

# Registration of Home Education in the ACT



**ACT**  
Government

Education and Training

A guide for parents and carers of  
ACT resident children.

**Liaison Unit**  
**ACT Education and**  
**Training Directorate**

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## Introduction

The Australian Capital Territory recognises that parents have the right to choose a suitable educational environment for their children. ACT resident parents may choose to register their children for home education or enrol them in a public school or registered non-government school, or both.

In the ACT, all home educated children must be registered with the Liaison Unit of the ACT Education and Training Directorate (the Directorate) in accordance with the [Education Act 2004](#) (the Act).

Parents who choose to educate their children at home develop the strategies that are suitable for the individual learning needs of each child and are required to provide a high quality education for each child.

Registration for home education involves:

1. Provisional registration
2. Registration (initial)
3. Renewal of registration

This manual outlines the legislative requirements of home education and provides information about the three (3) home education processes listed above. This manual does not apply to children living outside of the ACT or for ACT resident families undertaking extended domestic or international travel.

In the case of non-ACT residents, parents should contact the education authority of the jurisdiction in which they live. In the case of extended domestic or international travel (25 or more sequential school days) parents should speak to the principal of an ACT school or the Liaison Unit.

Home educators should be aware that:

- home educated students are not eligible to receive a year 10 or year 12 certificate
- the Directorate does not supply curriculum or curriculum materials to registered home educators.

## Education strategies

To undertake home education, home educators develop their own approach to home education which often changes over time. Home educators also make choices about curriculum which both influence and are influenced by their approach to home education.

The strategies used by individual families will vary according to the age and needs of the individual child. Examples of strategies to encourage learning may include discussion, workbooks, computer programs, research, literacy based activities, media, excursions, games, experiments, free play, activities with others outside the family and real life activities such as gardening, cooking and the care of animals.

Strategies to develop time management, decision making, goal setting, exploration and innovation often feature in home education within the ACT.

Home educators may choose the approach to home education that suits the individual child. Terms such as traditional, natural learning, commercial curriculum, commercial religious curriculum, non-schooling and eclectic are used to describe some of the wide variety of home education approaches.

## Curriculum

The Directorate does not supply curriculum materials for the purposes of home education. Although the Directorate does not require home educating parents to follow a specific curriculum, home educators are encouraged to be aware of the [Australian Curriculum website](#).

Parents are also free to use commercially available curriculum materials.

## ACT legislation

*Under section 9 of the Act, a child is of compulsory education age if the child is at least 6 years old and under the age that the first of the following happens:*

- (a) the child is 17 years old;*
- (b) the child completes year 12.*

*Under section 10(2) of the Act, parents must do either or both of the following:*

- (a) enrol the child at an education provider for the purpose of the provider's education course not longer than 14 days after the day the course starts;*
- (b) apply to register the child for home education not later than 10 school term days after the following happens:
  - i) the start of the school year*
  - ii) the day the child begins to live in the ACT.**

*Under section 10(6) of the Act, section 10(2) does not apply if:*

- (a) an exemption certificate is in force for the child; or*
- (b) the child is participating in a training or employment alternative in accordance with part 2.4 (after year 10 – training and employment alternatives); or*
- (c) the child's parents have an excuse for not complying with this section that the Director-General is satisfied is a reasonable excuse.*

# 1. Registering your child for home education

There are three components to home education registration in the ACT:

- i. Provisional registration
- ii. Registration (initial)
- iii. Renewal of registration

The following table provides a brief summary of the home education process.

