

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR.553

Title: **HOME SCHOOLING**

Adopted: June 5, 2000

Revised: January 24, 2001, January 16, 2003, **June 17, 2008**

Authorization: EPP

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide direction for establishing home schooling

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Associate Director

3.0 PROCEDURES

3.1. Background

The Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memorandum No. 131, dated June 14, 2007, provides direction to school boards concerning Home Schooling and excusing children who are being provided with a Home Schooling program from attendance at their local school.

Section 21 of the *Education Act* identifies the requirements for children of compulsory school age and responsibility of their parents/guardians. It also lists the legal reasons that a child may be excused from attending school.

21 (2) A child is excused from attendance at school if,

(a) the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere.

Section 24 deals with the appointment of the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor and the authority to conduct inquiries to determine the validity of the reasons or excuses for non attendance when the attendance counsellor is of the opinion the child should not be excused.

Sections 25, 26, 30 and 31 deal with the appointment, jurisdiction, responsibilities and powers of school attendance counsellors as well as identifying how and when court proceedings are to be instituted by the school attendance counsellor.

These procedures are based on the above references and are intended to inform the Superintendent of Education, principals, staff in Social Work & Attendance Services and parents of their respective rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Education Act, Instructions for Enrolment Registers, Ontario Secondary Schools Grades 9 to 12; Program and Diploma Requirements and PPM No. 131.

3.2. Procedure

- (a) Parent(s) wishing to Home School a child must obtain a Notice of Intent to Home School (Form 553A), from the Board's Policies and Procedures website, their local home school, or by making a request from Superintendent of Education.
- (b) Once a completed letter has been submitted, the Superintendent of Education will:
 - (i) Keep a record of the request
 - (ii) Issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the parent informing them that their child has been legally excused from attending a TDSB school
 - (iii) Inform the parent of the resources available to them. There is no support in the way of teachers, programs, textbooks or other materials given by the schools.
 - (iv) Update records annually ensuring that each student has been registered in a school or that notification for the current year has been received.

3.3. Rights and Responsibilities

(a) Parents¹

Parent(s) are expected to provide written notice of their intent to provide a Home Schooling program each school year, prior to September 1 of the impending school year. Such notice should be directed to the Superintendent of Education (See Form 553A, Notice of Intent to Provide Home Schooling)

Parent(s) who choose to provide a Home Schooling program for their child(ren) should inform the school board and have their child legally excused from attendance at school in accordance with Subsection 20(2) (a) of the Education Act.

Parents who have furnished written notice and have received a letter from the Superintendent of Education indicating that their child(ren) is/are legally excused from attendance at school may request access to the following resources:

¹ In this document, parents refers to Parents and Guardians

(i) *Assessments and Tests Administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office*

Parents wishing to have their children participate in the grades 3, 6, 9 and/or Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (Grade 10) should contact the local school principal by **September 30** of the current school year. Fees will not be charged by either the Board or the EQAO.

Space should be provided at the local school for the same date and time tests are being administered to regular day school students. The parent will be responsible for transportation to and from the site.

The EQAO will send the results of the Home Schooled children to the school that administered the assessments/tests and the school will send the results to the homes of these children. The test results for these children will not be included in the school or board reports generated by the EQAO

(ii) *Courses Offered Through the Independent Learning Centre*

Parents may enrol a compulsory school age child in courses offered through the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) at the Ministry upon receiving acknowledgement from the Board of their intent to home school. This letter, stating that the child is excused from attendance at school, must be submitted to the ILC as part of the application.

(iii) *Ministry of Education Curriculum Material*

Parents providing Home Schooling may access curriculum policy documents produced by the Ministry of Education free of charge through the Publications Ontario web site, at www.publications.gov.on.ca or by calling the toll free number 1-800-668-9938.

(b) *Support Services Offered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care*

Parents of Home Schooled children may have access to Ministry of Health and Long Term Care through local Community Care Access Centres provided that the parent has received a letter from the Superintendent of Education indicating that the child is excused from attendance at school for the purpose of Home Schooling.

3.4. Principals

When the Principal is informed by a parent that they intend to withdraw a child from school for the purpose of Home Schooling, she/he should inform the parent of the requirement to submit written notice via Form 553A, Notice of Intent to Provide Home Schooling. The parent should be informed that the notice should be directed to the Superintendent of Education.

