This document should be read in conjunction with [Home Education policy and associated guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education).

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The department works with parents who choose to home educate their children to ensure that home education programs are lawful and to enable Northern Territory (NT) children to experience appropriate education.

These guidelines support parents who are applying to home educate in NT for the first time. The guidelines will assist parents to meet their obligations to:

* submit timely and successful annual home education applications, including the required supporting documentation, and
* facilitate home inspections as part of the application process.

These guidelines also support department staff through the provision of information regarding the department’s requirements to:

* conduct home education assessments
* conduct home inspections, and
* make determinations to approve or decline home education applications.

Parents who are considering home education as an educational option for their child/ren are encouraged to discuss this choice with their school principal and/or the Home Education Officer. Home education requires significant dedication and commitment to understanding and delivering educational outcomes for children. It is important that parents and department staff discuss individual situations to determine whether home education is appropriate for both the parents and the child/ren.

These guidelines are aligned with the provisions for home education established under Part 4 Division 3 of the [*Education Act*](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/b1da3afbb3b142e869257f3f001da057?OpenDocument) (the Act) and section 12 of the [Education Regulations](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/0888d2c50a64efab69257f3000132c84/%24FILE/ATTKNWRI.pdf/Repe002R1.pdf).

1. **DEFINITIONS**

[Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)](http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp) is an independent statutory authority responsible for the:

* development and implementation of a national curriculum
* management of the National Assessment Program including NAPLAN
* collection and publication of information regarding the performance and resources of schools and campuses across Australia.

[Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority approved curriculum](http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/alternative-curriculum-recognition)currently includes:

* Australian Curriculum Framework
* International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program and Middle Years Program
* Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework
* Montessori National Curriculum Framework.

**Child of compulsory school age** is a child that turns six years of age on or before 30 June of the school year until the child completes Year 10 or turns 17 years of age, whichever comes first.

**Compulsory participation phase** applies to students who have completed Year 10, but have not turned 17, where the student must participate in an eligible option on a full time basis until they turn 17.

**Daily care and control of a child (in regards to the definition of parent)** refers to a person who is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights, and has all the responsibilities, in relation to the day-to-day care and control of the child.

**Decision notice** for the purpose of this policy is the formal notice approving or declining an application for home education.

**Eligible option** is participation on a full time basis in one of the following:

* approved education or training
* if 15 years or over, paid employment (minimum average of 25 hours per week) or
* a combination of approved education/training and paid employment.

**Home inspection** refers toa visit to the residence that home education is being proposed or taking place in, by a delegated departmental officer as part of the home education application process or as a condition of approval.

**Parent** signifies a child’s father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customary law or tradition.

**Parental responsibility (in regards to the definition of parent)** refers to a person who has:

1. daily care and control of the child, or
2. is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights, and has all the responsibilities, in relation to the long-term care and development of the child, or
3. has daily care and control of the child and the entitlement and responsibilities at (b)

and includes a person who has been given the above responsibilities under another state or territory law.

1. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Executive Director** **School Support Services** **(Executive Director)** is responsible for:

* overseeing the administration of home education in the Northern Territory in accordance with the *Education Act*
* acting as the delegate of the Chief Executive, make determinations to:
	+ approve or decline a home education application
	+ place conditions on an approval to home educate
	+ cancel a home education approval
	+ finalise a review conducted by the Home Education Review Panel.

**Home Education Project Officer** is responsible for:

* providing information and advice to parents and department staff in relation to home education
* coordinating the home education application process
* liaising with parents and relevant department staff in relation to home education applications.

**Director and Senior Manager for NT Curriculum T-9 and 10-12** are responsible for:

* overseeing the assessment of home education applications by Curriculum Consultants
* preparing Curriculum Assessment Reports on applications for home education
* liaising with principals where there is a disparity between the recommendations of the Curriculum Assessment Report and the Home Inspection Report to come to a common recommendation to the Executive Director.

