

Detailed guidance for home education applicants

Section One – Contact details and declaration

Please fill in all parts of this section, where applicable.

Section Two – “As well as”

The requirements under this section are set out in Section 21 of the Education Act 1989, which states that an exemption from enrolment at a registered school can only be granted where the Ministry of Education “is satisfied that the person will be taught at least as.... well as in a registered school”.

Key requirement (A)

Help us to understand your home education philosophy/approach, and how you will meet the requirement to teach “as well as” a registered school.

Detailed guidance

In this section, you will need to describe your overall approach to your child's education. This should include three core components: your philosophy/overall approach, your anticipated curriculum, and how you intend to cater for your child's special education needs (if any).

Philosophy/overall approach

Many home educators choose to build their approach based on an established education philosophy. Popular philosophies include:

- Classical
- School-at-home
- Montessori
- Charlotte Mason
- Unschooling
- Waldorf

Often, home educators choose to familiarise themselves with a few of these approaches, and then combine specific elements from each to suit the needs of their child.

If you wish to base your application on a pre-existing philosophy, you will need to become well-acquainted with it. One way to do this is by connecting with a home educator association. There are over a hundred of these associations in New Zealand, often split by region and/or overall philosophy. Most of these are easily identifiable and contactable via a web search.

We do not require home educators to specifically teach the New Zealand Curriculum (although you may access this world-leading curriculum for free if your child is granted an exemption from attendance at school). However, it may be useful to reflect on the curriculum's vision and key competencies, which are summarised in the table below.

The New Zealand Curriculum	
Vision	
Young people are confident, connected, actively involved, life-long learners.	
Key Competencies	
<u>Thinking</u>	This competency is about using creative, critical, and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas. These processes can help to develop understanding, make decisions, shape actions, or construct knowledge. Students who are competent thinkers and problem-solvers actively seek, use, and create knowledge.
<u>Using language, symbols, and text</u>	This competency is about working with and making meaning from the codes in which knowledge is expressed. Students who are competent can interpret and use words, numbers, images, movement, metaphor, and technologies in a number of contexts.
<u>Managing self</u>	This competency is associated with self-motivation, a "can-do" attitude, and with students seeing themselves as capable learners. It is integral to self-assessment. Students who manage themselves are enterprising, resourceful, reliable, and resilient. They establish personal goals, make plans, manage projects, and set high standards.
<u>Relating to others</u>	This competency is about interacting effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts. It includes the ability to listen actively, recognise different points of view, negotiate and share ideas.
<u>Participating and contributing</u>	This competency is about being actively involved in communities (eg. families, whānau, and cultural or interest groups). Students who participate and contribute in communities have a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within new contexts. They understand the importance of balancing rights, roles, and responsibilities and of contributing to the quality and sustainability of social, cultural, physical, and economic environments

For more information on the New Zealand Curriculum, please visit:

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/>

Many home educators choose a philosophy aligned with the Māori world-view. Te Marautanga o Aotearoa is the curriculum written for Māori immersion education. For more information on Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, please visit:

<http://tmoa.tki.org.nz/>

Learning areas

A home education situation can provide an opportunity for a more flexible approach to learning than that which is available in schools. However, the Ministry must still be satisfied that your child will be taught at least as well as in a registered school. Crucially, your proposed curriculum must:

i.be sufficiently broad...

A curriculum which is broad will cover several learning areas. Again, although you do not need to craft your approach with reference to the New Zealand Curriculum, it does contain the following list of learning areas which may be a good place to start:

- English
- Te Reo Māori
- Health and physical education
- Languages
- Social sciences
- Science
- Technology
- The arts
- Mathematics and statistics

It is not enough to simply list the learning areas you intend to teach. You should also provide enough information to help the Ministry gain a general understanding of what will be taught within the area.

