



Home Education Association, Inc
PO Box 245
Petersham NSW 2049
1300 72 99 91
contact@hea.edu.au
www.hea.edu.au

Registration for Home Education NSW FAQ

Email support@hea.edu.au for any other questions you may have that are not answered in this fact-sheet.

Do I have to send in my plan/work samples/other documents before the electronic visit can go ahead?

- **Information:** Unless you are undertaking registration by documentation (which hardly ever happens) there is no requirement for you to give copies of any of your documentation to the AP. The electronic equivalent to what would happen at the in-person visit could be screen sharing your documents during the video link up, or providing temporary, view only access through a platform such as Google Docs.
- **Information:** The Guidelines do not require you to show work samples - they do say that you must have (and be able to show) a system of record keeping. This may or may not be work samples.
- **Suggestion:** Ask your AP to show you where in the guidelines it states that you must submit documents before the meeting. Ask where your documents will be stored, and what they will be used for in the future. Get it in writing.
- **Suggestion:** contact the HEA for advocacy & support with this issue (free for all home educators). Email: support@hea.edu.au

Is it true that only written work provides evidence of delivery of education in a subject or that written assessments are necessary?

→ **Information:** In short, the answer to both these questions is 'no'.

Page 10 of the NESGA Guidelines state:

“There is no one teaching or learning method or set of resources to implement an educational program that will suit all families”

and

“The educational program and associated records may be paper based, project based, digital or a combination of different mediums....NESGA does not prescribe any particular method, resource or format for an educational program”.

Not all learning results in written work. Evidence of learning experiences could also include things like photographs, diary entries, theatre tickets, library records etc.

Do I have to show specific types of work, such as written work, in order to be successfully registered?

→ **Information:** There is no requirement in the NSW syllabuses for work to be written or for children to produce a predetermined amount of written work.

→ **Information:** In the case of disability or learning difficulties, requiring particular demonstrations of learning may be considered disability discrimination.

→ **Information:** the Education Act S74(2) clarifies that registration cannot be cancelled even if a child doesn't do any work if this is because they are sick or just refuses to do work.

→ **Suggestion:** Ask the AP to explain how the requirement for “more written work” is supported by the Education Act and the NESGA Guidelines. Talk to them about the other ways your child demonstrates their learning.

What if the AP makes suggestions during the visit? For example - that you keep a daily diary of activities or use the outcomes of the syllabuses in planning, recording and assessing. Do I have to follow those suggestions?

- **Information:** AP's often make suggestions during the home visit. These are generally intended to be helpful. They may inadvertently come across as instructions. Remember, they are suggestions only, and you should only do these things if you find them helpful. There are an endless variety of ways to go about home educating and APs cannot tell applicants which way to choose

Should I be worried that I haven't done what was in the last plan I showed the AP.

- **Information:** Comparing the previous plan to education provided is not part of the registration process, and adjusting the plan according to the needs of the child is very important.

What can I do if the AP suggests that because my child will move onto the next Stage next year, I should only get six months?

- **Information:** Registration periods do not need to be connected to specific stages/years of schooling. Just be prepared to show a plan for the future (usually 12 months is plenty).
- **Recommendation:** Ask for a registration certificate that states "primary", "secondary" or "senior secondary". This gives you greater flexibility, and removes this issue in the future. Having a specific stage/year of schooling on your registration is unnecessary.
- **Suggestion:** You could say that you are going to spend as long as necessary consolidating your child's understanding of the concepts covered in the current Stage, even up to 12 months, and then you will move onto the next Stage as appropriate. It is part of your responsibility as a homeschooling parent to adjust the program to meet the student's needs
- **Suggestion:** have the first part of the next plan ready to show if you believe that your child will be ready to move on. Remember, it's OK to adjust that plan later if you need to.

Do I need a timetable? Do I need to show how much time we will spend on each KLA?

- **Information:** According to the Education Act, Section 14(4), “Any syllabus developed or endorsed by the Authority for a particular course of study may indicate generally the period of time that should be allocated to the teaching of the course, but is not to make a specific period of time mandatory”
- **Information:** The FAQs in the Guidelines p 48 clarify that this is not required “4. *Do I need to keep a diary or have a timetable? No. Each family will vary in the specific types of records to be kept. A diary is one way of keeping a record of how the educational program has been implemented. A timetable is one way of planning learning times for different subjects. Parents may also use other approaches to planning and record keeping.*” Additionally, page 24 & 30 of the Homeschooling Guidelines state that, suggestions for time spent on KLA’s are not mandatory, “*These times are guidelines only.*”
- **Suggestion:** Many home educators have found that using the following sentence in their plans helps prevent issues with APs about the time spent home educating, “The time allocated to education will incorporate all the time every day from morning until evening, to allow students to complete the work, and will be sufficient to allow coverage of the curriculum proposed above, and further studies.”

