling, December 2013



It can be seen from Table 2 and Figure 1 that there was a fairly even distribution of registered children between ages 6 and 13, with about 300 registered students at each age. The largest age groups were at 9 years (368 students) and 10 years (352 students), while numbers progressively declined at 14 years (270 students), 15 years (253 students) and 16 years (183 students).

4 Location

Table 3 (overleaf) shows the distribution of home schooling families across NSW, described according to ABS Statistical Area 4 categories. For comparative purposes, Table 3 also shows the percentage of the NSW estimated resident population in each area (at 30 June 2013).

It can be seen from Table 3 that the largest numbers of home schooling families are in two Greater Sydney areas: Outer West and Blue Mountains and Inner South West, followed by the Central Coast, Capital Region and the Richmond-Tweed area.

When compared to the population distribution of the total NSW population, home schoolers are relatively over-represented in areas outside of Sydney, which contain 36% of the overall NSW population but nearly 50% of home schoolers. Proportional over-representation is particularly apparent in the southern tablelands (Southern Highland and Shoalhaven, Capital Region) and North Coast (Coffs Harbour - Grafton, Richmond - Tweed and Mid North Coast), as well Outer West Sydney and Blue Mountains. A number of Greater Sydney areas are proportionately under-represented, particularly the inner and northern parts of the city.

Table 3: Location of Home Schooling Families, December 2013

Location	Home Schooling Families		% of NSW Population
	No	%	
Greater Sydney	918	51.0%	64.2%
Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	59	3.3%	3.0%
Blacktown	70	3.9%	4.4%
Central Coast	106	5.9%	4.4%
City and Inner South	24	1.3%	4.0%
Eastern Suburbs	22	1.2%	3.7%
Inner South West	150	8.3%	7.7%
Inner West	29	1.6%	3.9%
North Sydney and Hornsby	32	1.8%	5.5%
Northern Beaches	23	1.3%	3.5%
Outer South West	51	2.8%	3.4%
Outer West and Blue Mountains	157	8.7%	4.1%
Parramatta	82	4.6%	5.9%
Ryde	23	1.3%	2.4%
South West	50	2.8%	5.3%
Sutherland	40	2.2%	3.0%
Rest of NSW	883	49.0%	35.8%
Capital Region	123	6.8%	3.0%
Central West	57	3.2%	2.8%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	66	3.7%	1.8%
Far West and Orara	32	1.8%	1.6%
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	79	4.4%	3.5%
Illawarra	62	3.4%	4.0%
Mid North Coast	83	4.6%	2.8%
Murray	25	1.4%	1.6%
New England and North West	60	3.3%	2.5%
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	75	4.2%	4.9%
Richmond - Tweed	100	5.6%	3.2%
Riverina	33	1.8%	2.1%
Southern Highlands & Shoalhaven	88	4.9%	1.9%
Total Locations	1801	100.0%	100.0%
Not Determined	77		-
Total	1878		-

5 Remoteness

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure consists of five categories, from major city to very remote. Table 4 shows the distribution of NSW home schooling families across these types of areas, together with the distribution of the NSW population as a whole.

Table 4: Remoteness Areas of Home Schooling Families

Remoteness Area	Home Schooling Families		% of NSW Population
	No	%	
Major Cities	1029	57.1%	74.2%
Inner Regional	566	31.4%	19.3%
Outer Regional	201	11.2%	6.0%
Remote	4	0.2%	0.4%
Very Remote	1	0.1%	0.1%
Total	1801	100.0%	100.0%

It can be seen from Table 4 that the majority of home schooling families (57%) are in major cities, but that this is less than the proportion that would be expected according to NSW population figures (74%). There is a proportional over-representation of home schooling families in inner regional (31% compared to 19% in total population) and outer regional (11% compared to 6%) locations. There are very few home schoolers in remote areas.

6 Socio-Economic Status (SES)

The socio-economic status of the localities in which home schooling families reside was estimated using the ABS Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, 2011. This measure provides a SES measure and percentile rank for each of the approximately 50,000 SA1 locations in Australia.

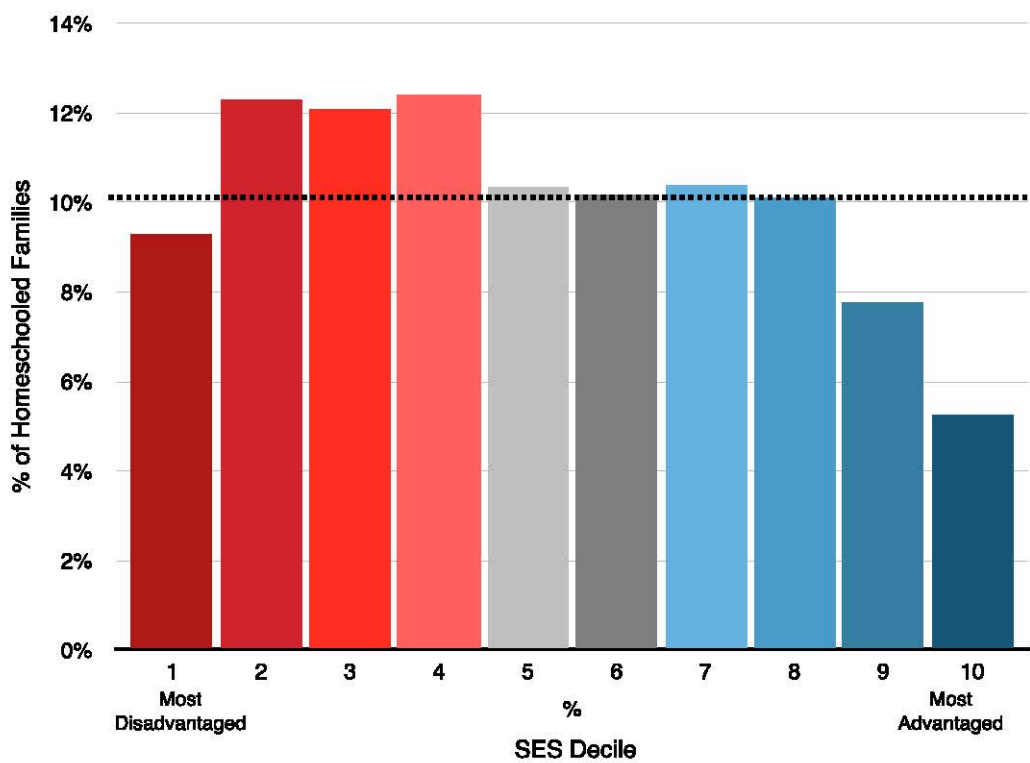
The ABS divides localities (SA1) into ten equal SES deciles, from 1 (most disadvantaged) to 10 (most advantaged). Each decile covers 10% of the population. The localities of all families with children registered for home schooling at 31 December 2013 were geocoded to these SES deciles, as shown in Table 5 and Figure 2 (overleaf).

Table 5: Socio-economic status of Home Schooling Families' Localities

SES Decile	Home Schooled Families		
	No	%	Cumulative %
1 (most disadvantaged)	167	9.3%	9.3%
2	221	12.3%	21.6%
3	217	12.1%	33.6%
4	223	12.4%	46.0%
5	186	10.3%	56.3%
6	183	10.2%	66.5%
7	187	10.4%	76.9%
8	182	10.1%	87.0%
9	140	7.8%	94.8%
10 (most advantaged)	94	5.2%	100.0%
Total	1800	100.0%	

It can be seen from Table 5 and Figure 2 that while home schooling families are located in localities with a range of SES profiles, there is a proportional over-representation from more disadvantaged localities (in particular deciles 2, 3 and 4) and under-representation from more advantaged localities (particularly deciles 9 and 10).

