Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017

Home Schooling Fact Sheet

On **1 January 2018** the new home schooling regulations in the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* take effect. These Regulations will replace the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*.

Changes have been made to the home schooling regulations. In particular, all parents seeking to register their child for home schooling for the first time will need to provide a learning plan at the registration stage. Parents will need to create a learning plan for each child that they seek to register for home schooling. Parents whose children are already registered for home schooling will not need to create a learning plan.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the changes that affect home schooling families.

# Changes to Regulations AFFECTING CHILDREN who are ALREADY REGISTERED FOR HOME SCHOOLING

## What will reviews entail?

A small portion (around 10 per cent) of families will be selected each year for a review of their home schooling arrangements. In a review, a parent will be asked to show that the eight key learning areas are being regularly and efficiently addressed and provide some evidence of educational progress. Evidence of progress might include samples of student work or NAPLAN results if available. Parents are still able to change or experiment with different teaching styles, as long as the eight key learning areas continue to be addressed.

## What supports and additional learning resources are available for home schooling parents?

A wide range of online resources are available to support home schooling parents to develop their educational program, including the recently refreshed online learning resources on the Department’s FUSE portal and extensive curriculum material available on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website.

The Distance Education Centre of Victoria (DECV) moved to an online instructional model and this means that it is no longer able to provide hard copy curriculum resources to home school parents. The Department is currently working with the DECV to continue to make curriculum resources available to home schooling parents. More information will be provided later in 2017.

Some families may also wish to consider partial enrolment at the local public school. The parent should discuss this option with the Principal to consider whether it is suitable for the child, family and school.

Home schooling parents can partially enrol their child in their local public school by providing the child’s home schooling registration letter. The student would be able to participate in all aspects of the program in which they are enrolled.

Home schooling parents can also access resources through the Victorian School of Languages, or approach the school about enrolment in language courses.

## How can home schooling families have their say in the future?

The Department is setting up a home schooling committee where the home schooling community can provide feedback to the Department and the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority on the operation of the regulations.

# Changes to Regulations AFFECTING CHILDREN who are NOT YET REGISTERED

## What is a learning plan?

Parents who wish to register their child for home schooling will now be required to prepare a learning plan. The learning plan will detail how the parent intends to regularly and efficiently instruct the child in the eight key learning areas as a whole.

Home schooling parents will not be required to adopt the Victorian curriculum or any particular style in the learning plan. The learning plan is intended to prompt consideration of what instruction will most benefit the child, taking into account all of the circumstances, and for a parent to demonstrate how they will meet those needs.

## How long will the applications take to assess and does my child have to stay in school during that time?

Under the new Regulations, home schooling applications will be assessed in a maximum of 28 days. It is anticipated that the majority of applications will not require 28 days to be assessed. The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires that all children of compulsory school age (between the ages of 6 and 17) be enrolled in a school or be registered for home schooling. This means that a child must remain enrolled in school while the learning plan is being prepared and while the application is assessed.

If a child is unable to attend school for a period of time due to illness, stress, bullying, or other difficulties, they can be excused from attendance at school with a “reasonable excuse” by the Principal of the school, but must remain enrolled at school until the application for home schooling is decided.

If discussions with a Principal do not lead to a resolution of the concern, the Department has a comprehensive Parent Complaint Policy where complaints relating to schools and Principals can be addressed by the regional or central office, as appropriate. If the Department cannot deal satisfactorily with a complaint, the parent could contact the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution for assistance.

## Can children with special needs obtain exemptions from the key learning areas?

Children who have special needs will be expected to learn material in the eight key learning areas that is appropriate to them, subject to reasonable adjustments made to accommodate their needs and abilities. Where it would be unreasonable to expect a child to be instructed in one of the eight key learning areas, a child may be exempted from that learning area as part of the registration process. The parent should seek that exemption during registration.

## further information

Further information about these changes can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/homeschool.aspx>

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/homeschooldefault.aspx?Redirect=1>

The *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* can be found at the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents, see [http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/)