Step	Action	Section and page of manual
<b>1</b>	Parent contacts the Liaison Unit to enquire about registration for home education and request an application form for provisional registration.	<a href="#">Section 3</a> Page 7
<b>2</b>	Parent sends completed application form to the Liaison Unit, together with original certified copies of required supporting documentation.	<a href="#">Section 3</a> Page 7
<b>3</b>	Provisional registration for six (6) months is granted and a <i>Certificate of Provisional Registration</i> is provided for each child.	<a href="#">Section 3</a> Page 7
<b>4</b>	If home education is continuing, a home visit is scheduled with the Liaison Unit one month prior to the expiry of registration. See step A below, if home education is not continuing or registration has expired.	<a href="#">Section 7</a> Page 9
<b>5</b>	The home educator provides a <i>Home Visit Parent Report</i> to the Liaison Unit at least one week before the scheduled home visit. A template for this report will be provided by the Liaison Unit.	<a href="#">Section 7</a> Page 9
<b>6</b>	A home visit will be conducted by an Authorised Person from the Liaison Unit.	<a href="#">Section 7</a> Page 9
<b>7</b>	A <i>Certificate of Registration</i> is provided for the home educated child for a period of no longer than two (2) years.	<a href="#">Section 8</a> Page 11
<b>8</b>	Once a child is registered (initial registration or renewed registration), the home educator provides an <i>Annual Report</i> to the Liaison Unit between 1 December and 31 January.	<a href="#">Section 9</a> Page 11
<b>9</b>	If renewal of home education registration is sought, repeat steps 4 – 8.	n/a
<b>A</b>	If home education is <u>not continuing</u> or registration has expired, and unless the child has turned 17 years of age, the child should be either enrolled in an ACT school within 10 days of the expiry or the conclusion of home education or the child should be registered again for provisional home education.	n/a

## 2. Conditions of home education registration

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*Sections 132, 135, 137, 138 and 139 of the Education Act (2004) detail the requirements for home education in the ACT.*

Registration for home education is subject to the following conditions:

- a. the parents of the child are to provide high quality education for the child
- b. the parents of the child should document the educational opportunities offered by the parents to their child and the strategies they use to encourage their child to learn
- c. the parents of the child should make available for inspection on request by the Director-General or Delegate any education programs, materials or other records used for the home education.

Registration of a child for home education may be cancelled if a parent has contravened a condition of the registration.

Parents of a child registered for home education are to provide a report (an *Annual Report*) about the educational progress of the child once every year.

## 3. Provisional registration

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*Under section 130 of the Act parents/carers may apply in writing for the registration of a child for home education. The initial six (6) month period of home education registration is called provisional registration.*

Parents may apply for provisional home education registration at any stage throughout the year using an application form available from the Liaison Unit.

The application form and required supporting documentation is to be provided to the Liaison Unit not later than 10 school term days after the child turns six (6) years of age or the child departs from the school of the child's enrolment or the first of the following happens:

- i. start of the school year
- ii. the day the child begins to live in the ACT.

Certified copies (see [section 15](#)) of the following documents must be submitted with an application:

- i. the birth certificate of each child
- ii. evidence of residence in the ACT
- iii. relevant temporary visas (if applicable)
- iv. any court orders relating to the child (if applicable).

For parents who wish to move their child from school education to home education, it is recommended, but not compulsory that an application for provisional home education registration is made prior to withdrawing their child from school.

### Home visit

No home visit is required to commence provisional registration.

### Provisional registration

Provisional registration is for six (6) months (or less if initial registration of the child is completed under section 131(3) or if the child ceases home education), and commences on the date the application and required supporting documentation is recorded as received by the Liaison Unit.

## 4. Registration (initial)

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*Under section 131 of the Act, parents/carers of provisionally registered children may apply for home education registration (initial).*

### Moving from provisional registration to registration (initial)

Parents who wish to move to registration (initial) should indicate this intention to the Liaison Unit by letter or email within the first five (5) months of registration.

Registration (initial) requires the home educator to provide the Liaison Unit with their initial *Home Visit Parent Report* and schedule a time for an Authorised Person to visit with the home educator and the child to discuss the report and the home education being provided. A *Home Visit Parent Report* template will be provided by the Liaison Unit. Home educators may adapt this template.