Figure 2: Socio-economic status of Home Schooling Families' Localities



INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014

Welcome to BOSTES

New South Wales Government

Educational Resources.
Board of Studies NSW
[Home](#)
[Home schooling in NSW](#)
[Home schooling information package – questions and answers](#)

Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package ('the Information Package') Questions and Answers

Updated May 2014

Purpose

- On 26 August 2013, the Office of the Board of Studies ('the Office') published an updated Information Package.
- To assist parents, the following 'Questions and Answers' have been developed.

Overview of questions

- Q1 Why has the Information Package been updated?
- Q2 Does the updated Information Package require me to change the way I home school my child?
- Q3 Does the updated Information Package mean that the unique nature of home education is no longer recognised?
- Q4 How can I access *Program Builder*?
- Q5 Does the home schooling educational program need to be based on Board of Studies syllabuses?
- Q6 Can I select the content for my child's educational program?
- Q7 Will the Authorised Person still discuss my application with me?
- Q8 Can I develop a program to meet my child's individual learning needs?
- Q9 Is it new to expect that the child will be present in the home during a home visit?
- Q10 Do I have to seek approval when working above the Years of schooling recorded on my child's certificate of registration?
- Q11 Can I continue to plan learning activities outside my home?
- Q12 Can I continue to plan group learning?
- Q13 Does the Information Package restrict my home schooling to 'school hours'?
- Q14 What might prompt a monitoring visit?
- Q15 Have the requirements for record keeping increased?
- Q16 Was there consultation on the updated Information Package?
- Q17 How can Board syllabuses be used by home schooling parents when developing an educational program for their child?
- Q18 Has the requirement that parents engage with Board syllabuses increased the workload for home schooling parents?
- Q19 Can home schooling parents continue to teach multi-age groups, use common themes or topics, or provide educational experiences beyond the confines of the home?
- Q20 How does an Authorised Person decide on the recommendation for a particular period of registration?

Q1. Why has the Information Package been updated?

The main reason for updating the Information Package is to provide information for parents about the new syllabuses developed by the Board of Studies to be implemented commencing from 2014.

The updated Information Package also provides clarification and more explicit information about the requirements and processes for home schooling registration.

For home schooling families who were meeting the requirements for registration prior to the publication of the updated Information Package, the clarified and more explicit information has not created a need to change the approach to home schooling. The requirements for registration have not changed.

Q2. Does the updated Information Package require me to change the way I home school my child?

No. For parents who were meeting the requirements for home schooling registration prior to the publication of the updated Information Package, there is no need to change your approach apart from commencing to implement the new Board of Studies syllabuses from 2014.

Home schooling parents can continue to:

- adopt an approach that integrates learning across a range of subject areas
- provide common topics or themes for children of multiple ages
- select content that is relevant to the child's learning needs
- design projects, choose resources and provide meaningful and engaging learning activities
- address individual learning rates and interests
- adjust the educational program according to factors such as the child's progress, the need for extension or revision, local events, new

resources and/or emerging areas of interest

- build on the learning opportunities that arise naturally in the home on a day-to-day basis
- plan learning times to suit the family.

Q3. Does the updated Information Package mean that the unique nature of home education is no longer recognised?

No. The unique nature of education in the home and the commitment, energy and time home schooling parents give to educate their children continue to be recognised. The diverse range of strategies, philosophies and approaches parents have for educating their children also continue to be recognised and valued.

The Information Package does not prescribe any particular approach to home schooling, nor does it preclude any particular approach.

Q4. How can I access Program Builder?

To access Program Builder, home schooling parents need to establish a 'Scootle' account. Scootle is a content discovery portal containing more than 16,000 teaching resources. Access to the Board's Program Builder assists in planning and organising learning content and resources.

The process for creating a Scootle account is to email the Home Schooling Unit <homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au> to request information about creating a Scootle account. Please provide your name, home location and the names of your registered children in this email.

On receipt of your emailed request, the Home Schooling Unit will confirm the home schooling registration of your children and send a return email providing details of how you can establish a Scootle account.

Parents may also be interested in the website www.tesaustalia.com, which was launched by TES Australia in partnership with the Board. The website provides a comprehensive range of teaching and assessment resources that relate to the NSW syllabuses. Home schooling families can register at this site to gain free access to over 500,000 digital resources.

Q5. Does the home schooling educational program need to be based on Board of Studies syllabuses?

Yes. The *Education Act 1990* provides the minimum curriculum for all children in NSW. The minimum curriculum is the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses. For children in NSW, the educational program must be based on and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies syllabuses.

This requirement has not changed with the updated Information Package. For parents who are currently using the Board of Studies syllabuses to plan an educational program for their child, the updated Information Package does not create a need to change the approach being taken by the parent.

The curriculum guidelines in the previous package were not, and are not, the minimum curriculum in NSW. The updated Information Package makes this clear. This clarity was requested by parents.

Q6. Can I select the content for my child's educational program?

Yes. The updated Information Package continues to provide for a home schooling parent to choose content that is relevant to the child's learning needs. This may be syllabus content, content developed by the parent or content drawn from a range of other sources.

Q7. Will the Authorised Person still discuss my application with me?

Yes. The purpose of a home visit by an Authorised Person is to assess an application for home schooling registration. The Information Package confirms this purpose. Discussion between the parent and the Authorised Person continues to be part of this process.

Q8. Can I develop a program to meet my child's individual learning needs?

Yes. It is expected that in planning an educational program, a parent will consider his or her child's individual learning needs and will incorporate specific learning activities and content to address those needs.

Q9. Is it new to expect that the child will be present in the home during a home visit?

No. The expectation that the child will be present in the home during a home visit has been part of the home visit process for many years. The updated Information Package makes this expectation clear.

Q10. Do I have to seek approval when working above the Years of schooling recorded on my child's certificate of registration?

The additional information in the Information Package means that it is only if a parent is seeking to change the Years of schooling on a child's certificate that the parent needs to notify the Home Schooling Unit. (Note: A certificate of registration may record 'primary' or 'secondary' education.)

Home schoolers may recall that Years of schooling information was only added to registration certificates when the minimum school leaving age was increased in 2010.

Parents can continue to provide work to extend their child's learning or to assist a child with learning difficulties.

Parents do not need to seek approval to select content, learning activities and resources that are relevant to the educational program that has been developed to address the child's individual learning needs. Parents do not need to seek approval to adjust an educational program, for example by providing extension work, spending more time on a topic, repeating an activity or progressing towards learning a new skill.

Addressing the individual learning needs of a child is part of home schooling. It is also part of meeting the registration requirement for the educational program to be suitable for the identified learning needs of the child.

Q11. Can I continue to plan learning activities outside my home?

Yes. Many home schooling parents incorporate learning outside of the home as part of an educational program. Activities such as community events, visits to the library, travel to local regions, trips to museums and participation in sporting groups may all contribute to a child's educational program.

The updated Information Package has not changed with regard to the inclusion and recognition of such activities as part of a child's educational program that is primarily implemented in the home.