For example, an English learning area for an 11 or 12 year-old could include content such as:

- Understanding basic punctuation (eg. full stops, parentheses, brackets) and other written conventions, including spelling rules.
- Understanding a range of English language techniques (eg. metaphors, similes, onomatopoeia, alliteration, rhyming, personification).
- Reading a range of written materials, including non-fiction and fiction, and encouraging personal responses to each text.
- Writing a mixture of creative, formal and opinion pieces, and using them to reflect and develop proof-reading skills.
- Extending vocabulary by focussing on one new word per week.

ii. ...be age-appropriate, and...

The Ministry of Education recognises that different children and young people have different learning needs. It also recognises that some home education philosophies do not teach some subjects until children have reached a certain age (which may be older than they would be at a registered school). This will be taken into account when you submit your application, but your approach must still be appropriate for the age of your child.

One way to assess whether your curriculum is age-appropriate is with reference to school-learners. Often, parents/legal guardians choose to home educate for a portion of their child's period of mandatory education (ie. ages 6-16). Around 20% of all new home educators return their children to mainstream schooling within one year. When thinking about whether your curriculum is age appropriate, you may wish to reflect on whether your child's education would be comparable to others at a similar age, if s/he was to return to a registered school.

iii. ...include strong literacy and numeracy components.

This requirement is self-explanatory. It is very important that all children and young people receive an education which enables them to be highly literate and numerate.

Catering for special education needs

The Ministry of Education can only approve applications to home educate where, "in the case of a person who would otherwise be likely to need special education, [the person] will be taught at least as regularly and well as in a special class or clinic or by a special service."¹

Your child may have one or more special education needs. If your child was at school, s/he may have access to a number of special education supports. You must ensure that you are able to cater to any such needs in a way which is comparable to what is available in mainstream education.

If you suspect that your child may have undiagnosed special education needs, it is important that you determine whether this is the case and are able to demonstrate how those needs will be met.

¹ Education Act 1989, Section 21(1)(b)(ii).

Section Two – Key requirement (B)

What resources do you intend to use, and are you delegating any teaching responsibility?

Detailed guidance

Identifying and exploring the use of resources

You should use this section to provide a sense of what resources you have available, and what resources you will need to obtain. These can include tangible resources (eg. textbooks, digital technologies, stationery, pre-packaged curriculums) and environmental resources (eg. gardens, libraries, educational community trips, beaches).

It will be important to describe how you will use specific resources. However, the extent of this will depend on the specific resource you are talking about. For example, we would not expect you to explain to us how you plan to use your stationery. On the other hand, if you plan to use the internet, we want you to explain what it would be used for and in what manner.

Delegated teaching responsibility

Some home educators delegate parts of their child's learning areas to other people or organisations to teach. This can be particularly useful where you want your child's education to cover specific learning areas that you do not feel well-equipped to teach (eg. calculus). You may wish to pay for a professional tutor to assist with your child's education.

Additionally, some home educators pay for access to Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu – The Correspondence School (Te Kura). Te Kura is New Zealand's only correspondence school. Ordinarily, students may only access Te Kura for specific reasons (eg. geographical isolation or itinerancy). Home educators may also access Te Kura on a per-subject, fee-paying basis. Please see <http://www.tekura.school.nz/> for more information.

If you delegate some teaching responsibility, it is essential that you (and your child) retain control over his or her overall curriculum/programme. Ultimately, you are responsible for the education of your child if you receive a long-term exemption from enrolment in a school.

Section 2 - Key requirement (C)

What are the educational goals for the next 12 months of your child's home education, and how will you know if you've met them?

Detailed guidance

Goals/aims/ambitions

By setting educational goals with – and for – your child, you will have an opportunity to keep track of his/her successes and achievements. It will also help you to identify where your child is struggling, allowing you to modify your teaching to respond to this.

Although this section asks you to provide specific goals for the coming 12 months, you should also state how these goals will change as your child's education progresses.

Goals do not need to be overly specific, and also shouldn't be so general that they are impossible to measure against. They do not need to cover the entirety of your child's educational progress.

