



**Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
BELIZE**

**HOME SCHOOLING
Protocols**

August, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Rule 10 (6) of the Education Rules, 2000 offers the following provision for home schooling:

Home schooling of children of compulsory school age may be allowed where the parents satisfy the Chief Education Officer that there is good reason to so do and that the parents possess the competence and the capacity or will make the necessary provision for the proper education of the child.

These protocols provide specific guidelines for District Education Centers; they allow the Ministry of Education to enter into a formal agreement with the parent/legal guardian who wishes to provide home schooling to his/her child(ren) in accordance with EDR 10 (6).

HOME SCHOOLING PROTOCOLS

- A. The parent/legal guardian requesting authorization for home schooling must:
1. reside in Belize; proof of residence must be ascertained
 2. demonstrate academic competence equivalent to at least an Associate degree for the designated home schooling teacher (i.e. the parent/legal guardian or other identified practitioner); authenticated credentials must be submitted
- B. A child will be considered registered for home schooling only after the following is completed:
1. The parent/legal guardian must submit the completed Home Schooling Application Form (Addendum A), with the mandatory supporting documentation¹, to the nearest District Education Center requesting permission to provide home schooling.
 2. Following the receipt and review of said application and supporting documentation, the DEC will engage the parent/legal guardian to get the following documents completed and signed no later than **one week before the first day of school** (September 1):
 - i. Home Schooling Agreement (Addendum B)
 - ii. Home Schooling Educational Plan (Addendum C)

Note that the parent/legal guardian must provide an Education Plan aligned to the Learning Outcomes (*provided by the DEC*) for the respective grade level curriculum produced or recognized by the Ministry of Education.

¹ Supporting documentation includes: official identification of parent/legal guardian; academic credentials of parent/legal guardian or designated teacher; birth certificate of child(ren); proof of residence; and legal authorization of ward, if applicable.

The child will be considered registered for home schooling with the Ministry of Education only after all documents (home schooling agreement and education plan) are received, completed and signed by the parent/legal guardian and the designated official at the District Education Center.

- C. The parent/legal guardian can expect to be officially advised of an approval within two weeks of the submission of the signed and completed documentation.
- D. Should the parent/legal guardian refuse to comply with the prescribed application/registration process, his/her request will be automatically denied.
- E. Officers from the DEC may conduct term visits (*at least one per term*) to monitor student engagement and progress. Officers may also request periodic submission of the Home Schooling Portfolio (see Addendum D) for review during each term. Written feedback will be provided immediately.
- F. At the end of the school term or academic year, the officers from the DEC will complete an evaluation of the student under the Home Schooling Agreement. Such evaluation shall include the following: (1) an interview with the child; (2) a literacy and numeracy assessment and (3) a review of the child's Home Schooling portfolio.

Where necessary, officers from the Education Support Services of the Ministry may be asked to become involved in the evaluation process. Such involvement would occur if the child being homeschooled has any particular learning needs that require a more specialized instructional approach.

Once the evaluation has been completed, a written report will be sent to the parent/legal guardian and a copy will be placed in the student's file.

- G. If the request for home schooling is not approved, or if the end of term or end of year evaluation suggests that the educational experience received at home is not in accordance with the home schooling agreement, the Ministry of Education shall require the child to enter or be returned to a regular school setting.

If the child is not registered in any school within one month of such decision, the Ministry will act in accordance with its legal responsibility.

- H. The Home Schooling Agreement is valid for a minimum of one (1) school term or a maximum of one (1) academic year. A new application can be submitted upon expiration. Should the parent/legal guardian choose not to register his/her child with the Ministry for the subsequent school term or academic year, he/she is expected to provide documented evidence that his/her child's registration is made at a school recognized by the Ministry.

Failing this, the Ministry will act in accordance with its legal responsibility.