Q12. Can I continue to plan group learning?

Yes. Many home schooling families come together to share resources, provide support, and contribute particular talents. The *Education Act 1990* states that home schooling means schooling in the home. This does not preclude parents from planning group learning activities as an aspect of the educational program that is primarily delivered in the child's home.

The updated Information Package has not changed this aspect of home schooling. The requirement of the *Education Act 1990* has not changed.

Q13. Does the Information Package restrict my home schooling to 'school hours'?

No. The requirement relating to the time to be allocated for home schooling has not changed. The updated Information Package continues to recognise that home schooling parents plan learning times according to the schedule of the family. This may be across all days of the week and at times that are outside of a typical school day.

Q14. What might prompt a monitoring visit?

A monitoring visit may occur if the Office receives information causing concern that is relevant to home schooling registration. If this occurs, the Office would first write to the home schooling parent to provide notice of the monitoring visit prior to the monitoring visit taking place.

A monitoring visit may also occur if an Authorised Person has recommended monitoring during the next period of registration. In this case, the parent would be notified of the recommended monitoring visit and would receive written advice of the visit prior to the monitoring taking place.

The Office has no plans for 'unannounced' home visits.

Q15. Have the requirements for record keeping increased?

There are no additional requirements for record keeping. The updated Information Package does not require parents to keep any more records than were required previously. Section 2 of the Information Package states the requirements for home schooling registration.

Q16. Was there consultation on the updated Information Package?

The main reason for updating the Information Package was to provide information about the staged implementation of new Kindergarten to Year 10 Board of Studies syllabuses in English, Mathematics, Science and History from 2014.

There was extensive and open consultation during the development of the new syllabuses. Information about the development and publication of the syllabuses has been available on the Board's website for over a year. In August and November 2012, the Home Education Association provided information for families about the development and publication of the new syllabuses. Authorised Persons have been discussing the new Board syllabuses with home schooling families for over a year.

The more explicit information contained in the updated Information Package addresses requests from home schooling parents to clarify aspects of home schooling registration and clarify what is expected. For parents meeting the requirements for registration, the updated Information Package has not created a need to change their approach to home schooling.

Ongoing discussion with home schooling parents and representatives of home schooling groups has demonstrated the need to provide further information to home schoolers to address any areas that may continue to be unclear or misunderstood. Such further information will take the form of additional questions and answers published on this page.

Q17. How can Board syllabuses be used by home schooling parents when developing an educational program for their child?

There are a number of 'entry points' to Board syllabuses for parents in developing the child's educational program. For example, a parent may demonstrate engagement with Board syllabuses through the integration of syllabus outcomes into the educational program. Alternatively, or in addition, a parent may use the syllabus stage statements as the basis for planning the educational program; or the parent use syllabus content to demonstrate that the educational program is based on relevant Board of Studies syllabuses.

Q18. Has the requirement that parents engage with Board syllabuses increased the workload for home schooling parents?

The requirement of the *Education Act 1990* that the educational program be based on, and taught in accordance with, the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses was stated in the previous Information Package and is repeated in the current Information Package.

Q19. Can home schooling parents continue to teach multi-age groups, use common themes or topics, or provide educational experiences beyond the confines of the home?

Parents may continue to provide learning activities for their children in multi-age groups, using common themes or topics; parents may continue to adjust the pace and/or content of the educational program in response to the identified learning needs of their children. Activities such as community events, visits to the library, travel to local regions, trips to museums and participation in sporting groups may all contribute to a child's educational program. The updated Information Package has not changed with regard to the inclusion and recognition of such activities as part of a child's educational program that is primarily implemented in the home.

Q20 How does an Authorised Person decide on the recommendation for a particular period of registration?

Authorised Persons assess each application on its individual merits. The process for making a recommendation for home schooling registration is based on the professional discernment and on-balance judgement of the Authorised Person.

An Authorised Person considers a range of factors in recommending a specific period of home schooling registration. Importantly, the Authorised Person will review the evidence provided by the applicant in relation to the requirements for home schooling registration as detailed in the [Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package \(PDF\)](#) (see page 10). Guidelines to assist Authorised Persons in making recommendations can be found in Appendix B of the [Registration for Home Schooling – Authorised Persons Handbook \(PDF\)](#).

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014

FORM 1: Application for Initial Registration (or Exemption from Registration) for Home Schooling

This form is to be used to:

- apply for registration (or exemption from registration) for the first time, OR
- apply for registration (or exemption from registration) for a child who may have been registered previously but does not have a current certificate of registration.

A separate application is required for each child.

Please return this form to:

Home Schooling Unit, BOSTES,
GPO Box 5300 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au

Telephone: (02) 9367 8149 Fax: (02) 9367 8475

Note: The educational program you have prepared will be reviewed during an assessment of your application by home visit.

Office use only	
Region:	
AP:	
D20 /	

Applicant's name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other
(Please circle) (Given name) (Family name)

Postal address:
..... Postcode:

Telephone no: Home: Mobile:

Email address:

Home address: (where home schooling will occur) (If the same as postal address write 'as above')

Child's name:
(Given name) (Family name)

Child's date of birth:/...../..... **Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐

Indigenous status: Is the child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? (Please tick)

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not disclosed ☐ Not known ☐

Applicant's relationship to child:

(If Legal Guardian, please attach copies of supporting documentation.
If Other, please provide details.)

Parent ☐
Legal Guardian ☐
Other ☐

Is the child the subject of a current Court Order?

(If yes, please attach a copy of the current order with this application.)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Is the child a State Ward?

(If yes, please attach a letter from the Department of Community Services stating consent for this home schooling application.)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you applied previously for home schooling?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide details including the name(s) of any siblings currently or previously registered for home schooling.

Are you applying for exemption from registration for home schooling on religious grounds?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please indicate the Years of schooling you intend to deliver:

Primary (Kindergarten to Year 6) ☐

Junior Secondary (Years 7 to 10) ☐

Senior Secondary (Years 11 –12) ☐

Note: For Years 11–12 please contact the Home Schooling Unit to discuss your educational program before proceeding further with this application.

Educational issues or special needs

Please indicate below if your child has special needs or if there are any educational issues you would like to discuss with the Authorised Person. If necessary, please attach further comment and/or information.

Optional section

Please briefly outline your reason(s) for choosing to apply to home school your child.

Philosophical ☐ Religious ☐ Special educational needs of the child ☐

Other ☐ (please specify)

An Authorised Person will contact you to make an appointment to assess the documentation you provide to demonstrate that requirements for registration will be met.

Are you prepared for the assessment visit from an Authorised Person by having read and addressed the requirements for home schooling contained in the Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package and having:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| – records of the child's previous educational history and attainment? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – an educational program based on the relevant BOSTES syllabuses? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – a method for recording learning activities? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – a method for recording student achievement and progress? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – sufficient resources and a suitable learning environment? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

I hereby apply for registration/exemption from registration (delete as applicable) for home schooling of the above-named child under Part 7, Division 6/7 of the Education Act 1990.

Signature of applicant: **Date:**/...../.....

Please note: The application must be signed by one parent. A second parent may also sign. Forms submitted by email must also contain a parent's signature.

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014

FORM 2: Application for Renewal of Registration (or Exemption from Registration) for Home Schooling

This form is to be used to apply for renewal of registration (or exemption from registration) for a child with current registration (or exemption from registration).

A separate application is required for each child.