Where it is evident that the child was removed from attendance at school because of ongoing conflicts with the school, not for the purpose of Home Schooling, or there has been a history of absenteeism by the child prior to the parent notifying the board of their intent to provide Home Schooling, the Principal should consult with the Superintendent of Education for appropriate direction.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that the student's OSR is requested and maintained at the school where one is available.

3.5. Conflict With the School

Upon receiving a Notice of Intent to Provide Home Schooling the Superintendent of Education, where appropriate, will consult with the principal of the child's school to establish the reason(s) related to the parents' decision to provide Home Schooling. When the reasons are due to conflict with the school or chronic absenteeism the Superintendent of Education may request that staff from Social Work & Attendance Services consult with the parent to discuss additional options.

Unless there exists sufficient grounds for investigating the matter further, the Superintendent of Education will issue a letter (Form 553B, Letter of Agreement) to the parent. A copy of the letter shall be sent to the school.

3.6. Superintendent of Education

The Superintendent of Education will:

- (a) be responsible for keeping a record of each Home Schooled child
- (b) issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the parent upon receiving a Notification of Intent to Home School
- (c) inform the parent of the resources available to them
- (d) update records annually ensuring that each student has been registered in a school or that notification for the current year has been received.
- (e) follow the guidelines for conducting an curriculum query when deemed necessary
- (f) when a Letter of Intent or Request for an OSR is not received for students that have been previously Home Schooled, a referral to Social Work & Attendance Services should be made by the Superintendent of Education.

3.7. Guidelines for Conducting a Curriculum Query

A school board may have reasonable grounds to investigate whether satisfactory instruction is being provided in the following instances:

- (a) refusal of a parent to notify the board in writing of the intent to provide Home Schooling

- (b) a credible report of concern by a third party with respect to the instruction being provided in the home evidence that the child was removed from attendance at school because of ongoing conflicts with the school, not for the purpose of Home Schooling
- (c) a history of absenteeism by the child prior to the parent notifying the board of their intent to provide Home Schooling.

Curriculum query, directed by the Superintendent of Education should focus on the following:

- (a) an instructional plan for educating the child including literacy and numeracy at developmentally appropriate levels
- (b) plans for assessing the child's achievement

A sample form for gathering information on a parent's Home Schooling program is available as Form 553C, Sample Format for Home Schooling Plan.

When the Superintendent of Education is unable to determine whether a child is receiving satisfactory instruction, further action may be taken in accordance with subsection 24(2) of the Education Act (Inquiry by Provincial Attendance Counsellor) or by referral to the Children's Aid.

Prior to requesting an inquiry by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor the Superintendent of Education, in consultation with Social Work and Attendance Services, should ensure that:

- (a) appropriate measures have been taken to determine whether the child is receiving satisfactory instruction;
- (b) documentation of all communication and/or attempts to communicate with the parents is retained;
- (c) documentation on the nature of the information and material provided by the parent is retained;
- (d) a factual summary of the case history is prepared for submission to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor

3.8. Clarification of Related Policy

- (a) Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR; PPM 129)

"Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999 (OSS)" will apply to students enrolled in an Ontario secondary school after having received Home Schooling. Refer to sections 6.6, 6.7.2 and Appendix 8.

(b) Enrolment Registers

Students excused from attendance at school for the purpose of Home Schooling will not be recorded in the enrolment register. If, however, a student is receiving part time instruction at school the student will be recorded in the appropriate register. Please refer to the Ministry Instructions for Enrolment Registers.

(c) Part-time Attendance

Parents may request that a child attend school on a part- time basis however, admission will be determined by the principal of the school based on the ability of the school to accommodate such requests. Per-Pupil grants will be prorated for students who are registered on a part time basis according to the time the student is in attendance at school. See enrolment on the register for appropriate protocol.

(d) Ontario Student Record(OSR)

There should be an OSR for all Home Schooled students maintained by the designated home school. Where a previous OSR does not exist, one will be created and all copies of letters of intent filed there annually. Where parents do not re-submit their letter of intent annually and the OSR is not requested from another jurisdiction, a referral to Social Work & Attendance Services as per existing procedures should be followed.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Form 553A, Notice of Intent to Provide Home Schooling

Form 553B, Letter of Agreement

Form 553C, Sample Format for Home Schooling Plan