



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

HOMESCHOOLING POLICY

2023 - 2027

March 2023





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1. POLICY TITLE: Policy on Home Schooling

2. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy aims to put forward guidelines for the options of home schooling as provided for under the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Education Act, Chap. 39:01, to strengthen the oversight of the related systems and procedures.

3. RATIONALE

In Trinidad and Tobago, an increasing number of parents are exercising the option to home school their children. The reasons identified include for parents' choice to opt-out of the general education system.

4. GOALS

The policy goals are as follows:

- i. To establish guidelines for home schooling.
- ii. To develop a registry of Home Schoolers.
- iii. To ensure the rights of the child to a suitable quality of education.

5. SCOPE

5.1 Inclusions

This policy shall apply to the following:

- Officers and Divisions of the Ministry of Education (MOE) inclusive of:
 - o The Minister of Education

- o Permanent Secretary
 - o Chief Education Officer (CEO)
 - o School Supervision and Management Division (SSMD)
 - o Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD)
 - o Student Support Service Division (SSSD)
 - o Examinations Section/Division
 - o Division of Educational Research and Evaluation (DERE)
 - o District Leadership Teams (DLTs)
 - o Principals and Teachers
- The Tobago House of Assembly (THA)
 - Parents, Legal Guardians

This policy shall apply to children of compulsory school age who are nationals of Trinidad and Tobago.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Home Schooling

Instruction at home, is synonymous with home schooling, refers to a programme of educational instruction given to a child by the child's parent or legal guardian or by a person designated by the parent or legal guardian, instead of enrolling the child in a public or private "school". It varies from a child being allowed to learn experimentally based on life's experiences, to a child being individually tutored or tutored in a group setting in a structured environment. Home schooling, therefore, is a process whereby a child is engaged in structured learning activities at home and/or elsewhere, as selected by the parent, but is not a full-time or part-time student at any institution registered with the Ministry of Education.

Parents may elect to home school children at locations outside of their residence. Approval of such arrangements do not constitute registration of these premises as private schools.

6.2 Home School Environment

This refers to the environment at the home or the location at which home schooling is conducted and includes, but is not limited to, the physical infrastructure, lighting, water supply, electricity supply, cleanliness, noise levels, safety considerations and teaching learning resources.

6.3 Private School

A private school is a privately owned and operated school or Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centre registered with the Ministry of Education to operate at a specified location and cater to a specified number of students.

6.4 District Leadership Team

A team of Ministry of Education officials operating at the Education District level, comprising representation from the following Divisions of the MOE to ensure collaboration in the approach to planning and resolution of issues:

- School Supervision and Management Division (SSMD)
- Student Support Services Division (SSSD)
- Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD)

6.5 Remote Schooling

Remote schooling is a combination of different kinds of virtual education, where neither the teachers nor the student(s) are physically present at school. Various sources of media are utilized for teaching and learning, including digital resources and tools, paper-based textbooks and printable worksheets. This can occur synchronously with real-time peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration, or asynchronously, with self-paced learning activities that take place independently of the instructor. A student who is a virtual or online student remains a registered student at a school to which he/she has been assigned and is subject to the same educative and administrative systems as those enrolled at a public or private school.

7. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This policy is guided by the following legislation:

7.1 Education Act Chap. 39:01:

Section 4 (4a)

In addition to the several duties imposed on the Minister in this Act, the Minister shall be responsible for (a) devising a system of education calculated as far as possible to ensure that educational and vocational abilities, aptitudes, and interests of the children find adequate expression and opportunity for their development.

Section 76 (1)

(1) In this Act, the expression “a compulsory school age” means any age between five and sixteen years and accordingly a person shall be deemed to be of compulsory school age if he has attained the age of five years and has not attained the age of sixteen years, and a person shall be deemed to be over compulsory school age as soon as he has attained the age of sixteen years.

Section 77

Subject to section 78, it shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, by regular attendance at a school.

