

Halton District School Board

Operational Policies/Procedures

NUMBER:	<i>to be determined</i>
TOPIC:	Home Schooling
EFFECTIVE:	September 2004
CROSS-REFERENCE:	HDSB School Attendance Manual
REVISION DATE:	Annually
RESPONSIBILITY:	School Operations

POLICY STATEMENT:

- The Halton District School Board will respect parental decisions to home school.
- Where the Board has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is not receiving satisfactory instruction and believes that the child should not be excused from attendance at school, the Board will initiate procedures to cause the child to attend including, where necessary, a request for an inquiry by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor.
- Children being home schooled will not be entitled to attend school on a part-time basis and will not be entitled to services and materials.
- When a child who has been home schooled registers with the Halton District School Board, s/he shall be placed in the age-appropriate grade. Decisions regarding the placement of secondary school students will be made in accordance with Ministry program and student placement policy.

PREAMBLE / INTRODUCTION:

Parents in Ontario have a right to choose to educate their child(ren) at home. A child under the age of sixteen is excused from attendance if "...the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere". The Ministry of Education does not define or describe "satisfactory instruction". It should not be assumed that home schooling must resemble regular day schooling in substance or format.

Section 30 (1) of the Education Act, states that it is an offence for a parent to neglect or refuse to cause their child to attend school unless the child is legally excused from attendance. Section 21 (1) of the Education Act describes the compulsory nature of schooling and 21 (2) outlines the legal bases for non-attendance. These sections are the relevant parts of the Act that give school boards the authority to seek information from parents about their decision to home school.

Our best mechanism to ensure that a child's developmental and educational needs are being met is to maintain a positive, open relationship with families who elect to home school their children to the best extent possible.

PROCEDURE:

When a parent indicates their intention to withdraw their child from school to provide home schooling:

1. The principal or designate will offer the parents an opportunity to discuss their choice. (The purpose of this is to ascertain whether the child has been experiencing problems of which the principal is unaware, whether the parent is dissatisfied with anything related to the education provided to date, or whether this is a decision by the parents based on conscience or a wish to play a direct role in their child's education.)
2. Ask the parent to complete and sign the "Notification of Intent to Home School" (Appendix A).
3. Forward the form to your Area Superintendent of Education.
4. Retire the Ontario Student Record folder in accordance with The Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline, 2000.
5. On the Attendance Register, show the student as "Retired" on the first date on which home schooling is to occur.
6. Note on the Home Schooling Tracking Form (Appendix C) that the child has been retired.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOME SCHOOLING

Supplementary Information for Principals and Vice-Principals

- Q. What is the difference between ‘home schooling’ and ‘home instruction’?
- A. Home schooling is the provision of satisfactory instruction by a parent outside of the regular school System. Home instruction is the provision of a limited amount of instruction to a pupil who is temporarily unable to attend school due to illness or injury.
- Q. Are principals required to meet with parents to review their education plan for their child?
- A. As the parents have made the decision to home school, responsibility for providing satisfactory instruction rests with them. The absence of articulated Ministry of Education standards for “satisfactory instruction” makes the assessment of the program arbitrary.
- Q. Does the school play a role in evaluating the child’s progress?
- A. No. Assessment and evaluation are an important part of the instructional process, therefore the responsibility rests with the person(s) providing the home schooling program.
- Q. Will the Halton District School Board allow students to attend school for part of the day and be home schooled for the other part?
- A. Ministry of Education documents indicate that a Board is under no obligation to accept a student on a part-time basis once a parent decides to home school. This is the position adopted by the Halton District School Board.
- Q. Can parents withdraw their child for part of the day to receive subject-specific instruction from a private tutor or tutorial agency?
- A. The definition of home schooling includes instruction “elsewhere”, such as at a tutorial service. The Halton District School Board’s policy states that we will not register students on a part-time basis who are receiving home schooling at home or elsewhere.
- Q. Can a teaching parent request that their child participate in large-group assessments such as those of the EQAO or standardized assessments like the grade four Otis-Lennon Test of School Abilities?
- A. Only children on our registers are eligible for such tests. However, the Minister has indicated that this may be reviewed in the future.
- Q. What if parents ask that resources be provided to them?
- A. The Halton District School Board does not provide resources for home schooling. Parents can access the Ministry of Education website (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>) to get program information and can contact publishers to purchase materials or may purchase materials at a retail teachers’ store.
- Q. What should a school do if it hears that children who are supposedly being home-schooled are not receiving instruction?
- A. If a school has reasonable grounds to believe that a child under 16 years of age who would normally attend school is not being educated, the principal will attempt to initiate contact with the family. If the family indicates that they have chosen to home school, ask them to complete a copy of Appendix A or send a letter to the Area Superintendent of Education indicating their decision. If they refuse to do either, inform your Area Superintendent of Education and School Social Worker.