Please return this form to:

Home Schooling Unit, BOSTES,
GPO Box 5300 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: homeschooling@bos.nsw.edu.au

Telephone: (02) 9367 8149 Fax: (02) 9367 8475

Note: *The educational program you have delivered, and plan to deliver, will be reviewed during an assessment of your application by home visit.*

Office use only	
Region:	
AP:	
D20 /	

Applicant's name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other
(Please circle) (Given name) (Family name)

Postal address:
Postcode:

Telephone no: Home: Mobile:

Email address:

Home address: (where home schooling will occur) *(If the same as postal address write 'as above')*

Child's name:
(Given name) (Family name)

Child's date of birth:/...../..... **Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐

Indigenous status: Is the child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? (Please tick)

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not disclosed ☐ Not known ☐

Applicant's relationship to child:

(If Legal Guardian, please attach copies of supporting documentation.)

If Other, please provide details.)

Parent ☐
Legal Guardian ☐
Other ☐

Is the child the subject of a current Court Order?

(If yes, please attach a copy of the current order with this application.)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Is the child a State Ward?

(If yes, please attach a letter from the Department of Community Services stating consent for this home schooling application.)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you applying for exemption from registration for home schooling on religious grounds?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please indicate the Years of schooling you intend to deliver in the next registration period:

Primary (Kindergarten to Year 6) ☐

Junior Secondary (Years 7 to 10) ☐

Senior Secondary (Years 11 and 12)

Note: For Years 11–12 please contact the Home Schooling Unit to discuss your educational program before proceeding further with this application.

Optional section

Please briefly outline your reason(s) for choosing to apply to home school your child.

Philosophical ☐

Religious ☐

Special educational needs of the child ☐

Other ☐

An Authorised Person will contact you to make an appointment to assess the documentation you provide to demonstrate that requirements for registration have been and will be met.

Are you prepared for the assessment visit from an Authorised Person by having read and addressed the requirements for home schooling contained in the *Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package* and having:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| – an educational program based on the relevant BOSTES syllabuses? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – an overview of the curriculum planned for the next period of registration? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – records of learning activities? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – records of student achievement and progress? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – records of the time allocated to student learning? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| – sufficient resources and a suitable learning environment? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

I hereby apply for registration/exemption from registration (delete as applicable) for home schooling of the above-named child under Part 7, Division 6/7 of the *Education Act 1990*.

Signature of applicant: **Date:** / /

Please note: The application must be signed by one parent. A second parent may also sign. Forms submitted by email must also contain a parent's signature.

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

Date received: 8/08/2014



REGISTRATION FOR HOME SCHOOLING

AUTHORISED PERSONS HANDBOOK

August 2013

© 2013 Copyright Board of Studies NSW for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

This document contains Material prepared by the Board of Studies NSW for and on behalf of the State of New South Wales. The Material is protected by Crown copyright.

All rights reserved. No part of the Material may be reproduced in Australia or in any other country by any process, electronic or otherwise, in any material form or transmitted to any other person or stored electronically in any form without the prior written permission of the Board of Studies NSW, except as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968. School students in NSW and teachers in schools in NSW may copy reasonable portions of the Material for the purposes of bona fide research or study.

When you access the Material you agree: to use the Material for information purposes only to reproduce a single copy for personal bona fide study use only and not to reproduce any major extract or the entire Material without the prior permission of the Board of Studies NSW · to acknowledge that the Material is provided by the Board of Studies NSW not to make any charge for providing the Material or any part of the Material to another person or in any way make commercial use of the Material without the prior written consent of the Board of Studies NSW and payment of the appropriate copyright fee to include this copyright notice in any copy made not to modify the Material or any part of the Material without the express prior written permission of the Board of Studies NSW.

The Material may contain third-party copyright materials such as photos, diagrams, quotations, cartoons and artworks. These materials are protected by Australian and international copyright laws and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any format without the copyright owner's specific permission. Unauthorised reproduction, transmission or commercial use of such copyright materials may result in prosecution.

The Board of Studies has made all reasonable attempts to locate owners of third-party copyright material and invites anyone from whom permission has not been sought to contact the Copyright Officer, ph (02) 9367 8289, fax (02) 9279 1482.

Published by Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300 Sydney NSW 2001 Australia
Tel: (02) 9367 8111
Fax: (02) 9367 8484
Internet: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
August 2013

20130503

Contents

CONTENTS	3
PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK	4
LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR REGISTRATION FOR HOME SCHOOLING	4
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	4
THE REGISTRATION PROCESS	5
OTHER HOME SCHOOLING PROCESSES.....	12
ADMINISTRATION	13
AUTHORISED PERSON BRIEFINGS	14
WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY: RISK MANAGEMENT	17
GUIDELINES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF PERIODS OF REGISTRATION	18

Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of the Authorised Persons Handbook ('the AP Handbook') is to:

- describe the role and responsibilities of Authorised Persons
- provide an overview of the home schooling registration process as it relates to the role of Authorised Persons
- guide Authorised Persons in conducting assessments of applications for registration for home schooling.

Audience

The intended audience of the AP Handbook is those persons responsible for making recommendations to the Office of the Board of Studies ('the Office') with regard to home schooling registration. This includes Board Inspectors as well as Authorised Persons and Senior Registration Officers delegated by the Office's Chief Executive for the purpose of making recommendations in relation to home schooling registration.

Legislative basis for registration for home schooling

Under the *Education Act 1990* ('the Act'), home schooling is recognised as a legitimate way of providing for the educational needs of children in NSW.

Part 7 of the Act makes provisions for home schooling.

A parent who decides to home school his or her child must have the approval of the Minister for Education or the Minister's delegate. Approval to home school is by registration.

The Office is responsible for administering the home schooling registration program.

The Office's Chief Executive has been delegated the authority to register children for home schooling by the Minister for Education.

The Office's *Registration for Home Schooling in NSW Information Package* ('the Information Package') details the Office's requirements for registration and the application process. The Information Package is available on the Board of Studies website <www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>.

The Information Package is the primary source of information about home schooling registration. The AP Handbook is to be read in conjunction with the Information Package.

Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Office

The Office's Registration and Accreditation Branch ('the Branch') administers the Office's home schooling registration program.

The Home Schooling Unit within the Branch has particular responsibilities related to the administration necessary for implementing the home schooling registration program.

The Office allocates applications for home schooling registration to Authorised Persons for assessment and sets the procedures to be followed by Authorised Persons in undertaking assessments.

The role of Authorised Persons

Under the Act, an Authorised Person in relation to a provision of the Act, means a person who is authorised by the Minister for Education (or the Minister's delegate) for the purposes of that provision.

With regard to the provisions of the Act for home schooling, an Authorised Person is authorised to make recommendations regarding registration for home schooling.

Under the provisions of the Act for home schooling, an Authorised Person includes any Board Inspector. The Office has also appointed identified staff from within the Branch to be Authorised Persons. Other Authorised Persons are employed by the Office, on a contractual basis, in metropolitan and regional locations across New South Wales.

The Office's Authorised Persons are responsible for assessing applications for home schooling registration and for making recommendations to the Office in relation to home schooling registration.

Authorised Persons must, as a condition of employment, know and implement the Office's Code of Conduct and Ethics. A copy of the Office's Code of Conduct and Ethics is provided to each newly appointed Authorised Person. A further copy is provided to each Authorised Person on an annual basis and as the Code is updated.