Section 78

A child is excused from attendance at school-

- a) if in the opinion of the Minister, he is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere;*
- b) if he is unable to attend school by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause;*
- c) if he is excluded from attendance at school under any written law;*
- d) if he is absent temporarily as authorized under the Regulations.*

7.2 Trinidad and Tobago Constitution, Chapter I, Part I - Rights Enshrined

4. It is hereby recognised and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely:

- (c) the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life;*
- (f) the right of a parent or guardian to provide a school of his own choice for the education of his child or ward;*
- (i) freedom of thought and expression;*

7.3 Regulation 9(a) of the Immigration Regulations made under Section 44 of the Immigration Act Chapter 18:01

- a) Where a person seeking to enter Trinidad and Tobago falls within the category described in section 9(1)(g) of the Act, the immigration officer shall not allow such person to enter Trinidad and Tobago for the purpose of entering any educational or training establishment in Trinidad and Tobago unless that person is in possession of a valid student's permit in the form set out as Form 43. The holder of a student's permit shall comply with the terms and conditions specified in such permit.*
- b) A person seeking to enter and remain in Trinidad and Tobago for the purpose of receiving education or training at an educational or training establishment by which he has been accepted as a student, may make application for a student's permit in duplicate to the Chief Immigration Officer in the form set out as Form 34.*
- c) The Chief Immigration Officer may, upon being satisfied as to the bona fides of the educational or training establishment, issue a student's permit if—*
 - (i) the person seeking to enter and remain in Trinidad and Tobago has been accepted as a student by such establishment;*
 - (ii) there is adequate accommodation for the student at such establishment;*
 - (iii) no local student has been displaced; and*

- (iv) *the person seeking to enter and remain in Trinidad and Tobago does not belong to a prohibited class.*

8. HOMESCHOOLING PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

8.1 The processes for the granting of approval to home school entails the following:

8.1.1 Submission of the completed prescribed Home School application form which is provided on the Ministry of Education's website. The application form should be submitted electronically to the Office of the Chief Education Officer along with the following documents:

8.1.1.1 Copies of Birth Certificate(s) of child/children to be home schooled

8.1.1.2 Proof of identification of parent(s)

8.1.2 Indication of the curriculum to be followed, if different from that of the Ministry of Education. Parents should be advised that in order to facilitate optimal preparation for national and regional examinations and/or future integration into local public schools/tertiary level institutions, the Ministry of Education's curriculum should be followed.

8.2 Should the Ministry require any adjustments to the application and/or accompanying documents, these should be submitted within the stated time limit of the applicant being so notified.

8.3 If the application is not approved:

8.3.1 The Minister shall facilitate placement in a public school. Alternatively, the parent may, at his/her own expense, register the child/children at a private school registered with the Ministry of Education.

8.3.2 Where the child has been diagnosed with special education needs, he/she may be supported in accessing placement at a public special school or at a private special school for which fees are subsidized by the Ministry of Education.

8.3.3 The parent may reapply to home school in the next school term/year;

- 8.4** Submission of an End of Year Report by the parent/guardian, using the prescribed format, upon request by the Ministry of Education.
- 8.5** If the child is evaluated using standardised assessments approved by the Ministry and it is determined that he/she is functioning at a level lower than that of his/her peers/than expected, the Chief Education Officer may, if necessary, advise on an adapted curriculum to be followed and place the child on probation for one (1) term or, if there is no improvement, deem the home instruction to be inadequate and recommend the placement of the student in the public school system.
- 8.6** Alternatively, the parent at his/her expense, may place the child in a registered private school of choice.

9. ROLES/ RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 The Ministry of Education shall:

- 9.1.2 Grant permission to home school for a stated period.
- 9.1.3 Grant permission to continue to home school based on the assessment of the End of Year Report provided by the tutor and signed by the parent/guardian.
- 9.1.4 Place in the public school system any student who is of compulsory school age (5-16), whom the parent is unable to enroll at a registered private school of choice, where approval to home-school was not granted.
- 9.1.5 Provide curricular support for all levels of home-schooling as requested by the parent/tutor.
- 9.1.6 Make available on the Ministry of Education's website: all relevant information necessary to support the home-schooling teaching and learning experience, including a list of possible requisite supplies for each subject, authorised curricula and virtual teaching, and learning materials.
- 9.1.7 Provide guidance with respect to special education needs.
- 9.1.8 Communicate with the parent/tutor and the relevant representative body.
- 9.1.9 Prepare a list of all home-schooled students who have been successfully registered for SEA by October of the preceding year.

