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Support for NSW Home Schooling Applicants

Application forms, the Guidelines for Homeschooling Registration in NSW, and Stage Statements and Outcomes from the NESA Syllabuses can be found on the Homeschooling pages of NESA website:

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/regulation/home-schooling/home-schooling-registration>.

The basic steps involved are

1. Fill in the correct application form:
 - a. the Application form for Initial Registration [n](#) or
 - b. the Application for Renewal of Registration
2. Submit your form via email or post
3. The Authorised Person (AP) will contact you to book a meeting to assess the application, generally within 2-3 weeks. Generally, this is a phone call.
 - a. This phone call is usually short. You are not required to provide any information during this phone call.
 - b. You can ask the AP to come on a day and time that suits you.
 - c. It is OK to reschedule your meeting with the AP if you need to.
4. Prepare for the meeting - you will need to have a plan based on the NSW Syllabus, method of record keeping, and resources - see Preparing for the Registration Visit (below)
5. The AP visits you in your home. Due to Covid-19, this process may occur electronically via zoom or similar. The meeting usually takes 30-60 minutes. See <https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/regulation/home-schooling/home-schooling-registration> for up to date changes to the process.



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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Be prepared and organised early, to feel settled and have everything ready.
2. Be confident - you are your child's best teacher.
3. Get support. Ask an experienced home educator to look over your plan and attend the AP visit with you. The HEA can help with this.
4. If you need to contact NESAs during the registration process, using email creates a written record that you can refer back to. If you need to phone, it's a good idea to follow up with an email detailing what you discussed. (e.g. Thanks for your time on the phone today. Just to confirm, we discussed....)
5. Know your rights & responsibilities. Read the NESAs Guidelines for Home Schooling Registration in NSW, available on the the Home Schooling pages of the NESAs website:
<https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/regulation/home-schooling/home-schooling-registration>
6. Consider registering for "primary", or "secondary", or "primary/secondary" rather than a particular 'Year/stage of Schooling'. This can give more scope for children to work at different levels and may provide greater flexibility, especially towards the senior high school years.

The Value of a Support Person

Just by being there, a support person will enhance your confidence, which makes a huge difference in how you are perceived by Authorised Persons. Having an experienced, registered home educator means they have been through the process before, and that they understand how home education works. The HEA may be able to connect you with a support person in your area, or join you via video link-up. The HEA can also provide guidance and support for your support person to help prepare them to sit in on your registration visit. APs are quite used to home education applicants having a support person, and are generally friendly - seeing the fact you have support as a positive thing in assisting you to provide the best education for your child/ren. It's also OK to let your AP know ahead of time that you will have a support person with you.

Preparing for the The Registration Visit

The following ideas may assist you in making the visit run as well as it can.

1. Don't stress; you are your child's best teacher, and your responsibility to provide for their education is enshrined in the law -

"EDUCATION ACT 1990"



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s.4 Principles on which this Act is based

(b) the education of a child is primarily the responsibility of the child's parents,

s.5 Principal objects of this Act

(d) to allow children to be educated at home"

2. Don't over-prepare - it's possible to create vast quantities of paperwork in the desire to impress the AP, that is not of any actual value to you. Not only is it possible to get a maximum registration period with minimal paperwork, but it's good just to meet the requirements. It is even possible to have a plan 48 pages long which still didn't meet the requirements.
3. Be ready to show the AP:

a. Records of the child's previous educational history and attainment

If the child was previously at school, a school report or NAPLAN results will show this. If the child has never been at school, nothing is needed. If the child is older than 6 years and has not previously been registered for home education or was previously registered, samples of work and/or a brief description of where the child is up to in each subject may be provided in lieu, but registration is regularly approved without any records of previous educational history. N.B. Don't worry about this - whatever was going on for your child previously will not have an impact on the outcome of the registration visit.

b. An educational program based on the relevant NESA syllabuses

There are a number of ways to show that the education program is based on the NSW syllabuses. Many families have found that the easiest way to do this is to use the Stage Statements of the syllabuses as a base. Stage statements are a brief plain-English description of each subject or 'Key Learning Area' (KLA) for each Stage of the syllabuses. There are also other ways of linking to the Syllabus. Outcomes and Objectives may also be used, and are particularly useful when registering for Stage 6, as the Syllabus documents for Stage 6 do not include Stage Statements. Showing the plan and explaining it at the visit is sufficient - there is no requirement to submit the plan to the AP.