**Curriculum Consultants** are responsible for:

* reviewing and assessing the curriculum and teaching and learning plans provided within home education applications.

**Regional Directors** are responsible for:

* ensuring that home inspections are conducted in accordance with the required timelines within their region
* ensuring that principals or department officers complete and submit Home Inspection Reports to the Home Education Officer within the required timelines.

**Principals** are responsible for:

* scheduling and conducting home inspections as requested by the Home Education Officer
* preparing Home Inspection Reports that provide a recommendation to the Executive Director as to whether a proposed home education is appropriate for approval
* liaising with Director and Senior Manager for NT Curriculum T-9 and 10-12 where there is a disparity between the recommendations of the Curriculum Assessment Report and the Home Inspection Report to come to a common recommendation to the Executive Director.

**Parents** are responsible for:

* submitting timely and complete applications including all supporting documentation
* ensuring their child/ren remain enrolled in school until such time as a Home Education Approval Notice is received
* accommodating a home inspection as part of the application process
* delivering home education in accordance with the Home Education Approval Notice and the conditions of approval
* accommodating a home inspection to demonstrate the progress of their child/ren against the home education program
* informing the department of any changes to home education or when home education ceases.
1. **APPLICATION PROCESS**

A flow chart of the application process is provided at Appendix A.

**4.1 Develop a home education program for each child**

Parents are encouraged to refer to the [Home Education Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Requirements Information Sheet](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/homework) (Attachment A) for guidance on developing the home education program for their child/ren.

The department recommends that parents use the [Australian Curriculum](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/) to find the curriculum and achievement standards appropriate for their child’s year level to develop their child’s home education program.

**4.1.1 Exemptions from using ACARA approved curriculum**

The Act requires that the curriculum used in a home education program must be one that is approved by the [ACARA](http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp).

An exemption from using an ACARA approved curriculum may be granted where special circumstances exist. Special circumstances may include accommodations for a child with disability or special support needs, or a family temporarily living in Australia who wishes to continue using the curriculum program of their home country during their residency.

Where parents wish to seek an exemption, details of the special circumstances must be provided along with supporting documentation to inform the department’s decision.

**4.2 Complete application form**

Parents must complete a [Home Education Application Form](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education) (Attachment B) for each child that they wish to home educate. All sections of the application must be complete for the application to be accepted. Supporting documentation must also be submitted as outlined in the application form.

**4.3 Submit application**

The department accepts and assesses new home education applications twice a year. Application closing dates are published on the [Northern Territory Government Home Education website](https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/home-schooling). As a general guide, submission dates are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Semester 1
 | Applications should be submitted in November/December of the previous year and will close early January. |
| * Semester 2
 | Applications should be submitted in May/June and will close early July. |

Late applications will only be accepted where extenuating circumstances exist. For example, a family who has approval for home education in another jurisdiction and is moving to the Northern Territory and seeking to continue to home educate their children.

Applications and any supporting documentation are to be submitted via post or email to the Home Education Officer.

Post: Home Education Officer Email: homeeducation.det@nt.gov.au

 School Support Services

 Department of Education

 GPO Box 4821

 DARWIN NT 0801

Parents must ensure that their children remain enrolled in, and attend, school until such time as they receive approval to home educate. New home education applications will be prioritised; however, final determinations may take up to 10 weeks.

**4.4 Initial application review**

All applications are subject to an initial application review to ensure that all sections are completed in full and sufficient information is provided to assess the proposed home education program.

If the application is completed adequately parents will receive an Acknowledgement Letter advising that their application has been received and is currently being assessed.

If the application is not completed adequately parents will be required to respond to a Request for Further Information, within 30 days, to prevent the application from being declined. Refer to the [Declined or Cancelled Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education) for further information.

**4.4 Applicant check**

The Home Education Officer conducts an applicant check with the following department areas:

* Enrolment and Attendance
* Student Support
* School Operations, and
* Regional Director.