- 9.1.10 Host meetings between the Ministry's ECCE team and parents of ECCE aged children to provide guidelines to parents on the broad principles of developmentally appropriate practices to ensure the holistic development of children at the start of home schooling.
 - 9.1.11 Host meetings with the relevant representative body to provide guidelines to parents on the broad principles of developmentally appropriate practices to ensure the holistic development of children at the start of home schooling.
 - 9.1.12 Ensure the care and protection of students.
- 9.2** The Parent / Guardian shall:
- 9.2.1 Maintain an annual portfolio/record of the child's work that will be used to assess his/her development at the ECCE level.
 - 9.2.2 Allow the child/children to undergo assessments at a date and time determined by the Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education in order to establish whether the child has achieved reasonable proficiency/progress based on the Ministry's school standards or the established individualised pathway for child/children.
 - 9.2.3 Facilitate virtual/in-person visits by officers of the Ministry of Education as delegated by the Chief Education Officer:
 - 9.2.3.1 to observe classroom instruction in cases where student progress occasions probation.
 - 9.2.3.2 to ensure the care and protection of students.
 - 9.2.4 Be responsible for physical and psycho-social well-being of the home-schooled child/children and immunization status especially if re-entry/entry into the public school system is contemplated subsequently.
 - 9.2.5 Keep abreast of all educational initiatives (refer to District Office, MOE website).
 - 9.2.6 Ensure that all necessary educational teaching and learning resources are provided for the effective delivery of the curriculum.
 - 9.2.7 Be responsible for registering their child/children for national/regional examinations as private candidate (A valid registration certificate of home

instruction will be required for registration for the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA)¹.)

9.2.8 Register their child/children for local/regional examinations as private candidates at the appropriate time, if desired.

9.2.9 Submit applications annually for approval to home school their child/children.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF HOME INSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES

10.1 The District Leadership Team (DLT) will undertake annual reviews of requested End of Year Reports, and where necessary, interviews will be conducted with the parent and home-schooled child/children. The evaluation will include a review of the teaching, learning and assessment as contained in the End of Year Report.

11. (RE-)ENTRY/ENTRY INTO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

11.1 If at any stage the parent/guardian requests that his/her child be allowed to re-enter the public or private school system, the child must undergo appropriate testing and evaluation to be placed in an appropriate standard or form. Such standard or form may or may not be the same that the child has achieved in the programme of home instruction.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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¹ A Certificate of home instruction is not a requirement for Regional Examinations such as those offered by CXC.



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Education Towers, No.5 St. Vincent Street, Port of
Spain, Trinidad
868.622.2181 www.moe.gov.tt

Home School Application Form

This application is for exemption from enrollment at a registered school.

If you are applying for more than one child, you must make a separate application for each child. Each application must have its own supporting documentation, specifically catering to each child.

Applications usually take 4-6 weeks to process.

If your child is aged between 5 and 16 years old, it is a legal requirement that he or she is enrolled in and attending a registered school while the process is underway.

Checklist

Before submitting this application, please ensure that you have included the following:-

<input type="checkbox"/>	Section One	Contact Details To be completed by a parent/legal guardian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section Two	Homeschooling Particulars To be completed by a parent/legal guardian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section Three	Other Information To be completed by a parent/legal guardian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of Birth Certificate	
<input type="checkbox"/>	If not a Trinbagonian Citizen by birth, proof of Trinidad and Tobago Permanent Residence or Citizenship must be submitted.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Court Order – A copy of relevant Court Order (if legal guardian is not parent).	

Completed Forms

- The Home School application form which is provided on the Ministry of Education's website – www.moe.gov.tt should be completed.
- The completed application form should then be submitted to the Office of the Chief Education Officer via email at ceo@moe.gov.tt, along with the following documents:
 - ✓ Copies of Birth Certificate(s) of child/children to be home schooled; and
 - ✓ Proof of identification of parent(s).

Privacy/Disclaimer

The personal information collected by the Ministry of Education on this form is for the purpose of assessing your application for exemption from enrollment at a registered school and for monitoring and reporting on the education provided under the exemption. The Ministry will contact the school in which your child/children is currently attending (or last school attended).

The information collected may be used by or disclosed to other agencies, such as the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, for the purposes outlined above. Your information will not be disclosed to any other person or agency unless it is authorised or required by law.

The Ministry of Education will hold the information collected and you have the right under the Data Privacy Act to request access to, and correction of this information.