The registration process

Overview of the home schooling registration process

The home schooling registration process involves the following key steps:

- application is received by the Office
- the Office allocates the application to an Authorised Person
- the Authorised Person assesses application
- the Authorised Person provides a report to the Office with a recommendation relating to home schooling registration
- if registration is approved, the Office issues a certificate of registration to the applicant
- if registration is refused, the applicant is advised and may appeal.

These steps are described in the Information Package.

This section of the AP Handbook outlines the roles of the Office and Authorised Persons as relevant to each step in the registration process.

Receipt and allocation of applications – the Office

An applicant may apply for initial registration or renewal of registration at any time.

On receipt of an application for either initial or renewal of registration, the Office enters details of the application into the Office's database.

Applications are then allocated by the Office to an Authorised Person for assessment. Typically, applications are allocated to Authorised Persons on a weekly basis.

Allocations are made by email to the Authorised Person. The email includes:

- a summary of the Authorised Person's allocations
- a copy of each allocated application
- family history of registration, where applicable, for each application

- other information/supporting documentation where relevant (this may include an Authorised Person's report for a previous application, if relevant, and/or supporting information provided by the applicant).

In some cases it may also be relevant for a senior officer from the Branch to contact an Authorised Person to provide additional information relevant to the Authorised Person's allocations.

Receipt of applications – the Authorised Person

Applicants are advised in the Information Package that it may take up to three months to finalise the assessment of an application for registration, from the time of submitting the application to the time of receiving a certificate of registration. Within this timeframe, the Office provides a maximum period of 35 days for an Authorised Person to assess an allocated application and provide a report to the Office. This number of days may be extended if the circumstances warrant an extension and if approved by a senior officer of the Branch.

On receipt of the allocated applications, the Authorised Person reviews the applications and notifies the Branch if anomalies are identified or more information is required.

For each application, the Authorised Person:

- makes contact with the applicant to set a date for the assessment to be conducted by home visit
- conducts a home visit to assess the application
- prepares a report making recommendations relating to home schooling registration
- submits the report to the Office.

Each of these steps is discussed in the following section of the handbook.

Assessment of Applications

Initial contact

The initial contact from the Authorised Person to the applicant is critical to the assessment process. The Authorised Person must specify clearly:

- his or her name and position
- the process for assessing the application by home visit
- the evidence of compliance the applicant is required to provide at the time of the assessment to demonstrate that the requirements for registration are being, and/or will be, met
- that the child or children to be registered are expected to be present during the assessment by home visit.

During the initial contact, and prior to undertaking the assessment, it is important for the Authorised Person to check the 'readiness' of the applicant by asking whether the applicant has read the Information Package and whether the applicant has prepared an educational program for his or her child based on the Board's syllabuses. For applicants seeking renewal of registration, the Authorised Person must also check that the applicant will have evidence of the delivery of the current educational program ready for the assessment by home visit.

Apart from exceptional circumstances and with the approval of a senior officer from the Branch, the delay between being allocated an application and assessing the application should not be longer than three weeks. This timeframe provides adequate time for the entire assessment process to be finalised within 35 days for the majority of applications.

If an Authorised Person experiences problems in contacting an applicant or in arranging a time to assess the application within three weeks of being allocated the application, the Authorised Person should discuss this issue with a Senior Registration Officer or Board Inspector from the Branch. In these circumstances, the Office may proceed to refuse the application unless the application is withdrawn by the applicant.

The Office has a process for tracking the timeliness of the registration process. An officer from the Branch will contact an Authorised Person if a report for an allocated application has not been received within the expected timeline.

Assessment by home visit

Applications for home schooling registration are assessed by home visit.

The requirements for home schooling registration are detailed in the Information Package. The Authorised Person, in making an assessment, must have regard to evidence relating to each of these requirements. The Authorised Person must also consider the capacity of the applicant to plan and provide for the educational needs of his or her child, as reflected by the documentary evidence available.

In relation to the identified learning needs of the child, the Authorised Person may also consider any information available in relation to the child's educational history, previous school reports, participation in external testing programs such as NAPLAN and/or reports from external professionals such as a speech therapist or a psychologist.

For applications for initial registration, the purpose of the assessment is for the Authorised Person to determine whether, based on the evidence available, the applicant has demonstrated that the requirements for registration would be complied with if registration was granted.

For applications for renewal of registration, the purpose of the assessment is for the Authorised Person to determine whether, based on the evidence available, the applicant has demonstrated current compliance with the requirements for registration and that the requirements for registration would be complied with if renewal of registration was granted.

Registration for home schooling requires that the educational program be delivered in the registered child's home. In assessing an application for home schooling registration, an Authorised Person must be satisfied that the education of the child, as required for registration, including for all key learning areas, will occur in the home. The home schooling program may be supplemented by extracurricular activities, participation in tutorial groups and/or excursion type activities.

Work health and safety

Assessments for home schooling registration by home visit must be conducted during normal business hours and on weekdays. If an applicant requests a time outside these hours and days, the Authorised Person may seek written approval from a Board Inspector from the Branch. Approval may be granted depending on the circumstances.

Under the Office's Work Health and Safety Policy, Authorised Persons are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of others in the workplace and to observe directions on health and safety from designated officers from the Office. A copy of the Office's Work Health and Safety Policy is provided to each newly appointed Authorised Person. A further copy is provided to each Authorised Person on an annual basis and as the policy is updated.

Further information in relation to work health and safety is attached (**Appendix A**).

Conduct

At all times, the Authorised Person's conduct must be professional and in accordance with the Office's Code of Conduct and Ethics.

The Authorised Person's role in assessing an application for registration is not a mentoring or consultative role. It must be clear to the applicant that the role and purpose of the home visit is to assess the application based on the documentary evidence provided by the applicant. Within the context of this purpose, the Authorised Person may, at times, provide information to the applicant in relation to the Board's educational support materials and other helpful advice.

Child Protection

Prior to being employed by the Office, each Authorised Person is required to complete a Working with Children Check under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*. Information about the working with children check is available on the website of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People <www.kids.nsw.gov.au>.

Authorised Persons are considered to be 'mandatory reporters' under the *Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*. Mandatory reporters have a legislated obligation to report children at risk of significant harm to Community Services on telephone number 133 627 or 132 111. Community Services has developed a Mandatory Reporter Guide to help mandatory reporters decide whether a concern meets the statutory threshold for reporting risk of significant harm. Information about mandatory reporting of the risk of significant harm and the Mandatory Reporter Guide are available on the Community Services' website <www.community.nsw.gov.au>.

Authorised Persons are asked to advise the Branch's Assistant Director if a report of a risk of significant harm is made to Community Services as a result of the Authorised Person's work related to the home schooling program.

Home visits are only to be conducted by an Authorised Person when allocated an application to assess or if directed by the Office for a purpose associated with home schooling registration.

Conflict of Interest

If an Authorised Person is allocated an application to assess and the Authorised Person is aware of a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, the Authorised Person has an obligation to disclose the conflict of interest to the Assistant Director or a Board Inspector from the Branch immediately. The application will be re-allocated or, depending on the specific circumstances, other measures will be put in place to manage the potential for a conflict of interest.

Home visit – feedback to the applicant

Towards the end of an assessment by home visit, the Authorised Person typically informs the applicant of the recommendation to be made in relation to home schooling registration. The Authorised Person must be clear that his or her recommendation is a recommendation and not a decision. The Office's Chief Executive is responsible for deciding whether to grant registration or not.