Q. Who keeps track of students receiving home schooling?

A.

- i) Schools are to keep a list of students who have been withdrawn for home schooling (see Appendix C) and to forward this information to the normal receiving schools within the system at regular student transition periods (e.g. gr. 8 to 9).
- ii) The Attendance Register and retired OSR form part of the student's record.
- iii) Based upon the receipt of parental letters of intent to home school and copies of Appendix "A", the School Operations Department will maintain a record of students being home schooled for cross-reference.

Q. Where do I place a child who returns to our system after being home schooled?

A. It is the Halton District School Board's position that a child will be placed in the age-appropriate grade. Students of secondary school age will be placed in accordance with Ministry program and student placement policy.

Q. Where can I get more information about attendance requirements and regulations?

A. One of the best sources of information is in the instruction section of the student attendance register. Part II of the Education Act deals with Student Attendance issues. The Halton District School Board Operational Policies and Procedures pertaining to Student Attendance have been developed to provide school staff with the information necessary to address a wide range of registration and attendance situations. When in doubt, consult with your Area Superintendent of Education.



Halton District School Board

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO HOME SCHOOL

Please complete a separate form for each child being withdrawn for the purpose of Home Schooling.

Date: _____

TO: Area Superintendent of Education

FROM: _____
(Name of Parents) (Telephone Number)

RE: _____
(Name of child) (D.O.B.)

OF _____
(Street Number and Name) (Municipality)

(Postal Code) (Current School)

Please be advised of my/our intent, as per the Education Act 21(2)(a), to withdraw my/our child(ren) from _____ School so that s/he/they may receive satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere.

Sincerely,

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Principal Signature)

Copies: Ontario Student Record Folder
Parent/Guardian

(original to Area Superintendent Of Education)



Halton District School Board

Date

Name

Dear Name:

I am in receipt of your letter indicating your intention to withdraw your daughter/son, (name), from the Halton District School Board in order to provide satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere. Under the Education Act, “a child is excused from attendance at school if he is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere.”

Your decision to home school is a significant one and you should be aware that:

- a) As required under the Education Act, Regulations, and Requirements for Maintaining the Attendance Register, your child will be shown as having retired from the public education system;
- b) Part-time attendance at school will not be permitted by the Halton District School Board;
- c) Responsibility for program planning, assessment and evaluation rests with you as the teaching parent;
- d) Learning materials and/or resources are not provided by the Halton District School Board;
- e) Staff resources provided for speech therapy, special education assistance, vision, hearing, counseling and individual assessments will not be accessible through the Halton District School Board;
- f) Credits cannot be earned towards a high school diploma through home schooling;
- g) Access to a universal vaccination program through the school is not available. Please contact the Halton Region Health Department for assistance and information regarding this program.
- h) Should you choose to register your child with the Halton District School Board at some point in the future your child will be accepted as a new registrant and will be placed in the age-appropriate grade (elementary) **or** prior learning will be assessed and appropriate placement determined by the Principal (secondary).

If you would like your child to participate in the assessments for students in Grades 3, 6, and 9, and/or in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (normally given to students in Grade 10), that are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), you should contact your child’s home school for information about the dates, times and locations.

You may wish to review information on the Ministry of Education website (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>) or to seek further support from a home schooling network.

If you require any further information or clarification, please contact me at 905-335-3663.

Sincerely,

name, Superintendent of Education

School Operations

Copies to: Name, Principal, Name Public School
 Ontario Student Record
 Name, Attendance Counsellor /file



Operational Policy & Procedure – Home Schooling
SCHOOL RECORD -- STUDENTS WITHDRAWN FOR HOME SCHOOLING

<i>Date of Retirement</i>	<i>Surname</i>	<i>Given Name</i>	<i>Identification No.</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>