ADDENDUM A: HOME SCHOOLING APPLICATION FORM

Student's Name: _____ <i>First Name Last Name Middle Name</i>		
Student's Sex: _____ <i>M</i> _____ <i>F</i>	Student's Date of Birth: _____ <i>(dd/mm/yyyy)</i>	
Particulars of last School attended (if applicable): Last Grade Level: _____ Period of Attendance: _____ Name of School: _____ School Address: _____		
Particulars of Parent (Mother): Name: _____ Email: _____ Tel: _____(h) _____(c) _____(w) Home Address: _____	Particulars of Parent (Father): Name: _____ Email: _____ Tel: _____(h) _____(c) _____(w) Home Address: _____	
Particulars of Legal Guardian (if applicable): Name: _____ Email: _____ Tel: _____(h) _____(c) _____(w) Home Address: _____		
Particulars of designated Home Schooling Teacher: Name: _____ Relationship to Student _____ Academic Certification: () Undergraduate (Associate or Bachelor's degree) () Graduate (Master's degree or higher) Email: _____ Tel: _____(h) _____(c) _____(w) Home Address: _____		
REASON(S) FOR HOME SCHOOLING: 		
EVALUATION: <i>The student will be assessed by officials from the Ministry of Education at the end of the school term or academic year (whichever applies). The parent/legal guardian will be contacted by the District Education Center to inform him/her of the date/place/time of the assessment.</i>		
_____ Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian	_____ Date	

ADDENDUM B: HOME SCHOOLING AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made this _____ day of _____, 20____
between the Ministry of Education (Ministry) and
_____ (Parent/Legal Guardian).

WHEREAS in accordance with Rule 10 (6) of the Education Rules, 2000, *Home schooling of children of compulsory school age may be allowed where the parents satisfy the Chief Education Officer that there is good reason to so do and that the parents possess the competence and the capacity or will make the necessary provision for the proper education of the child;*

AND WHEREAS the Parent/Legal Guardian of _____, *(name of child)*² is desirous of providing homeschooling;

It is agreed as follows:-

1. The Parent/Legal Guardian shall ensure that education of the child is adequately provided for in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act and Rules and policies of the Ministry;
2. The Parent/Legal Guardian undertakes to take personal and direct responsibility for the education of the child to provide at home education/learning experience at _____ *(address where home schooling is to be administered)* which is in accordance with the appropriate curricular learning outcomes as outlined by the Ministry; and,
3. The Parent/Legal Guardian shall collaborate with the District Education Center in the establishment of a timeline for the evaluation of the child in which the assessment of education and learning will be completed by the end of the school term or academic year (whichever applies). This may include an interview, a literacy and numeracy assessment and a review of the home schooling portfolio.

If, for any reason, either the Parent/Legal Guardian or the Ministry decides that the child should enter or return to a regular school setting, the appropriate registration processes will be carried out by the parent/legal guardian.

Signed by

Parent/Legal Guardian *(Signature & Printed Name)*

Witness *(Signature & Printed Name)*

District Education Manager *(Signature & Printed Name)*

Witness *(Signature & Printed Name)*

² The home schooling agreement is for one child only; a separate agreement is to be completed for each child for which a home schooling application is approved.

ADDENDUM C: HOME SCHOOLING EDUCATION PLAN

1. Personal Information

Student's Name: _____		
<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Middle Name</i>
Student's Sex: _____ _____ <i>F</i>	Student's Date of Birth: _____ <i>(dd/mm/yyyy)</i>	
Name of Home Schooling Teacher: _____		
Address for Home Schooling Lessons: _____		

2. Home schooling Goals (for the school term or academic year)

Proposed Home Schooling Schedule:	Expected Home Schooling Goals:

3. Subject Information

While your child will be evaluated in Language Arts and Mathematics by officials of the Ministry at the end of the home schooling period, it is important to broaden your child's educational experiences and ensure that all subject areas in the National Curriculum, including the Expressive Arts and Physical Education, are covered in your Home Schooling Education Plan. Evidence of this coverage should be apparent in the Home Schooling Portfolio. The table below serves as a template for the Education Plan. Please feel free to adjust or expand to meet your needs.

Subjects	Learning Outcomes	Duration of Weekly Lessons	Resources or Materials	Types of Assessments or Evaluation

ADDENDUM D: HOME SCHOOLING PORTFOLIO GUIDE

The following information is a suggested format to guide the parent/legal guardian regarding the content of the student's portfolio for evaluation purposes.

The portfolio should be organized by school term and include the following:

- ❖ A written record of Learning Outcomes taught with samples of the child's work included as well as a record of what has been evaluated for:
 - Language Arts, Mathematics and all other areas of the National Curriculum, including Expressive Arts and Physical Education
- ❖ A collection of projects, logs, experiments or other evidence of concepts taught in:
 - Language Arts, Mathematics and all other areas of the National Curriculum, including Expressive Arts and Physical Education
- ❖ Writing samples, dated chronologically, including sketches, drawings, lettering, journal entries, stories, poems, letters, etc. The sample work kept is to be done over a period of time to show growth and improvement.
- ❖ A list of leveled reading books, magazines and articles read, dated chronologically, with a written report on the reading experience.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DEC's