At times, an Authorised Person may need to gather further information or to discuss a proposed recommendation with an officer from the Branch, prior to finalising a recommendation. In these circumstances, the Authorised Person is asked to inform the applicant of the recommendation being considered and that the applicant will be advised subsequently of the recommendation to be made.

If the Authorised Person has identified concern that the applicant may not be complying with the requirements for registration and/or that the applicant has not demonstrated a capacity to comply with the requirements for registration, the Authorised Person must identify the areas of concern to the applicant. A concern or concerns must be relevant to the applicant's compliance or capacity to comply with the requirements for registration. Matters unrelated to the requirements for registration are not to be considered as part of the process of assessment.

Withdrawal of an application

An applicant may withdraw his or her application at any stage before a decision relating to the application has been made by the Office.

The withdrawal of an application for registration must be made in writing to the Office by email, mail or by completion of a *Withdrawal of Application for Registration* form provided by an Authorised Person.

The Authorised Person's report and recommendations

Authorised Person's reports

The Office provides report templates for Authorised Persons. Reports are to be submitted using the template provided by the Office.

The Authorised Person's report states the findings of the Authorised Person in relation to the evidence that has been sighted during the assessment process. Based on this evidence, the report states the recommendation of the Authorised Person.

The Authorised Person's report identifies his or her findings in relation to the evidence produced by the applicant to demonstrate that the requirements are being met and/or that the requirements would be met if registration was granted.

The report requires that the Authorised Person record an overview of the evidence considered during the assessment. The report also requires that the Authorised Person comment on the applicant's demonstrated compliance and/or areas for improvement. Comments on a report must be reviewed by the Authorised Person to ensure that the comments are clear, professional, free of bias and emotional language, and relevant to compliance with the requirements.

The Authorised Person is required to have a process for checking the accuracy of details on the report such as the name, address, date of home visit, dates for a recommended period of registration and Years of schooling. All reports must be checked by the Authorised Person prior to submitting them to the Office.

The Authorised Person's findings and recommendations

The Authorised Person's findings in relation to the available evidence of compliance with the requirements determines the recommendation to be made.

The findings and recommendations of the Authorised Person will be considered by the Office in deciding whether or not to grant registration and, if so, the period for which registration is granted.

Guidelines for the Authorised Person to consider in making a recommendation relating to home schooling registration are attached (**Appendix B**).

Recommendation to register

Where an applicant for initial registration has satisfied the Authorised Person that a capacity to meet the requirements for registration has been demonstrated, the Authorised Person may recommend a period of initial registration.

Generally, initial registration is for a period that is less than the maximum of up to two years. The reason for this is that whilst most aspects of the requirements can be demonstrably met prior to an initial period of registration, others can only be prospectively addressed. For example, while prior evidence can be obtained relating to the requirement that the educational program *will be* based on the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses, evidence that the educational program *is being* taught in accordance with the Board's syllabuses can only be made available subsequently when the program *is being* taught. For this reason, initial registration is generally for a period of less than the maximum possible. Evidence of the program *being taught* in accordance with the requirements can be reviewed prior to any longer periods of registration being considered if the applicant seeks renewal of registration.

Applicants for initial registration with a history of successive periods of home schooling registration for another child, each for the maximum period of two years, may be recommended for a period of initial registration of up to two years. In these circumstances, the applicant must have demonstrated that the educational program being delivered to the other child *is being* taught in accordance with the requirements over a sustained period.

Where an applicant for renewal of registration has satisfied the Authorised Person that current compliance with the requirements has been demonstrated and that a capacity to meet the requirements for registration for a further period has been demonstrated, the Authorised Person may recommend a period of registration of up to two years.

At times an Authorised Person may be satisfied that the applicant is complying, or has demonstrated a capacity to comply, but there are identified areas for improvement in relation to compliance with the requirements for registration. In these circumstances, the Authorised Person may recommend registration for a period less than the maximum period. The specific areas for improvement must be communicated to the applicant during the visit and noted in the Authorised Person's report.

An Authorised Person may also recommend registration for a period less than the maximum possible, if the child is turning 17 years of age before the maximum period would end or when a registration period is being aligned to the registration period of a sibling.

If an Authorised Person is considering a recommendation of three months or less for an initial period of registration or six months or less for a renewed period of registration, the Authorised Person must discuss the recommendation with a Senior Registration Officer or Board Inspector prior to finalising the report.

Recommendation – Years of schooling

A certificate of registration for home schooling will specify a Year or Years of schooling for primary education (Kindergarten to Year 6), secondary education (Year 7 to Year 10) or for the curriculum beyond Year 10 (Year 11 and Year 12).

For registration beyond Year 10, the applicant is asked to discuss his or her plans with a senior officer of the Branch. The applicant must provide an educational program that complies with the Board's pattern of study requirements for the Higher School Certificate, that is:

- (a) courses of study of a general description determined by the Minister on the recommendation of the Board are to be provided for each student in each Year
- (b) those courses of study are to include a course of study in English

- (c) those courses of study are to comply with a pattern of study determined by the Minister on the recommendation of the Board
- (d) those courses of study are to be taught in accordance with a syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board and approved by the Minister.

A pattern of study may include (but is not limited to) the number of courses to be studied, the sequence in which particular courses are to be taught and the number of units of study that a course is to contain. More information regarding the pattern of study requirements is contained in the Information Package and the Board of Studies' Assessment Certification Examination ('ACE') website. Also of consideration with regard to an application for home schooling registration for Years 11 and 12, is the period of time for schooling before the student turns 17 and registration ceases.

Recommendation to refuse registration

If an Authorised Person forms the opinion that an applicant for initial registration has not demonstrated a capacity to comply with the requirements for registration, a recommendation to refuse registration must be made.

If the Authorised Person forms the opinion that an applicant for renewal of registration has not demonstrated current compliance with the requirements for registration and/or a capacity to comply with the requirements for a future period of registration, a recommendation to refuse registration must be made. The applicant's capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of his or her child as evidenced by the current educational program and whether the current program has been delivered must also be considered.

If an Authorised Person makes a recommendation that an application be refused, the Authorised Person's report must state the reasons for making the recommendation to refuse, as relevant to the requirements for registration. The Authorised Person is required to review his or her comments to ensure that they accurately and clearly state the Authorised Person's findings in relation to non-compliance with the requirements for registration. Matters unrelated to the requirements for registration are not to be considered as part of the assessment process or as a reason for recommending that registration be refused.

An application for registration may also be refused if the applicant cannot be contacted or is not available for an Authorised Person to assess the application by home visit within the Office's timeline.

If a recommendation to refuse registration is made, the applicant is advised by the Office of the right to seek an internal review of the recommendation. This process is described in the Information Package.

Submission of the Authorised Person's report

When an Authorised Person's report has been finalised, the Authorised Person submits the report to the Office.

The report is submitted by email to the Home Schooling Unit.

If relevant, Authorised Persons are also required to submit to the Home Schooling Unit any file notes or records associated with the assessment. The Office must abide by the *State Records Act 1998* and is required to maintain full and accurate records of the business activities of the Office.

On receipt of a report from an Authorised Person, the Office enters the details including the recommendation, into the home schooling database.