SECTION ONE

Contact Details

All fields must be completed by the parent/legal guardian.

Student's Details

First Name

Middle Name

Surname

Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of Birth

____/____/____ DD/MM/YYYY

Student's Address

House / Apt. #

Street Name

City / Town

P.O. Box

Is the above address also your mailing address? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, identify your mailing address below

House / Apt. #

Street Name

City / Town

P.O. Box

School Details

Name of current school or last school attended (If applicable)

Form / Class

Please state the period which you intended to homeschool your child E.g. (From 2022 to 2024)

From _____ To _____

State the number of years you intend to homeschool your child

Years

Has your child attended an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centre prior to this application?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state the name of the Centre

Parent / Legal Guardian's Details

First Name

Last Name

Relationship to student

Home phone number

Mobile phone number

Email Address

Are there any other children in the home who are currently being homeschooled? Yes

☐

No

☐

If yes, please identify their name/s

SECTION TWO

Homeschooling Particulars

All fields must be completed by the parent/legal guardian.

This section will give the Ministry an understanding of the following:

- Your home education philosophy/approach.
- How you intend to teach your child.

Parent's Qualifications

Please select your highest educational qualification and submit copies of such documentation

- ☐ A' Level Subjects
- ☐ O' Level Subjects
- ☐ Associate Degree
- ☐ Teachers Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other _____
- _____

Please state how you intend to monitor and record your child's progress

- ☐ Create and Maintain Portfolios
- ☐ Take a Monthly/Weekly Assessment
- ☐ Other _____
- _____

Does your child have any special educational needs? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please select all that applies

- ☐ Autism
- ☐ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- ☐ Dyslexia
- ☐ Other _____
- _____

What additional measures are being taken to instruct your child with special needs?

Tutoring Information

Please select the resources you intend to use on your homeschooling journey

- ☐ Ministry of Education's Primary School Curriculum
- ☐ Ministry of Education's Secondary School Curriculum
- ☐ Other _____
- _____

Do you intend to enlist the help of a qualified teacher/tutor at any time whilst homeschooling?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, select the qualifications of the person and submit relevant copies of their documentation

- ☐ A' Level Subjects
- ☐ O' Level Subjects
- ☐ Associate Degree
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Teachers Diploma
- ☐ Other _____
- _____

If no, please explain why

What are your educational goals for the next 12 months/duration of your child's home education?

☐ Development of Literacy and Numeracy Skills

☐ Development of Critical Thinking Skills

☐ Other

Please provide a timetable which would identify what subject would be taught on different days and times and submit copies of such

Primary School Curricula

English Language Arts

Mathematics

Agricultural Science

Social Studies

Spanish

Physical Education

VAPA – Visual And Performing Arts

Science

Secondary School Curricula (Forms 1-3)

English Language Arts

Mathematics

Physical Education

Integrated Science (Social Sciences, Geography & History)

Religious Education (RE)

Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)

Spanish

Technology Education

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Music

VAPA (Dance, Drama, Music & Visual Arts)

CSEC (Forms 4-5)

Additional Mathematics

Biology

Caribbean History

Chemistry

Economics

Electronic Document Preparation and Management
(EDPM)

English A

English B

Family and Resource Management

Food Nutrition and Health

French

Geography

Human and Social Biology (HSB)

Industrial Technology (Building and Furniture

Option, Electrical and Electronics Option &

Mechanical Engineering Option)

Information Technology

Integrated Science

Mathematics

Music

Office Administration (OA)

Physical Education and Sport

Physics

Principles of Accounts (POA)

Principles of Business (POB)

Religious Education

Social Studies

Spanish

Technical Drawing

Textiles, Clothing and Fashion

Theatre Arts

Visual Arts



SECTION THREE

Other Information

All fields must be completed by the parent/legal guardian.

Please select your reason for homeschooling

☐

COVID-19 Pandemic

☐

Financial Issues

☐

Problems to get Child into a Registered School

☐

An Opportunity to give child Individual Attention

☐

Bullying at School

☐

Other

State any additional information you may wish to include to support your application. (E.g. Child's interests, strengths, weaknesses etc.)

Declaration

If you are submitting this application as a legal guardian, but you are not a parent recorded on the child's birth certificate, please provide a copy of the relevant Court Order which grants you guardianship.

I certify that the information given in this form is true and accurate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____