

Guide to Home Schooling in Victoria

2015



Published by Early Childhood and School Education Group
Department of Education and Training
Melbourne
January 2015

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Preface

The Victorian Government supports parent choice in schooling and appreciates that parents who choose to home school their children do so for a variety of reasons and they often commit significant time, energy and resources.

Parents who choose to home school their children are responsible for the planning, implementation and assessment of their educational program. This program, while flexible, must address eight key learning areas and be consistent with democratic principles and practice. It should enable children to realise their learning potential and develop enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Documenting the home education program is good practice and will also assist should the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) be required to carry out a review.

This booklet, *Guide to Home Schooling in Victoria*, is designed to assist families to ensure that home schooled children are able to maximise their potential and achieve the best outcomes possible. It outlines current requirements and support for home schooling families, and includes information on:

- considering the decision to home school
- registering for home schooling
- requirements for home schooling programs
- review of home schooling programs
- curriculum and other support available to home schooling families
- post-school pathways for home schooled students
- useful contacts
- suggestions for documenting home schooling programs.

This booklet has been prepared by the Department of Education and Training (DET) in consultation with the VRQA.

Guide to Home Schooling in Victoria outlines the requirements and supports for Victorian families who home school their children.

1. Considering the decision to home school

Schools in Victoria are welcoming and inclusive community resources that provide high quality educational offerings, tailored to the needs of individual students. Specialist services are available for students with additional needs.

The decision to home school your child should be an informed one.

You may be considering home schooling your child for a variety of reasons. Whatever your reasons, it is important that your decision to home school is an informed one. You should discuss your options with a local principal to explore the range of options available within a school setting before you make a decision.

Please consider carefully all the information in this booklet. The decision to home school has consequences for your child's current and future schooling including their access to senior secondary school qualifications, work experience and post-school pathways. You should familiarise yourself with the support available for delivery of curriculum at home, and may also wish to speak to other parents about the challenges and benefits of home schooling.

What is home schooling

Home schooling takes many forms and may include:

- a parent or both parents instructing their child
- groups of home-schooling families coming together for social activities with an educational purpose, attending excursions or playing sport
- a tutor being employed by the parent in specialised learning areas.

Home schooling is **not** a quasi-school arrangement where an instructor or teacher is employed to instruct a group of students in the eight key learning areas away from the home base and during normal school hours. In this situation, normal school registration processes apply.

A range of educational settings

To help in making your decision, the remainder of this section outlines some alternatives to 'mainstream' or home schooling, for your consideration.

Support for students with particular needs

You may be considering home schooling because you feel your child has particular needs which are not being met by the mainstream school system – for example, your child has a disability, or is gifted, or is experiencing bullying. If you are considering home schooling for these reasons, be sure to consider all available options in order to ensure home schooling is the best educational program for your child and family. Many supports for students with additional needs are available through the school system but cannot be accessed from a home school environment. Some options you could explore with your child's current school include:

- Accessing the support of a social worker, psychologist or speech pathologist via the Student Support Services
- Developing an individual learning plan and/or behaviour support plan to help with learning or behavioural issues
- The possibility of an accelerated learning program or other extension program for gifted and talented students

- The possibility of a re-engagement program or alternative setting as a last resort to address learning or behavioural issues, when in school support strategies have not been successful.

In the first instance, you should discuss concerns and options with staff at your child's school. If you need further assistance, you can contact the DET regional office and speak with the Community Liaison Officer. DET regional offices are listed at Appendix A.

Information on health and wellbeing services for students in Victorian government schools, including the Program for Students with Disabilities, anti-bullying initiatives and student welfare support, can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/health/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information on support for gifted students, see

- For Primary education - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/gifted.aspx>
- For Secondary education - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/gifted.aspx>
- 'Making a Difference for Young Gifted and Talented Children' - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/gtmakedifference.aspx>

Flexible learning options

Students at risk of disengaging from school may benefit from a range of flexible learning options. These include alternative education programs funded by DET, which do not necessarily involve attendance at school. These programs can be of short duration (e.g. 8–10 weeks) or for a longer term (e.g. 1–2 years). More information may be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/health/Pages/flexiblelearn.aspx>

In addition to funded alternative education settings, many schools have developed innovative programs for disengaged young people. Schools are working in partnership with local community service agencies, non-government organisations, business and other government departments to offer a range of activities that can be delivered inside and outside school hours focusing on barriers to student engagement.