It would be helpful to set at least one goal per area of learning. For example, goals for English could (depending on your child's age) involve giving your child the knowledge and skills s/he needs to:

- retell a story in correct sequence of beginning, middle, and end
- construct simple and complex sentences
- use punctuation and correct spelling consistently
- write an essay comparing and discussing themes across two or more written texts.

Tracking progress

There are two essential elements to this: record keeping, and assessment/evaluation/self-review.

In order to know how well your child is achieving, it is essential that you keep records so that you can make comparisons between your child's previous and current achievements. These records:

- should be written or digital (eg. not just based on your memory)
- may include photos, documents, reflective journals, student work records etc, and
- should be kept regularly to show progress over time.

The next step is to make use of your records. You can develop your own way to do this, but the most important thing is that you know how well your child is doing, and have a way to identify strengths and areas for development.

This will enable you to adjust your educational plan to ensure the best possible outcomes for your child. One easy way to achieve this is through regular assessments, though this may not fit within your home education philosophy.

Section Two - Key requirement (D)

What is your vision for your child's long-term educational achievement?

Detailed guidance

This question gives you an opportunity to provide a sense of what overall, long-term educational outcomes you want for your child (eg. skills, competencies, knowledge, qualifications, occupation, tertiary entrance etc).

Your answer to this question will be determined by your child's age. For example, we would not expect a child to know whether they intend to enrol for tertiary education, or what sort of occupation they might seek after their home education journey. It may nonetheless be useful for you to think about these things early on, as entry to tertiary education or workplace minimum skill requirements may help to guide your curriculum.

Examples of long-term visions might include a desire to:

- achieve University Entrance (eg. via NCEA or other qualifications)
- secure a New Zealand Apprenticeship
- have the literacy, numeracy/financial, social and logical skills to run a business
- develop personal attributes.

Section Two - Key requirement (E)

Give us a detailed description of a special project or topic plan that you intend to do, or describe one that you have done in the past.

Detailed guidance

You need to provide a specific example of a period of learning about a certain topic. It may span several days, weeks, or months. For example, it could relate to mathematics, biology or history.

As is the case for the other sections of your application, this should be age-appropriate. This special project or topic plan should include:

- a topic title and duration of work
- a plan or course of learning
- goals
- resources used, and
- methods to assess or otherwise determine what has been learned (including records).

The Ministry of Education appreciates that some home education philosophies do not forward-plan projects or topics. If this is the case for you, then you may wish to describe a topic or project which you have already completed with your child.

Section Three – “As regularly as”

The requirement under this section is set out in Section 21 of the Education Act 1989, which states that an exemption from enrolment at a registered school can only be granted where the Ministry of Education “is satisfied that the person will be taught at least as regularly... as in a registered school”.

Key requirement

How will you meet the requirement to teach “as regularly as” in a registered school?

Detailed guidance

In this section you should explain how you would be teaching at least as regularly as at a registered school. Although this question does not *necessarily* relate to the number of hours of teaching and learning taking place, you may find it useful to reflect on the hours students spend at a school:

- Primary and intermediate schools are open for 384 half-days per year.
- Secondary and composite schools are open for 380 half-days per year.

Many home educators believe that education should take place “24 hours a day, 7 days a week”. In order to accept this approach, the Ministry of Education will still require information to understand when teaching of the learning areas you have identified for your child would ordinarily take place, and for how long.

There are two components to this requirement. The Ministry must be satisfied that you are going to teach:

- frequently – there will not be prolonged periods where your child will not be learning (eg. your child will be taught 5 days a week)
- for suitable durations – it would be useful for you to describe a typical day, in terms of timeframes and curriculum coverage.

Home educators practising different philosophies may wish to answer this question in different ways. For example, you could provide:

- an example of a timetable, including subjects and activities
- a written description of an average week’s worth of teaching
- a calendar including dates and times of teaching
- a description of a period of learning about a specific topic (similar to your topic plan/special project), including how long (eg. in a given week) you will spend teaching your child.