### Home visit

See [section 7](#) of this Manual

### Registration (initial)

Registration (initial) is for up to two (2) years. At the request of the parent, or as agreed in consultation between the parent and the Authorised Person, a shorter period may be negotiated. If registration is approved by the Director-General or Delegate, the registration period commences on the date of the home visit.

## 5. Registration renewal

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*Under section 137 of the Act, parent/carers of a child registered for home education may apply in writing requesting registration renewal.*

### Renewing registration

Parents who wish to renew the home education registration of a child should indicate this intention to the Liaison Unit by letter or email.

Registration requires the home educator to provide the Liaison Unit with their *Home Visit Parent Report* and schedule a time for an Authorised Person to visit with the home educator and the child to discuss the report and the home education being provided.

### Home visit

See [section 7](#) of this Manual.

### Registration renewal

Registration renewal is for up to two (2) years. At the request of the parent, or as agreed in consultation between the parent and the Authorised Person, a shorter period may be negotiated. If registration is approved by the Director-General or Delegate, the registration period commences on the date of the home visit.



## 6. Documenting home education

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*Under section 132 of the Act, the parents/carers of a home educated child must document the educational opportunities offered and the strategies they use to encourage their child to learn.*

Examples of documentation of educational opportunities and learning strategies may include:

- i. a diary or learning journal
- ii. parent observations and/or reflections on how the education is happening
- iii. work books across a range of subject or learning areas
- iv. annotated work samples
- v. a list of goals, outcomes or milestones achieved with notes about how and when they were achieved
- vi. creative works which may be displayed, performed or recorded.

## 7. Home visits

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*Under section 132 of the Act, parents/carers of a child being home educated must make available for inspection any education programs, material or other records.*

### Home visit

At an agreed time the home educating parent/s and registered child/children will meet with an Authorised Person from the Liaison Unit at the home education base. To negotiate an alternative venue such as a community library, please speak with the Liaison Unit. Booking the alternative venue is the responsibility of the home educator.

It is anticipated that a home visit will last for approximately one (1) hour with 30 additional minutes for each additional child.

### Home Visit Parent Report

*Under section 128 of the Act, home education is committed to offering a broad range of opportunities that foster in each child the development of the child's unique spiritual, emotional, physical, social and intellectual being.*

In line with section 128 of the Act, the *Home Visit Parent Report* template uses the terms '*spiritual, emotional, physical, social and intellectual*'. Parents may adapt this form to reflect their style of home education but should be aware that the Authorised Person is looking to see that a breadth of educational opportunities is provided.

*Spiritual* may include religious education, ethics and/or aspects of personal development as appropriate to the family and the child.

The parent provides the *Home Visit Parent Report* to the Liaison Unit at least one (1) week prior to the home visit. This report outlines the approaches, strategies and resources used to provide a quality education. This report is signed at the home visit by both the Authorised Person and the home educating parent.

## Home Visit Directorate Report

During the home visit, the Authorised Person will complete a *Home Visit Directorate Report*. This report provides an overview of the approaches, strategies, and resources used to provide a quality education to the Director-General or Delegate approving home education registration. The *Home Visit Directorate Report* records the evidence sighted of meeting the conditions of home education registration.

### Providing evidence of a quality education

Home educators are required to keep records about the education they provide to each child. Records may be created in a variety of ways, as described in [section 6](#). These records may be viewed at the home visit.

At the home visit the Authorised Person and the home educating parents will discuss:

- i. how home education is meeting the educational needs of each child
- ii. how educational opportunities are chosen
- iii. materials and resources used
- iv. strategies used to promote enthusiasm for learning.

The Authorised Person may request to see a small sample of each child's work at the home visit. A sample may include an example of a piece of writing, a sample of recent maths activities, a piece of creative endeavour and the child's 'favourite' recent piece of work.

If the child's learning activities do not produce material that can be collected as evidence of learning, then parents and children may choose to describe these experiences.