For more information on flexible learning options that may be available for your child, speak with the Community Liaison Officer at your regional office. DET regional offices are listed at Appendix A.

Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV)

Prior to registering your child for home schooling, you may wish to explore distance education as an option. The Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV) is a government school that provides an alternative learning option to Victorian students who are unable to attend a mainstream school. Students who are able to access DECV services are those:

- with physical or chronic health conditions
- with social or emotional issues
- who live the required distance from the nearest school, or
- who are on extended family travel.

If you think your child may meet the above criteria and you are interested in registering them for distance education, please visit the DECV website for more information

(www.distance.vic.edu.au), or contact them on 03 8480 0000. Home schooled students may also be able to enrol in a senior secondary qualification at DECV, see *Accessing VCE and VCAL via DECV* in Section 5 for further details.

2. Requirements for home schooling

Registration

Under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, all children of compulsory school age (6-17 years) must either be enrolled in and attending a registered school or registered for home schooling, unless they have a reasonable excuse. Failure to do so may risk proceedings being brought against the parents of the child under Section 2.1 of the Act. Section 2.1 of the Act also specifies it is an offence for a parent not to provide instruction to a child registered for home schooling without reasonable excuse.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) is the body responsible for registration of students for home schooling. Upon request, the VRQA must provide any information relating to the registration of students for home schooling to a School Attendance Officer. School Attendance Officers are employees of the Department of Education and Training who have been appointed to enforce the requirements for compulsory school enrolment and attendance (and home schooling registration) under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Parents who choose to home school a child aged 6–17 years are required by the *Education and Training Regulations 2007* to register with the VRQA. Registration for home schooling for children over 17 years of age is optional rather than compulsory. A child who has turned 18 cannot be registered.

How to register

An application to register a child must be made using the prescribed application form. The application form and detailed information about the registration process is available from the VRQA at <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/homeschooldefault.aspx> or by telephoning (03) 9032 1538.

The application must be accompanied by evidence of the child's date of birth, such as a copy of an original birth certificate, an extract of birth or a note from a doctor who can attest to the child's age. No fee is payable for the registration of a child for home schooling.

On registration, parents must commit to meeting the requirements for a home schooling program outlined in the next section.

The VRQA will notify the parent in writing of their decision in relation to an application for registration within 14 days of the application being received. The VRQA keeps information about students registered for home schooling on the State Register but is prohibited by law from making the information public.

Requirements for home schooling programs

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 states that all Victorians are entitled to a quality education that realises their learning potential and maximises their education and training achievement; promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning; and allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

Parents who choose to home school their child assume responsibility for ensuring that their child receives a quality education. This includes the planning, implementation and assessment of their child's educational program.

Key learning areas

The *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* require that a home schooled child receives regular and efficient instruction that, taken as a whole, addresses the following key learning areas:

- The Arts
- English
- Health and Physical Education
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Information and Communication Technology, and Design and Technology

The eight key learning areas are derived from the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians which sets the direction for Australian schooling to reflect the educational needs of young people in a rapidly changing world.

While the eight key learning areas form the broad framework for home education programs, they are not of equal importance at all year levels. English and mathematics are of fundamental importance in all years of schooling and are the primary focus of learning in the early years. The delivery style of the programs may vary from informal learning approaches to formal curriculum programs, depending on the child's learning needs and individual circumstances. Students with disabilities require programs tailored to their diverse needs.

Democratic principles and practice

The *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* also require that home schooling parents commit to providing instruction consistent with the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

Within the context of these democratic principles, 'tolerance' should be interpreted broadly as an understanding and acceptance of difference, in particular, relating to the range of religious, political and social beliefs and values held within Australian society.

Notification to the VRQA

The *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* include a requirement that home schooling parents notify the VRQA in writing:

- by 30 November each year that home schooling instruction is continuing for the following calendar year (January to December)
- whenever their details change, including changes of residential address
- within 14 days if the child ceases to be home schooled.

3. Review of a home schooling program

The VRQA can review a home schooling program where there are grounds for concern that the program might not be meeting the requirements outlined in the previous section.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* says that the VRQA may cancel the registration of a student for home schooling if:

- the parents or student fail to comply with the requirements of the registration or regulations relating to home schooling; or
- they refuse the VRQA permission to review the home schooling program to determine compliance with the requirements.

4. Support for home schooling

Curriculum support

Typically, home-schooling parents develop their own curriculum and programs around the eight key learning areas to suit their particular circumstances, and their child or children's needs and interests. DET recognises that this involves significant effort and encourages families to access the information and support available to assist them in developing a quality learning program.