In the HEA sample plans, the first page under the name of the Key Learning Area (KLA), or subject is the Stage Statement, reprinted from the syllabus. Cutting and pasting the Stage Statement for each KLA, and then describing how you intend to cover this, or which resources you will use to cover it, creates a broad educational plan and makes it easy for APs to see how the plan is based upon the syllabus. The Stage Statements and Outcomes for each Stage (Early Stage 1-Stage 5) are available on the Homeschooling pages of the NESA website.



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c. A method for recording learning activities

There are many ways of recording learning activities. NESAs do not prescribe any particular method.

Suggestions include:

- ★ Keeping samples of work,
- ★ a diary or calendar,
- ★ photos, videos or audio recordings of activities,
- ★ library borrowing records,
- ★ lists of documentaries watched or books read,
- ★ tickets to events, theatre programs
- ★ records/reports/certificates from electronic programs you may use
- ★ writing a blog
- ★ Instagram posts
- ★ Outcomes charts
- ★ And probably many others!

Many families do a combination of these. The important thing with record keeping is to choose a method that works for your family, suits your preferences and skills, and which does not become overwhelming. After all, your focus is on providing an excellent education for your child. See HEA record keeping for more detailed information and samples.

d. A method for recording student achievement and progress

There is not a requirement to provide evidence that children have made particular achievements or progress, or that they are meeting Outcomes for their Stage or Year level, or that for which they were registered. Parents are only required to make their own personal assessments and adjust the educational opportunities provided, so that they are appropriate to the needs of the child.

There are many ways of assessing the work that children have undertaken. A few families like to use tests like NAPLAN but most use ongoing assessment as they observe and interact with their children.

A statement such as the following can be a useful inclusion in your plan, to show that you have considered the need for ongoing assessment. *“Records of work and progress will be kept, by both informal and formal methods. By observing and discussing work, I will be able to assess my child’s ability to understand the work, identify areas which may need greater attention, and adjust work accordingly, in order to best meet educational needs. Photographs of activities and samples of work will be used as a method of recording.”*

e. Sufficient resources and a suitable learning environment

Resources means all of the things, people and places that you may use to provide your child's education. It can include:



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- ★ books,
- ★ television/computer,
- ★ the kitchen,
- ★ your backyard (including trampoline, vege garden, chicken coop etc),
- ★ local places, such as art galleries, museums, parks, beaches, bushland, sports venues etc
- ★ the local home education network,
- ★ friends with expertise in particular subjects etc.
- ★ Community resources such as art classes, music groups, scouts etc.

It is not necessary for children to have a special school desk or work area. Have on show resources to be used and list other resources in the planning document along with learning experiences/activities. The HEA provides members with free access to a number of educational programs, as well as discounts on a wide range of other educational products and programs. Our website also has a list of free resources www.hea.edu.au.

It seems like a no brainer - but clean up before the AP comes! Turn on the lights, open the curtains. They are looking to see a safe learning environment, somewhere to read, somewhere to write, somewhere to play. You don't need to show the AP private areas of your home such as bedrooms.

f. Time allocation

While it is a requirement that “the time allocated to learning is sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum” (p 9 Guidelines), this is flexible, and a parent can choose when and how they provide learning opportunities and adjust to meet the needs of their child. Children can and do learn at any time during the day or week - not just during normal school hours. The Guidelines and Syllabus documents include suggested times and proportions of time, but these are only provided as a general guide. A timetable is not required (p 49 Guidelines).



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