

REGARDING THE USE OF

THE WA CURRICULUM

FOR WA HOME EDUCATORS

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This document is my best effort to distil the requirements of the:

- **School Education Act**
- **Home Education Policy** and
- **West Australian Curriculum**

for Home Educating parents.

It is not an official document in any capacity.

Parents should familiarise themselves with the official documents available at the following links.

School Education Act

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_878_homepage.html

The Home Education Policy

<http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/policies/home-education.en?cat-id=3457117>

The West Australian Curriculum

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser>

REGARDING THE USE OF WA CURRICULUM FOR WA HOME EDUCATORS

IN A NUTSHELL

- Home educators are to show their child's/children's ³ educational program and evidence of progress.
- Moderators are to evaluate the program and progress in relation to the WA Curriculum.
- If a written concern is made as to the ³ educational program and progress of a child, the CEO/RED decides whether the program/program of sufficient concern for a further review to be held, a decision made by taking the WA Curriculum into account.

The inference I take from these facts from the School Ed Act and the Home Ed Policy is that the Home Educator does not have to show evidence of documentation/programming against the WA Curriculum, but that if a written concern is issued by the Moderator, the WA Curriculum will be used by the CEO (or Regional Executive Director as the CEO's delegate) as a gauge of appropriate progress. Therefore it is not mandated that parents have a documented plan against the curriculum, but it is sensible/expedient to factor to use it as one of our planning tools since it is the gauge by which registration can be cancelled if a child can't be shown to be making educational progress. H.Mc.

DEFINITIONS

(Home Education Procedures document)

³ Educational Program

"An organised set of learning Activities designed to enable a student to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes relevant to the student's individual needs."

⁴ Home Educator

"A parent registered under s48 of the School Education Act"

⁵ Home Education Moderator

"A person appointed by the Regional Executive Director to evaluate and report on home education programs and progress"

DEFINITION

(Cambridge dictionary)

Evaluate

"To judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount or value of something."

¹LAW - School Education Act 1999

According to the ¹School Education Act (the law):

⁴Home Educators -

- Are responsible for the ³educational program of their children.
- Are required to show tangible evidence of a child's progress
- Are to give at least 21 days' notice for a required evaluation

⁵Home Education Moderators -

- Are to evaluate a child's ³educational program and progress
 - within 3 months of registration and
 - at least every 12 months while registered
- Are to provide a report of their evaluation to the parent and the CEO

The CEO

- If a concern is raised about the child's program or ³educational progress, written notice of the concern and reasons must be sent to the home educator
- The shortest period of notice for an evaluation to be arranged is 7 day notice for evaluation of those concerns to be adequately addressed
- Before deciding that the child's ³educational progress is not satisfactory, the CEO may consider the outline of curriculum and assessment in schools established under the ⁶School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997 (SCSA)

²POLICY - Should not exceed the law

According to the ²Home Education Policy / Procedures:

EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PROGRESS

The Home education Moderator will:

- "undertake evaluations of children's educational programs and educational progress in accordance with the School Education Act 1999" (*Home Education Procedures document*)
- "collect information to be able to prepare an evaluation report on children's educational programs and educational progress" (*Home Education Procedures document*)
 - ("Guidance - the home education moderator is deemed to have the power to request to see tangible evidence of the home education program and the child's progress" (*Home Education Procedures document*))

The Regional Executive Director will:

-decide whether the educational programs offered and the children's educational programs and educational progress are appropriate to the ⁶Western Australian Curriculum and approve the final evaluation report for release to the home educator

⁶WA Curriculum - Referred to within the ¹Act and the ²Policy - www.scsa.edu.au

Statements from ⁶SCSA

"In accordance with the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act, 1997, the ⁶Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline (Outline) sets out 'the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that students are expected to acquire and guidelines for the assessment of student achievement'. The Outline is for all Western Australian schools - government and non-government schools, approved international schools and **home education providers**". (<http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/principles/background>)

In 2013 the Home Based Learning Network (now Home Education Western Australia) sought clarification of some issues from SCSA. The following advice was received and published on HBLN's website:

"The Authority has advised that all educational programs, whether they are delivered in a school or through a home education program, must reflect the Outline's general capabilities, and the content and achievement standards. Like teachers in schools, some home educators will need to add to and adjust their programs. Of course, moderators will continue to be flexible to cater for the different approaches of home educators and use their professional judgement when they come to evaluate home education programs according to the Outline."