A variety of support is available to help home schooling families deliver a quality educational program.

AusVELS

AusVELS is the Australian Curriculum in Victoria. It is organised as an eleven (11) level structure and provides a single coherent and comprehensive set of prescribed content and achievement standards which are used to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and achievement and report to parents.

The Foundation (Prep) to Year 10 curriculum framework incorporates:

- the Australian Curriculum domains (English, Mathematics, Science and History)
- the remaining Discipline-based Learning domains as covered in the VELS (eg. Languages and Geography)
- Interdisciplinary Learning domains (eg. Information and Communications Technology), and
- Physical, Personal and Social Learning domains (e.g. Civics and Citizenship).

The content in the first four Australian Curriculum domains in AusVELS (English, Mathematics, History and Science) has changed from the VELS domains.

A comparison summary of content changes from VELS to AusVELS for English, Maths, History and Science can be found at:

- English - <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/resources/english.aspx>
- Maths - <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/resources/maths.aspx>
- History - <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/resources/history.aspx>
- Science - <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/resources/science.aspx>

AusVELS provides a good basis for both home schooling and general school curriculum programs. Many home schooling families choose to develop an education program consistent with the curriculum delivered in Victorian government schools and which aligns with AusVELS.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) website provides extensive information about AusVELS to illustrate the expected standards in each area of the curriculum, including sample units of work and a wide variety of teaching and learning resources. These can be found at:

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/index.aspx>

More information on the national curriculum can be found at the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website:

<http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum.html>

Curriculum materials from Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV)

Home schooling parents may choose to purchase packages of printed materials (all of which are aligned with the AusVELS) from the DECV. All subject areas for Prep to Year 8 are covered, while packages for Years 9 and 10 contain materials for the core curriculum areas only (English, Maths and Science).

Home schooling parents wanting to purchase DECV curriculum materials will be required to provide evidence of registration with the VRQA at the time of purchase. Please note that DECV audio and digital resources are unavailable for sale due to copyright restrictions. Furthermore, purchase of materials does not include DECV tutoring that is available to distance education students.

Further information can be obtained from DECV by telephoning (03) 8480 0000.

Partial enrolment at a neighbourhood government school

A parent registered for home schooling can approach their neighbourhood government school to partially enrol a home schooling student in specific activities. Activities may include sport, art, science or a language. The period, extent and conditions of enrolment for the home schooling student are at the discretion of the principal. Please see Appendix B for DET's *Partial Enrolment for Registered Home Schooling Students Guidelines*.

National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Students registered for home schooling are eligible to partially enrol at their neighbourhood government school for specific activities, including the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests.

Participating in NAPLAN can help home-schooling parents to assess their child's progress against national literacy and numeracy benchmarks. This can help parents to identify their child's future learning needs or provide reassurance of the quality of a successful home-schooling program. NAPLAN tests may also be useful evidence of educational attainment for students seeking senior secondary and tertiary education.

Students who are registered for home schooling are eligible to sit the NAPLAN tests in a school-based setting. In order to arrange this, parents of home schoolers should contact their neighbourhood Government school

FUSE – online educational resource

FUSE (Find, Use, Share, Education) is a DET developed repository that provides access to relevant, informative and exciting online educational resources from around the world. FUSE has four separate homepages (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Teacher) to help families, educators and learners find resources most appropriate to their needs. FUSE contains websites, images, audio and video, as well as other online resources.

All resources are recommended and reviewed by educators, and tagged according to audience, subject areas, AusVELS, post-compulsory and early childhood curriculum frameworks. They have been selected to support and enrich learning and teaching programs

for classes and for individual students and will benefit families who home school their child. Resources can be accessed at <https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/Teacher.aspx>

Languages Online

Home schooling students can access Languages Online, a publicly accessible website developed by DET. It provides teaching and learning resources suitable for language students from Prep to Year 10. Students studying French, German, Indonesian or Italian can access over 800 online interactive tasks and download worksheets across a wide range of topic areas. They can also download 'Game Maker' templates to create interactive languages games using their own text, voice recording or images at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/LanguagesOnline/>

Victorian School of Languages (VSL)

DET's Victorian School of Languages provides programs in over 40 languages for students from Years 1–12 in 42 centres throughout Victoria. Home schooled students are able to access the out-of-hours programs (usually Saturday mornings). Visit <https://www.vsl.vic.edu.au/> or telephone (03) 9474 0500 for more information.