### Registration renewal without a home visit

In families with more than one child registered for home education, and where the children have different renewal dates, renewal without a home visit may be possible.

Experienced home educators may request in writing to have registration (initial) and registration renewal assessed on the basis of the submitted *Home Visit Parent Report* **WITHOUT** a home visit.

In order for registration (initial) or registration renewal to be approved without a home visit:

- i. home educators have been previously registered for the maximum period (i.e. up to two years)  
AND
- ii. all *Annual Reports* have been submitted AND
- iii. an Authorised Person has visited during the past 18 months AND
- iv. evidence of a quality education was clearly provided in the previously submitted *Home Visit Parent Reports*.

#### Example:

*Mr and Mrs Blue are ACT residents. They have registered their children, Julie, Fred and Rosie for home education.*

*As Julie and Fred's home education registration was scheduled to expire on the 25 March 2013, Mr and Mrs Blue organised for a home visit to take place before the expiry date.*

*Rosie's registration is due to expire on 28 December 2013.*

*As a home visit has been conducted within the past 18 months, and the family has submitted all Annual Reports for each child, Mr and Mrs Blue can apply for Rosie's registration to be renewed without a home visit. Mr and Mrs Blue submit a Home Visit Parent Report for Rosie when asking for registration renewal without a home visit.*

### **Parent feedback**

Following the home visit, the parent may wish to provide feedback regarding the Authorised Person, an aspect of the registration visit or the documentation of the visit. All feedback should be forwarded to the Manager, Liaison Unit by letter or email [HomeEd@act.gov.au](mailto:HomeEd@act.gov.au).

### **Non-compliance with legislative requirements**

If a parent contravenes a condition of home education registration as detailed in section 135 of the Act, the parent will be afforded the opportunity to comply with the conditions of registration before registration is cancelled.

## **8. Certificates of registration**

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Following receipt of the application for provisional registration, the Liaison Unit will send the *Certificate of Provisional Registration* together with a welcome letter from the Assistant Manager of the Liaison Unit to the applicant. The name and details of each child will be recorded in the register of home education and the Student Transfer Register.

A *Certificate of Registration*, signed by the Manager Liaison Unit and a copy of the *Home Visit Directorate Report* will be provided to parents following home visits for registration (initial) and registration renewal.

For students who are provisionally registered or registered for part-time school/part-time home education, the certificate will note the part-time agreement and the name of the part-time school.

## **9. Annual report**

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*Under section 138 of the Act, parents/carers of a child registered for home education must submit a report about the educational progress of the child once every year. This report is called the Annual Report.*

The *Annual Report* summarises the educational progress of each child registered for home education. The Liaison Unit provides home educators with an optional report format for the *Annual Report*. The *Annual Report* should be submitted between 1 December and 31 January, each year.

*Annual Reports* should be forwarded via post or email to the Assistant Manager - Home Education, Liaison Unit at [HomeEd@act.gov.au](mailto:HomeEd@act.gov.au).

An *Annual Report* is **not** required for children who are provisionally registered.

## 10. Home educators moving from interstate

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*Under section 131 of the Act, parents/carers who hold current Registration in other Australian states or territories and are relocating to the ACT may apply for registration without applying for provisional registration.*

Where a family who is registered for home education in another Australian state or territory relocates to the ACT, the parent may request home education registration (initial) in the ACT without the need for provisional registration.

To apply for registration (initial), an application form, required supporting documentation and evidence of registration in another jurisdiction is to be provided to the Liaison Unit not later than 10 school term days after the first of the following happens:

- i. start of the school year
- ii. the day the child begins to live in the ACT.

## 11. Part-time home education

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When choosing a suitable educational environment for their child, some parents explore the possibility of part-time home education/part-time school attendance.

The Liaison Unit notes that a successful part-time agreement is dependent on good communication between the school and the parent.