The Office will contact the Authorised Person if clarification of a report is required. At times, clarification is required in relation to inconsistent information contained within different parts of a report, unclear comments and/or errors in fact such as the date of birth or address of the child. Authorised Persons must have and implement a process for checking each report before it is submitted.

Where a report recommends registration, the Office prepares a submission for the Chief Executive and, if registration is approved, the Office issues a certificate of registration.

Where a report recommends that registration be refused, the Office commences a process to advise the applicant in writing of the recommendation and of the right to an internal review. This process is described in the Information Package.

Other home schooling processes

Site visit

Home schooling registration is conditional on the registered child undertaking an educational program at the home address specified on his or her certificate of registration.

If a registered child moves to a new home address, the Office must be notified.

On receipt of a notification that a registered child has moved home address, the Office arranges for a visit to the new home address. The purpose of the visit is to assess whether the learning environment of the new home is suitable for home schooling registration. If relevant, the Authorised Person will also have regard to evidence relating to compliance with other requirements.

If the new home is found to be suitable, a new certificate of registration identifying the new home address will be issued for the remaining portion of the current period of registration.

If an Authorised Person is requested to undertake an assessment of a new home address, the Authorised Person will:

- contact the parent to make arrangements for the visit
- undertake the home visit to assess the suitability of the learning environment
- expect that the child or children who are registered are present during the home visit
- prepare a report and recommendation
- submit the report to the Office.

On receipt of the report, the Office finalises the process and, if approved, issues a new certificate of registration.

Certificate of completion of Year 10

An applicant may apply for a certificate of completion of Year 10 for his or her child.

The Information Package explains the certificate and the eligibility requirements.

If allocated an application for a certificate of completion of Year 10, the Authorised Person will:

- contact the parent to make arrangements for assessing the application
- undertake the assessment
- expect that the child to be assessed is present during the assessment by home visit
- prepare a report and recommendation
- submit the report to the Office.

On receipt of the report, the Office finalises the process and, if approved, a certificate of completion of Year 10 is issued.

Registration for Years 11 and 12

For applicants seeking home schooling registration for Years 11 and 12, the requirements for registration are the same as for other Years of schooling with additional requirements related to the curriculum and the pattern of study.

The Information Package describes the curriculum requirements.

Typically, a senior officer from the Branch contacts an applicant for registration for Year 11 or Year 12, to discuss whether the applicant has prepared an educational program based on the Board's syllabuses and the required pattern of study.

The child to be registered is expected to be present during the assessment by home visit.

As registration for Years 11 and 12 is relatively new, any recommendation for registration for Year 11 or Year 12 must be discussed with a senior officer from the Branch prior to finalising a report.

Internal review

An applicant may seek an internal review of a recommendation to refuse registration or to cancel registration.

If an internal review is requested, the internal review is conducted by a different Authorised Person from the Authorised Person who made the original recommendation.

If allocated an internal review, the Office will provide the Authorised Person with a copy of the applicant's application, the original Authorised Person's report and recommendations stating the reasons why refusal or cancellation of registration was recommended and any additional information provided by the applicant.

A Board Inspector or Senior Registration Officer from the Branch will provide specific advice to the Authorised Person about the process, timeline and reporting requirements for undertaking the internal review.

Following the internal review assessment and report, the Office finalises the process and advises the applicant in writing of the outcome of the internal review.

Recommendation for monitoring

From time to time the Office may monitor a parent's compliance with the requirements for registration. When this occurs, an Authorised Person appointed by the Office will contact the parent to organise a home visit to review evidence that the requirements for registration continue to be met.

Administration

Travel

Authorised Persons are required to use their own vehicle for home schooling assessment visits.

Authorised Persons are required to complete a *Use of Private Motor Vehicle* form to outline details of the vehicle to be used for home schooling visits and provide a copy of current registration and comprehensive insurance for the vehicle. The completed form with the relevant attachments is to be forwarded to the Senior Administrative Officer at the Home Schooling Unit as

details of the vehicle change; that is, when registration and insurance details are changed, or if a different vehicle is to be used.

Payments for Authorised Persons in metropolitan and regional NSW

Payments to Authorised Persons are made in relation to each application assessed.

Details of the payment process are provided to each Authorised Person on employment and when rates of payment are changed.

Authorised Persons are required to submit an invoice for the applications that the Authorised Person has assessed and the distance travelled.

Invoices should be emailed to the Home Schooling Unit, generally at the same time as the report. Invoices received by Friday (midday) will be processed for that fortnightly pay period. For advice about the dates of pay periods, please contact an administrative officer from the Branch.

Payment from the Office to Authorised Persons is on a fortnightly basis, subject to the Office's receipt of invoices.

Additional payments are made on the following basis:

- a one-off grant upon initial appointment to assist with the setup of technology in the home
- a twice-yearly grant for postage, telephone calls, fax costs and electronic communication associated with the Authorised Person's work.

Any enquiries regarding payments, should be directed to the Branch's Senior Administrative Officer.

Overnight accommodation

At times, an Authorised Person may require overnight accommodation in order to assess an application for home schooling registration.

Where required, the Authorised Person requests approval for overnight accommodation in writing. Requests should be emailed to the Home Schooling Unit. A request for overnight accommodation should include the destination(s) to be visited, the distance to be travelled, the average journey time and the number of applications to be assessed.

The Office will respond to all requests for approval of overnight accommodation in writing.

If approved, the Authorised Person makes the necessary accommodation arrangements.

For approved requests, the Authorised Person may claim the actual cost of accommodation and meals based on receipts up to a maximum rate. For details of the maximum rates and the process for making a claim, please contact the Senior Administrative Officer of the Branch.

Authorised Person briefings

At varying times during the year, the Office may convene a meeting of Authorised Persons (usually once or twice a year) to provide relevant information, advice and professional learning. These meetings also provide an opportunity for Authorised Persons to raise issues and share ideas and experiences.

In planning a briefing session for Authorised Persons, the Office identifies particular items for inclusion on the agenda. Authorised Persons are also invited to suggest, and present, agenda items for inclusion.

The Office notifies Authorised Persons of briefing session dates early each year.

Authorised Persons are entitled to claim payment for attendance at the Office's briefings and reimbursement of the cost of travelling to the briefings. Claims for transport and travel costs must be accompanied by receipts, tickets or other forms of proof of purchase.

Where required, the Home Schooling Unit will organise flights and accommodation in advance of a briefing and in consultation with the Authorised Person.

Authorised Person updates

The Office provides regular updates via email as necessary to keep Authorised Persons up to date on recent developments and to provide information relevant to the work of Authorised Persons.

Authorised Persons are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Office any matters requiring clarification or topics that could be considered for inclusion in an Authorised Person update.

General communication

Authorised Persons are asked to contact a senior officer from the Branch if an issue, a concern or an unexpected event arises in relation to home schooling registration and the work of the Authorised Person.

Authorised Persons are also asked to refer any applicant or person with general enquiries or questions about home schooling registration to the Branch.

Complaints

From time to time, issues or circumstances may arise in the home schooling program that may lead to a person and/or an organisation with a legitimate interest in the issue to lodge a complaint.

Complaints can be made to the Office at any time. An individual or organisation may contact the Office for advice on how to raise an issue or proceed with a complaint. Complaints must be made in writing and include details of:

- the name, address and contact details of the individual(s) or organisation making the complaint
- the individual(s) against whom the complaint is being made
- how the complaint relates to the requirements for registration for home schooling as detailed in the *Registration for Home Schooling in NSW Information Package*
- the substance and basis of the complaint, a description of the issue or matter to which the complaint relates
- an account of any action already taken in relation to the complaint, if relevant.