Access to education programs at major public cultural/educational venues

A number of major public organisations provide education programs for schools, including the National Gallery of Victoria, the Melbourne Zoo, the Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks, Sovereign Hill and the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. While entry to some of these establishments is free, access to education programs is on a fee-for-service basis. Home-schooling families who wish to access these programs should telephone the organisation to clarify the conditions of entry and the arrangements for participating in education programs.

A number of these organisations provide a range of interactive learning opportunities, downloadable resources and free education kits that can be accessed online. A comprehensive list of organisations that offer education programs as part of DET's Strategic Partnerships Program, including contact details, are listed on DET's website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/partnerships/Pages/spppartnerships.aspx>

Support networks

A number of support networks in Victoria provide assistance to home schooling families, including educational and social activities and teaching resources. These can be found on the internet by searching the terms 'home schooling Victoria' and 'home education Victoria'.

Note: *Privately convened networks, support groups and materials produced by these groups and by other individuals are not endorsed by the DET. Home schooling parents should verify the suitability of any materials purchased or accessed via the internet.*

Financial support

The Government provides the following assistance to eligible home schoolers:

Public Transport Concession Cards

Home schooled students requiring a Victorian Public Transport Concession Card, may apply by:

- completing the Victorian Public Transport Concession Card application form
- including two passport sized photographs
- enclosing a photocopy of your current Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority home schooling notification letter; and
- enclosing a cheque made out to Public Transport Victoria for the \$9.00 processing fee; and mail to Public Transport Victoria, Home School VPT Student Concession Card applications, PO Box 4724, Melbourne Vic 3001.

A valid Victorian Public Transport Concession Card will be posted to the applicant.

Further information on the Concession Card is available at <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/> or by telephoning 131 638.

Australian Government support

Information on Australian Government support and tax arrangements for home schoolers can be found by contacting Centrelink (<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink>) and the Australian Tax Office (www.ato.gov.au)

5. Senior secondary and tertiary qualifications

There are a range of pathways available to young people who wish to transition from home schooling to senior secondary and tertiary education. These include secondary education certificates and programs, higher and further education and vocational education and training. Students transitioning to these pathways cease to be registered home schoolers, but many courses still allow students to study at home.

In Victoria, compulsory participation in schooling is required until 17 years of age. An amendment to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, which took effect from 1 January 2009, includes:

- a mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling (meaning in school or an approved equivalent) until they complete Year 10; and
- a mandatory requirement for all young people that have completed Year 10 to participate full-time (defined as at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until age 17.

Further information on these participation and age requirements can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/departments/legislation/pages/act2006age.asp>

This section provides an overview of careers advice and the senior secondary and tertiary pathways and qualifications available to students as well as details of where you can find out more information.

Careers and Transitions Advice

Information on careers and transitions is available on DET's Careers Resources web page, which can be accessed at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/Pages/default.aspx>

Information to support parents to help their child with career and pathway planning is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/beyond/Pages/default.aspx>

The Victorian Skills Gateway provides a comprehensive online one-stop-shop for vocational training in Victoria and includes information tailored for students and parents. See page 16 of this document for more information on The Victorian Skills Gateway.

The Commonwealth Government's myfuture website also provides career information, including interactive tools for young people and guidance for parents and can be accessed at www.myfuture.edu.au

Currently it is not possible for home schooled students to participate in DET's work experience program and insurance scheme for students in schools. However, home-schooling families may wish to make private arrangements with employers for work experience opportunities.

Employment Advice

The Victorian Government's youth website, Youth Central contains a 'Jobs & Careers' section to assist young people in finding work, applying for jobs, starting a business and understanding employment rights and responsibilities. For further information, go to <http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au>

Senior Secondary Qualifications

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) are the two state-awarded senior secondary qualifications available to Victorian students that provide pathways into higher education, training or employment. For information on what pathways these certificates can offer, see

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/pages/vce/publications/WhereToNow/default.aspx>

Students may also complete the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) delivered through a small number of schools. Information on the IB is available at

<http://www.ibo.org/country/AU/>

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

The VCE is an accredited secondary education certificate that recognises the successful completion of secondary education in Victoria. Students usually complete it in Years 11 and 12. The VCE provides pathways to further study at university or the vocational training system, and to work. Further information on the VCE is available at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/VCE/

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

VCAL is an applied learning senior secondary certificate equivalent to the VCE. It provides pathways into employment, further education and training through an applied learning approach, structured workplace learning, and the development of general employability, literacy, numeracy and vocationally specific skills through community based projects. Students undertake VCAL at one of three levels (Foundation, Intermediate or Senior), depending on which is most appropriate to their learning needs. Further information on the VCAL is available at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/

Who can deliver the VCE and VCAL?