Some reasons for this choice include:

- transition from home education to full school attendance
- transition from school attendance to home education
- transition back to school from illness, injury or extended absence
- medical requirements best met in this way
- access to subject specific or specialised teaching not able to be provided by full-time home education
- access to educational opportunities not provided by the school
- family or social situations.

To negotiate a part-time home education/part-time school education arrangement parents:

- i. negotiate the arrangement with the principal (or delegate) of the school where the child is enrolled/potentially enrolled
- ii. record the arrangements in an agreement signed by both the parent and the principal
- iii. lodge a copy of the agreement with the Liaison Unit.

When enrolling a child in an ACT public school, parents should refer to the Directorate's advice on [Priority Placement Areas](#).

The application for part-time home education registration documents the agreement between the school and the home educator. The agreement shows how the combination of home and school education will provide a high quality education for the child and notes the roles and the responsibilities of both the parent and the school. The original agreement should be held by the part-time school. Copies of the agreement should be held by the home educator and the Liaison Unit.

A template for a part-time agreement is available from the Liaison Unit.

For home educated children with part-time enrolment at a school, the Authorised Person may contact the school prior to a home visit to ascertain that the agreement previously lodged with the Liaison Unit is still current and effective.

When considering part-time home education combined with part-time employment or work experience, please read Chapter 21 of the [Children and Young People Act 2008](#) prior to discussing this arrangement with the Liaison Unit.

## 12. Assessment and planning

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Assessment of learning can take place in any home education activity and environment. In the home education context 'assessment' does not require the 'marking or grading' of work; rather it may involve the observation of developing skills, knowledge or values in a range of contexts.

Strategies for assessment may include observation, comparison and discussion, or more formal testing. Tests are not a requirement for home education although some home educators may wish to use them in some circumstances.

Evaluation of learning provides information that may assist parents identify their child's strengths and weaknesses, identify how learning occurs, and think about possible educational opportunities and strategies for the future.

## 13. NAPLAN

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The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) commenced in 2008 to assess reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy of Australian children in school years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Home educated children are welcome to participate in the NAPLAN program. Enquiries about NAPLAN should be made to the Assistant Manager - Home Education, Liaison Unit.

NAPLAN assessments usually occur in the second week in May each year. The assessments are conducted at the Headley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning, Stirling, and are supervised by staff from the Liaison Unit.

NAPLAN results are not sent to the Liaison Unit nor are they held on children's home education files. Results are only sent to parents who may choose whether or not to include them in documentation for registration or in the *Annual Report*.

## 14. Resources

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Resources are the tools used to facilitate education.

Resources may include:

- i. specific curriculum resources such as reference, text or work books, puzzles and games, art and craft materials
- ii. external tools such as frequently used websites or software, season passes to a museum or theatre, short courses etc
- iii. the services of tutors or facilities such as libraries and galleries
- iv. the usual facilities of the home, e.g. kitchen, workshop space, garden, wet area
- v. the interactions of extended family and friends may also be considered as resources
- vi. activities provided by home education networks, associations, local sporting clubs and facilities.

The Liaison Unit regularly provides home educators with information about community activities in and around the ACT. This information bulletin also alerts home educators to current resources, including web based resources that may be of interest.

## 15. Application forms and templates

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The following application form and templates are available through the Liaison Unit:

- Application form for provisional home education registration
- *Home Visit Parent Report* template
- *Annual Report* template
- *Part-time home education/part-time school agreement* template.

Home educators may adapt the templates if required but not the application form.

All applications for home education must be accompanied by true copies of the following certified documents:

- i. the birth certificate of each child
- ii. evidence of residence in the ACT
- iii. relevant temporary visas (if applicable)
- iv. any court orders relating to the child (if applicable).

A certified true copy is a photocopy of an original document that has been verified by comparison with the original and marked in pen with the words 'I certify that this is a true copy of the original' or similar, the name of the person, their signature, profession/employer and the date (across the face of the photocopy).