Complaints should be directed to the Assistant Director, Registration and Accreditation.

The Office will deal with complaints relating to home schooling registration according to the relevant policies of the Office.

Availability of Authorised Persons

The Branch allocates applications to Authorised Persons for assessment on a continual basis, as applications are received.

If an Authorised Person will be unavailable for conducting assessments by home visits for a period of two weeks or longer, the Authorised Person must contact the Branch as soon as possible. The Office will determine whether it is necessary to allocate and/or re-allocate

applications to an alternate Authorised Person for the period during which the Authorised Person will be unavailable.

Work Health and Safety: Risk Management

Under Work Health and Safety legislation, the Office of the Board of Studies as the person conducting a business or undertaking ('the PCBU') has an obligation to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all workers.

Work Health and Safety covers the concept of the health, safety and welfare of all persons who may be impacted by work activities.

- **Health** means physical and psychological health
- **Safety** requires the elimination or minimisation of hazards in the workplace that have the potential to cause harm
- **Welfare** includes the provision of facilities, protective clothing or equipment.

As the PCBU, the Office is required to meet the primary duty of care including the provision of:

- safe work environments
- safe systems of work
- facilities
- information, instruction, training and supervision
- monitoring of workers' health and workplace conditions.

Authorised Persons, as workers, are required to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care to ensure acts/omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- comply with reasonable instructions from the PCBU
- cooperate with the policy or procedures of the PCBU.

The identification of risks or hazards, and the minimisation or elimination of any such risks or hazards is a responsibility of both the Office and the Authorised Person. Such action is taken in the context of what might be considered to be 'reasonably practical'.

Routine strategies for identifying risk include the following:

- Where there is a known history of any particular concerns with a family, the Office will provide the Authorised Person with background information as appropriate and permitted given privacy considerations.
- In planning the home schooling visit with the applicant, the Authorised Person should clarify any site-specific matters that may be relevant, eg location of the home, access to the home, animals, mobile phone coverage etc.

Routine risk management strategies include the following:

- The Office may recommend that the Authorised Person take another person with them to conduct the visit, eg an officer from the Registration Branch.
- Where the Authorised Person is concerned about a visit for any reason, the Authorised Person may request that an officer from the Registration Branch accompany them on the visit.

Authorised Persons are encouraged to communicate any matters related to risk assessment of home visits to the Home Schooling Unit and to exercise due diligence in relation to common sense matters such as road and motor vehicle safety.

Guidelines for recommendations of periods of registration

Recommendations for registration are based on the Authorised Person's assessment of the evidence of compliance presented by the applicant in relation to the requirements for registration.

The following information provides a general guide for Authorised Persons to consider in discerning whether registration is recommended and, if so, the length of the period for which registration is recommended.

Separate information is provided in relation to the assessment of applications for initial registration and applications for renewal of registration with the following tables providing an overview of how the assessment of an Authorised Person aligns with varying recommendations.

The process of making a recommendation in relation to an application for registration relies on the professional discernment and balanced judgement of an Authorised Person. These guidelines are intended to assist that process. The guidelines do not replace the specific matters considered by an Authorised Person in forming a recommendation in all circumstances. During the decision making process, Authorised Persons may wish to discuss the recommendation being considered with a Board Inspector or Senior Registration Officer from the Branch.

Authorised Persons are asked to contact a senior officer from the Registration Branch to discuss cases where the recommendation for initial registration is for three months or less, the recommendation for renewal of registration is for six months or less or where refusal of registration is recommended.

Initial registration

Please see Table 1 provided later in these guidelines in relation to recommendations for initial registration.

The assessment of an application for an initial period of home schooling registration is based on determining whether the information provided by the applicant demonstrates evidence of a capacity to comply with the requirements for registration should registration be granted.

While most aspects of the requirements can be demonstrably met prior to an initial period of registration, others can only be prospectively addressed. For example, while prior evidence can be obtained relating to the requirement that the educational *will be* based on the relevant Board of Studies syllabuses, evidence that the educational program *is being* taught in accordance with the Board's syllabuses can only be made available subsequently when the program is being taught. For this reason, initial registration is generally for a period of less than the maximum two-year period of registration permitted by the *Education Act 1990* ('the Act') so that evidence of the program being taught in accordance with the requirements can be reviewed prior to any longer periods of registration being considered.

An applicant seeking initial registration of a child, who has other registered children, may present evidence that the educational program being delivered to the other children is being delivered in accordance with Board syllabuses. Such evidence may be relevant in determining the period of initial registration to be recommended.

Renewal of registration

Please see Table 2 provided later in these guidelines in relation to recommendations for renewal of registration.

The assessment of an application for renewal of registration considers whether the applicant for renewal of registration provides documentary evidence that the current educational program complies with the requirements for registration as well as evidence that the educational program proposed for the renewed period of registration demonstrates a capacity to comply with the requirements.

The Authorised Person's assessment of whether the applicant demonstrates a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of his or her child is also relevant to the Authorised Person's consideration of whether the applicant demonstrates a capacity to comply with the requirements in any further period of registration.

When assessing an application for renewal of registration, the Authorised Person also considers whether the previous assessment identified areas for improvement and whether the improvements have been made. A failure to make the identified improvements may be of concern in relation to an applicant's capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child.

Registration for less than the maximum period of two years may be recommended for one or more of the following reasons:

- to align the period of registration with sibling(s)
- the child will turn 17 within the 2 year period
- areas of compliance to be improved have been identified and need to be addressed.

Table 1: INITIAL REGISTRATION

Assessment – application for initial registration	Period of registration for consideration
The applicant:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates compliance with the requirements for registration in the delivery of an educational program for another child who has been registered for successive periods of registration, each for the maximum period of registration demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements for registration demonstrates a level of planning to sustain a period of up to two years registration 	Up to two years when evidence demonstrates the delivery of a compliant educational program for another child for successive periods of registration for the maximum period possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements for registration demonstrates a level of planning to sustain a one year period of registration 	One year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements with some areas for improvement demonstrates planning to sustain a period of registration 	Six months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements with many areas for improvement demonstrates limited planning to sustain a period of registration 	Three months (minimum)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to demonstrate a capacity to comply with one or more requirement 	Refusal

Table 2: RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION

Assessment – application for renewal of registration	Period of registration for consideration
The applicant:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates compliance with all requirements during the current period of registration demonstrates a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child during the current period demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements demonstrates a level of planning to sustain a period of up to two years of registration 	Up to two years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates compliance with all requirements during the current period with some areas for improvement demonstrates a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child during the current period demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements demonstrates a capacity to address the areas for improvement demonstrates planning to sustain a one year period of registration 	One year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates compliance with all requirements during the current period with many areas for improvement demonstrates a capacity to plan and provide for the educational needs of the child during the current period demonstrates a capacity to comply with all requirements with many areas for improvement demonstrates a capacity to address the areas for improvement demonstrates limited planning to sustain a period of registration 	Three to six months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to demonstrate compliance with one or more requirements during the current period of registration failure to address previously identified areas for improvement in relation to the requirements failure to demonstrate a capacity to comply with one or more requirements 	Refusal