NOTES

- The ¹School Education Act 1999 **contains the laws** relating to home education.
- The ²Home Education Policy **expands** on and **clarifies** the Act - but **should not exceed** it.
- The ⁶Western Australian Curriculum is referenced within the Policy with the web address: www.scsa.edu.au/internet
- Multiple references are made to ³"educational program and progress" to both home educators and moderators
- Only **one** reference is made to **curriculum** in the Home Education section of the School Education Act 1999 - and that is in s 53 which relates to Cancellation of Registration. *S53(2) "Before deciding under subsection (1)(a) that a child's educational progress is not satisfactory the chief executive officer may take into account – (a) the outline of curriculum and assessment in schools established under the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997".* – That is, a program that is inadequate against the WA Curriculum may of itself result in cancellation prior to the determination that progress is not satisfactory. However, it does not specify the extent of implementation or documentation, only that the Outline may be taken into account. A program would have to be of sufficient concern to have a determination made by the CEO on this issue alone. The previous section s53(1) states *"The chief executive officer may cancel a home educator's registration under section 48 in respect of a child if – (a) in the opinion of the chief executive officer, the child's educational progress is not satisfactory"*. The adequacy of these issues are taken to the CEO (or RED by delegation) if and after a moderator raises a written concern - determining whether the educational program offered is meeting the needs of the child, and the child's educational progress is satisfactory, with consideration given to the WA Curriculum
- **At no point in the Act or the Policy** are home educators instructed to fulfil a proforma, to quote curriculum numbers or even to document their program according to the WA Curriculum.
- A further review is only to be held where concerns are raised and recorded in the report. Without a concern the moderator has no authority to require an additional evaluation meeting.
- SCSA's 2013 statement recognises the need for flexibility within home education and it indicates the importance of the general capabilities and the child's progress along with curriculum content. Whilst home educators are not required to document all of these there will be a **reflection** of these three elements as appropriate to the home education context. In other words, a moderator will need to establish adequate content development **over time**, determine whether effective progress has been made (not in relation to the year level standard, but in relation to that child's previous attainments) within a rich and varied program geared to life-long learning skills. Also note that moderators 'evaluate programs according to the Outline' (the WA Curriculum).
- Home educators should not be focussed on 'meeting the requirements of the WA Curriculum' but rather be focussed on **meeting the needs of their child** with the understanding that **the WA curriculum will be the measuring tool by which the program's adequacy will be evaluated**.
- Home educators are **not required** to implement the moderator's style of program, nor to provide documentation to assist the moderator in collating information; it is the moderator's role to evaluate the home educator's program.
- If moderators wish to upskill home educators on documentation against the curriculum, they should articulate the fact **that this is beyond the requirement of evaluating a program** and should offer their time rather than giving the impression that it is a requirement. Requiring documentation goes beyond the role of evaluating. In an evaluation the moderator may make suggestions or recommendations or raise concerns. If the ground is unsure, **a home educator may ask the moderator** "Is this a requirement specified in the Act or the Policy? Please show me where" or "What is your concern?" or "How will this benefit my child?" Many parents will keep documentation for their own planning/assessing purposes, but time-consuming documentation that supplies answers for a moderator to save them actually evaluating the program should be weighed up against its ultimate value toward the child/ren's program
- Note that **by definition (see definitions on first page)**, "an educational program is an organised set of learning activities to enable a student to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes relevant to the student's individual needs" - **that** is our job, **by definition from the Home Education Policy and Procedures document itself** - to organise our children's targeted learning activities. **The definition does not include curriculum-linked documentation**. Therefore any documentation is at the home educator's discretion. The extent to which it is completed should relate to your style of meeting the student's individual needs, not busy-work performing only a self-justifying task for evaluation meetings.