The VCE and VCAL can only be delivered by senior secondary providers registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and authorised by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to deliver these qualifications. Families who home school cannot be accredited to deliver them.

Therefore, home-schooled students who wish to undertake the VCE or VCAL need to cease registration as a home-schooled student with the VRQA and enrol with a registered senior secondary provider. Senior secondary providers include most government and non-government secondary and P-12 schools as well as many non-school providers such as TAFEs or Learn Local organisations.

Parents registered for home schooling can search for local education providers delivering VCE, VCAL or IB qualifications by postcode through the VRQA State Register search facility – www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Accessing VCE and VCAL via DECV

Students who were formerly registered for home schooling with the VRQA may be able to enrol in a full time Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program with the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV) – which is a registered senior secondary provider.

A student cannot be both registered for home schooling and enrolled as a student with DECV. Former home schooled students wanting to enrol in a VCE or VCAL program with DECV will need to satisfy the following enrolment criteria:

- Students must be registered as home schoolers for a period of at least 12 months prior to the enrolment.
- evidence of the previous year's registration for home schooling must be provided to DECV or equivalent authority in other states) for a minimum of one complete school year (i.e. enrolled with the VRQA by the start of February in the year prior to undertaking the VCE or VCAL program) and evidence that the child's registration for home schooling has been cancelled.

Students attempting the VCE or VCAL must be capable of succeeding in the program. As students registered for home schooling do not have moderated assessments of capability at year 10 level, assessments may be required to ensure that the VCE/VCAL is the appropriate choice for the student. Such assessments may include general skills/competencies tests, evidence of prior learning achievements or a portfolio of the student's work.

Enrolment will include access to DECV materials (with associated costs), teaching and support. This will improve school completion and post-school pathways for home schooled students while enabling them to continue learning at home.

Further information on enrolment at DECV is available at <http://www.distance.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/10-12-Enrolment-Handbook-2014.pdf> or by telephoning (03) 8480 0000.

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS)

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) is the delivery of nationally recognised VET certificates across a wide range of industries that contribute towards the completion of a senior secondary certificate in schools, such as the VCE or VCAL. It is mandatory for all Intermediate and Senior VCAL students to undertake VETiS for completion of their certificates. VETiS is typically delivered through partnerships between schools, industry and training providers, and includes opportunities for students to participate in structured workplace learning.

VETiS also includes School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) and pre-apprenticeships.

School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) are distinct pathways within VETiS. SBATs are available to secondary school students over 15 years of age and enrolled in VCE or VCAL and allow students to combine part-time employment with nationally recognised vocational training and their senior secondary certificate studies. SBATs are available in a number of industry areas.

Because students can only undertake VETiS as part of their VCE or VCAL, it provides a vocationally orientated program of studies leading to a senior secondary certificate. For more information see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/Pages/vet.aspx>

Tertiary Qualifications

Whether or not a student chooses to complete a senior secondary education certificate, there are several options available to home-schooled students that support their ability to gain additional qualifications once they finish their compulsory years of schooling.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an education that directly relates to getting a job. Courses in vocational education and training are developed from standards set by industry and employers. These courses suit students who enjoy learning in a practical and hands on environment that has a clear purpose.

There are many different types of VET providers offering a wide variety of training programs:

- Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes www.tafe.vic.gov.au
- Learn Local organisations, otherwise known as Adult Community and Further Education <http://learnlocal.org.au/>
- Private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) <http://www.myskills.gov.au/>

The Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG)

Government support is available for young people to complete vocational training qualifications. The Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) provides a government-subsidised place in accredited vocational training for young people under age 20 if they meet citizenship/residency requirements. Information on the VTG is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/vet/pages/funding.aspx>

To access the VTG, students must cease being registered for home schooling and enrol with an RTO providing accredited vocational education and training. Such enrolments may be full or part time. Further information on providers and courses which offer subsidised training is available at the Victorian Skills Gateway (see below).

The Victorian Skills Gateway

The Victorian Skills Gateway is a one-stop-shop for Victorian vocational education and training support to help students find the best training option available. It has been developed by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET).

Searches can be performed on occupations, courses, training providers, video and written case studies. This website is also viewable via a purpose-built smartphone interface.