What can I do if the AP says they are recommending a short registration period? (less than the maximum registration periods - 12 months for initial and 2 years for subsequent registrations)

- **Suggestion:** Ask the AP the reason for giving a short registration period. If the answer is general, eg “we generally give six months to see how you are going”, ask for the specific reasons for not giving the full registration period, and for a written report. You can also ask “what do you need to see in order to recommend 12 months/ 2 years”. Further discussion of the issues may result in a different recommendation.

What are my options if the AP suggests that I withdraw my application to avoid a rejection of registration?

- **Suggestion:** You do not need to decide which way to go during the AP visit. Consider your options carefully before you decide, and discuss the options with an experienced homeschooler or the HEA. In some cases, a rejection may be better than withdrawing the application because a rejection can be appealed.

What are my options if my child is not attending school/needs to be removed promptly from school, but it's going to take up to 12 weeks to register for homeschooling?

- **Information:** In NSW, it is NESA's practice that you are not registered until the day you receive your certificate. We have been unable to locate any basis for this in the legislation. The Education Act (1990) allows for non-attendance at school for medical reasons (part 5, section 23 [3a]) so long as you let the school know within 7 days and provide a copy of the medical certificate. The Education Act (1990) also states that non attendance because of a child's disobedience may be a defense to prosecution under the compulsory schooling laws (part 5, section 23 [3g]).
- **Information:** According to the [FACs website](#): "Children have the right to be safe, to be treated with affection, to be educated, to have medical care and to be protected against cruelty and abuse. Parents have the duty to protect their children's rights until they are old enough to make their own way in the world." It is your responsibility as a parent to make decisions to ensure that you are supporting your child's rights to education and safety, while engaging with the process of registration.
- **Suggestion:** Some families send their children back to school during the period while they are registering for home education. If you have a good relationship with your school, you may be able to negotiate an amicable solution during the transition time (such as reduced attendance).
- **Suggestion:** Some families find that they have circumstances in which they need to remove their child from school immediately, for the well being of the child. If this is your situation, then a medical certificate to cover the gap could be helpful. Talk to your GP about your concerns.
- **Suggestion:** Some families decide to keep their child home while they wait for home education registration. In the case where you are not yet registered, and do not have a medical certificate, the student may be marked as 'absent - unexplained' at school. Too many unexplained absences may result in the school making a report to the Education Department, resulting in Home School Liaison (aka truancy) Officer calls, Usually the registration process would be completed before legal action, however this is a stressful pathway which we do not recommend.
- **Support is available:** We can support you to ask NESA to expedite registration where it is urgently needed. Email: support@hea.edu.au



Will the AP be more likely to approve me if I buy a packaged curriculum?

- **Suggestion:** The short answer to this question is 'no'. You need to have a plan, based on the NSW Syllabus, and resources.

As the AP is assessing your capacity to provide education to your child, you need to understand the plan, and how it meets the requirements, and it should be suited to your child's individual needs.

Whatever resources, books or online programs you provide - library books, purchased books (including textbooks and workbooks, whether 'syllabus-linked' or not, and general books), online programs, community resources or entire all-in-one curriculums - are still just resources. Choose the resources which are the best fit for your child's learning needs.

- **Support is available:** Many parents are anxious about the registration visit. However, very few eligible applicants are refused (according to NESA data only 0.19% of applicants were refused in 2020 due to 'requirements not met'). The requirements are on p 9 of the Guidelines. When assessing your application, the AP will "consider the capacity of the applicant to plan and provide for the educational needs of his or her child" (AP Handbook) - demonstrating your confidence to plan with your child's needs in mind, and choose resources suited to their interests is helpful in this regard. The HEA NSW Registration Support Team volunteers are happy to provide support with planning and plan review. Be confident!

I'm not happy with the outcome of my registration, or some other part of the registration process. What are my options?

- **Information:** The AP handbook includes a formal complaints process at page 19, which can be used to address issues.
- **Suggestion:** The HEA can help! If you would like assistance to lodge a complaint, request a new assessment or a different AP, please email: support@hea.edu.au.