Certification of true copies can be carried out by a range of people in the community including:

- justice of the peace
- registered pharmacist
- accountants - member of a recognised professional accounting body or a registered tax agent
- manager of a bank or credit union, other than managers of bank travel centres
- a currently registered nurse
- barrister, solicitor or patent attorney
- postal manager or manager at selected Australia Post outlets
- principal of an Australian secondary college, high school or primary school.

## 16. The Liaison Unit

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The Liaison Unit ACT Education and Training Directorate manages home education registration of ACT resident children. Officers from the Liaison Unit are appointed as Authorised Persons under section 67 of the *Education Act 2004*, to perform a range of duties in accordance with the Act including the registration of home education.

Contact details for the Assistant Manager – Home Education, Liaison Unit are:

**Phone:** +61 2 6205 9299 **Email:** [HomeEd@act.gov.au](mailto:HomeEd@act.gov.au)

### Authorised Persons

Authorised Persons from the Liaison Unit conduct home visits. When conducting a home visit the Authorised Person will carry a photo identity card that will be shown at the commencement of the home visit. Authorised Persons generally have a background in education.

## 17. Working with Vulnerable People

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For information regarding the requirements of the [Working with Vulnerable People Act 2011](#), please contact the Office for Regulatory Services.

## 18. Privacy and confidentiality

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All current home education records of the Directorate are kept in student record files held by the Liaison Unit, Information, Communications and Governance Branch. Records are accessed by Liaison Unit staff in order to effectively manage home education. These records contain personal information and are managed according to the requirements of the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cwlth\)](#).

The records of home educated children who have concluded home education are placed in secure archives within the Directorate. Parents and older children may request to view the contents of their own student record.

To request information from a child's file as a parent of that child, you may do so in two (2) ways:

1. If you wish to use email and you have access to a scanner you may request information from [det.legal.liaison@act.gov.au](mailto:det.legal.liaison@act.gov.au) stating exactly what you need. For example, you may want copies of your child's school NAPLAN results or particular school reports. Your request must include:
  - proof of identity - usually a scanned copy of your Driver's licence
  - a scanned copy of your child's birth certificate.
2. If you do not have access to a scanner you can post photocopies of the two documents above with a written request for specific information required to:  
Legal Liaison, Information, Communications and Governance Branch  
Education and Training Directorate  
GPO Box 158  
Canberra ACT 2601

## 19. Glossary of terms

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### Compulsory education age

An ACT resident child is of compulsory education age if the child is at least six (6) years old and under the age that the first of the following happens: the child completes year 12; or, the child is 17 years old. The Directorate registers children for home education once they turn six (6) years of age.

### Home base

The home base is the regular residential address of the main educating parent and child and is where home education is conducted. Some parts of the home education may be planned and taught by tutors, community based programs or activities at a location other than the home base.

### Home education organisations

A number of organisations provide support for families registered for home education. These organisations include:

- CHEC ([Christian Home Education Canberra](#))
- HENCAST ([Home Education Network Canberra and Southern Tablelands](#))
- [Home Education Association Inc. Australia](#) (HEA)

### Main educator

The parent who has the day-to-day responsibility for managing the education of the children is considered the 'main educator' and will be the first point of contact for the Liaison Unit.

### Parent

In this manual, 'parent' refers to a person who has parental responsibility for the child under the *Children and Young People Act 2008*. Under section 6 of the *Education Act 2004*, a parent includes a carer.

### Student Identification Number

Every child who is enrolled in an ACT school or is registered for home education is given a unique student number. Children who have been previously enrolled in an ACT school have already been allocated a unique number. This number is used during the period of home education and enables a child to be tracked through the education system and for identification during the marking of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Children who attend school on a part-time basis will use the same number for both school and home education. The number is not used for general administrative purposes. The Student Identification Number is shown on certificates of home education registration issued after July 2013.

The Student Identification Number may be used when applying for student bus travel passes with ACTION buses. Parents are provided with a copy of this number when a registration certificate is issued.



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