The applicant check is to confirm that home education is an appropriate option for the child and any outcomes of the check will need to be discussed at the home inspection. This will ensure that parents have the opportunity to respond to any concerns.

**4.6 Curriculum assessment**

The proposed home education is assessed by a Curriculum Consultant and is based on:

* the use of an appropriate curriculum that demonstrates sufficient scope and detail across all learning areas
* the overall design of the teaching and learning plan in relation to the curriculum and the child’s year level
* the application of appropriate resources and materials to support the curriculum achievement standards across all learning areas, and
* the application of appropriate assessments to identify and record the child’s progress and achievement against the curriculum standards across all learning areas.

A Curriculum Assessment Report (Attachment C) will be completed and will summarise the assessment of the application and, where appropriate, provide recommendations relating to the home education for the principal or department officer to discuss with the parent at the home inspection.

**4.7 Scheduling home inspection for application assessment**

The Home Education Officer will notify the relevant principal/department officer of the required home inspection and provide them with the following information for each child:

* Home Education Application
* Curriculum and Assessment Report
* any additional information from the applicant check.

The principal/department officer will review the home education information for each child and arrange an agreed time with the parents to conduct the home inspection. The home inspection is to be undertaken within **two weeks** of the principal/department officer receiving the request from the Home Education Officer.

Where there is more than one child being home educated within the family home, it is at the principal/department officer’s discretion to conduct one or more inspections to report on the proposed home education program and facilities for each child. Principals may choose to delegate the home inspection to the assistant principal or senior teacher within the school.

Where the principal/department officer has made three attempts to schedule a home inspection and has been unsuccessful in securing a date and time with parents, the home education application may be declined due to an inability to complete the application assessment process. Refer to the [Declined or Cancelled Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education) for further information.

The principal/department officer should keep a record of attempts to schedule the home inspection and report back to the Home Education Officer where they have been unsuccessful.

**4.8 Conducting home inspection for application assessment**

The home inspection will focus on discussing and reviewing:

* the proposed teaching and learning program
* the resources and materials to be used to support the home education delivery
* the home education environment and facilities
* any recommendations that have been made within the Curriculum Assessment Report, and
* any concerns raised by the applicant check.

The home inspection is also an opportunity for parents to seek advice on their home education program or to discuss any concerns they may have in relation to their child’s learning needs. The child/ren must be present and are encouraged to participate and engage with the home inspection process.

**4.9 Home Inspection Report for New Applications**

Upon completion of the home inspection the principal/department officer will prepare a [Home Inspection Report for New Applications](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education) (Attachment D) and submit it to the Home Education Officer within 5 working days of conducting the home inspection.

The report will provide an assessment of the home education program and facilities with a recommendation to the Executive Director as to whether the home education application should be approved or declined. Where appropriate, conditions on the approval may also be recommended, for example: *Approval is subject to parents increasing the range of resources and materials used to support the delivery of the science curriculum.*

**4.10 Determination on home education application**

The determination to approve or decline a home education application, and whether any specific conditions of approval are to be applied, is based on the recommendations of the Curriculum Assessment Report and the Home Inspection Report for New Applications. Where there is a disparity between the recommendations of the two reports, the authors of each report will liaise with each other to negotiate a common recommendation to the Executive Director.

The relevant reports are submitted to the Executive Director to consider prior to making one of the following determinations:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Determination** | **Action** |
| **Application approved**  | 1. Home Education Approval Notice is provided to parents outlining the conditions of approval and enclosing copies of the Curriculum Assessment Report and the Home Inspection Report for New Applications.
2. Parents are to implement the home education program and comply with the conditions of the Home Education Approval Notice. A standard condition of approval is to accommodate a home inspection in Term 3. Refer to [Home Inspection for Approved Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)
3. Parents may withdraw their child/ren from school and commence home education. A copy of the Home Education Approval Notice must be provided to the school.
 |
| **Application declined** | 1. Application Declined Notice is provided to the parents. The Notice will:
	1. outline the reasons for the decision to decline the application
	2. invite the parents to provide a written response, within 30 days, with reasons as to why the home education should be approved and an outline of how they are able to accommodate the recommendations made in the Curriculum Assessment Report and Home Inspection Report.
	3. include copies of the Curriculum Assessment Report and the Home Inspection Report for New Applications.
2. Refer to [Declined or Cancelled Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education).
 |

1. **CESSATION OF HOME EDUCATION**

A parent must inform the Home Education Officer in writing within 14 days of any of the following:

* the parents cease to provide home education (this may include the family moving interstate where a Northern Territory home education approval no longer applies); or
* the child is enrolled in school; or
* there is a change to the details provided within the home education application.

**5.2 Student participating in an out of school eligible option**

Where a student is participating in an out of school eligible option, the parent must ensure that they notify the Home Education Officer in writing, and complete and forward a [Notification of Arrangements](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/enrolment) form to the Manager Eligible Options.

Out of school eligible option refers to where astudent has completed Year 10, and is between 15 and 17 years of age, and the student chooses to participate full time in one of the following eligible options:

* paid employment (minimum average of 25 hours per week), or
* approved education or training where the provider is not a school or a home education environment (e.g. an apprenticeship or full time study through a university or registered training organisation).
1. **COMPLAINTS AND REVIEWS**

Complaints relating to the home education process, should be made in writing to homeeducation.det@nt.gov.au and will be processed in accordance with the department [complaint process](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/complaints).

Where parents wish to seek a review of a home education decision they should refer to the [Declined or Cancelled Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education).

**6.1 Review by Tribunal**

A parent may apply to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) for a review of the decision by the department in relation to:

* decline a home education application, or
* impose conditions on an approval to home educate, or
* cancel an approval to home educate.

For a matter to be referred to NTCAT, it must have first been through the department [complaint process](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/complaints) or a Home Education Review Panel as outlined in the [Declined or Canceled Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education).

1. **PRIVACY PRINCIPALS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

All information collected in relation to the home education of a child is to be used solely for the purpose of administering home education commensurate with the Act and in accordance with the [*Information Act*](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/f8841e16139b1b3069257fb50081793e?OpenDocument).

All records and information relating to home education will be maintained in the department’s record management system (Tower Records and Information Management – TRIM) under the security caveat Student Records in Confidence.

1. **APPENDICES AND ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A – New Home Education Application process

Attachment A – [Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Requirements Information Sheet](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/homework)

Attachment B – [Home Education Application Form](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)

Attachment C – [Curriculum Assessment Report](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)

Attachment D - [Home Inspection Report for New Applications](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)

1. **RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Department of Education | * [Enrolment policy](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/enrolment)
* [Home Education policy](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)
* [Continuing Home Education Application guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)
* [Home Inspection for Approved Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)
* [Declined or Cancelled Home Education guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/home-education)
* [Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of children guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/mandatory-reporting-of-harm-and-exploitation-of-children)
 |
| Northern Territory | * [*Education Act*](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/b1da3afbb3b142e869257f3f001da057?OpenDocument)
* [Education Regulations](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/0888d2c50a64efab69257f3000132c84/%24FILE/ATTKNWRI.pdf/Repe002R1.pdf)
* [*Information Act*](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/f8841e16139b1b3069257fb50081793e?OpenDocument)
* [*Care and Protection of Children Act*](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/linkreference/CARE%20AND%20PROTECTION%20OF%20CHILDREN%20ACT?opendocument)
* [*Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act*](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/d0ff18b20ccbdd8969257f300015bae7?OpenDocument)
* [Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board](http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/)
 |
| National | * [Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority](http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp)
* [Australian Curriculum Version 8.0](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/)
 |

**Appendix A - New Home Education Application Process**