The courses on the Victorian Skills Gateway website are either regulated qualifications under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), or short training programs comprising units of competency from regulated qualifications.

All training organisations included on the Victorian Skills Gateway are registered under the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Although the Victorian Skills Gateway only lists courses that a training provider intends to offer during the next 12-18 months, it is important to contact the training provider directly to confirm the availability of a course.

For more information and to access the Victorian Skills Gateway see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway/Pages/home.aspx>

Higher Education

There are ten universities operating in Victoria – eight Victorian public universities, the Australian Catholic University (which operates in several states and territories and has two campuses in Victoria) and the University of Divinity (Australia's first university of specialisation).

The Australian Government's MyUniversity website provides students with a broad range of information about Australian universities and other higher education providers:

<http://myuniversity.gov.au/>

In addition, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) website can help students to work out suitable courses to meet their needs and includes information about distance education and external courses, as well as enrolment times and procedures, scholarships and TAFE or university fees (see information below).

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)

The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) is the central office that processes applications and offers for places in tertiary courses at university, TAFE and independent tertiary colleges in Victoria. It is not a selection authority. All decisions about which applicants are offered a place are made by the course selection authorities at relevant institutions.

Most courses offer entry for 'Non-Year 12' (including home-schooled) applicants. Foundation and bridging programs can also provide alternative entry pathways to some tertiary courses. The *VTAC Guide* provides detailed information on entry options and requirements for different courses. It is available for sale from newsagents, or for free download at www.vtac.edu.au/publications.

The VTAC website also provides a 'Course Search' function that allows users to search courses by institution, study area and/or keyword. VTAC can be contacted on 1300 364 133 or visit www.vtac.edu.au/courses.html

6. Useful contacts for home schoolers

- Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) – 132637 and www.ames.net.au
- Australian Apprenticeships – 13 38 73 and www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au
- Council of Adult Education (CAE) – (03) 9652 0611 and www.cae.edu.au
- Department of Education and Training (DET) – (03) 9637 2000 and www.education.vic.gov.au
- Department of Human Services – Centrelink information - <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink>
- Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV) – (03) 8480 0000 and www.distance.vic.edu.au
- Education and Training Reform Act and Regulations – www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- FUSE – www.fuse.education.vic.gov.au
- Languages Online – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/LanguagesOnline/>
- Learn Local – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/learnlocal/pages/default.aspx>
- Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) – www.llen.vic.gov.au
- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians – http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
- Public Transport Victoria (Concession Card) – 131 638 and <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/>
- myfuture – www.myfuture.edu.au
- Open Universities Australia – 1300 280 875 and www.open.edu.au
- Secondary education certificates and programs – <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/publications/WhereToNow/default.aspx>
- Further education and training – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/pages/default.aspx>
- Strategic Partnerships program – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/partnerships/Pages/spppartnerships.aspx>
- Student Wellbeing – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/default.aspx>
- Victorian Skills Gateway – 131 823 and <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/victoriaskillsgateway/Pages/home.aspx>
- Transitions and Pathways - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/Pages/default.aspx>
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) – <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vcal/index.aspx>

- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) – <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/index.aspx>
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) – (03) 9032 1539 and <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/homeschooldefault.aspx>
- Victorian School of Languages (VSL) – (03) 9474 0500 and www.vsl.vic.edu.au
- Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) – 1300 364 133 and www.vtac.edu.au
- Vocational education and training across Australia – www.training.gov.au
- Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/pages/vet.aspx>
- VRQA State Register - <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/StateRegister/Search.aspx/Search?SearchType=0>
- Youth Central – www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

Appendix A: DET regional offices

DET is organised into four regional offices. Regional offices can offer support regarding the range of educational opportunities available to families in their local area.

North Eastern Victoria Region

Benalla	Phone: (03) 8392 9500
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Glen Waverley	Phone: (03) 8392 9300
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North Western Victoria Region

Bendigo	Phone: (03) 5440 3111
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Coburg	Phone: (03) 9488 9488
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South Eastern Victoria Region

Dandenong	Phone: (03) 8765 5600
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Moe	Phone: (03) 5127 0400
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South Western Victoria Region

Ballarat	Phone: (03) 5337 8444
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Footscray	Phone: (03) 8397 0300
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Geelong	Phone: (03) 5225 1000
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Appendix B: Partial Enrolment for Registered Home Schooling Students Guidelines

Background

The *Education and Training reform Act 2006* ('the Act') requires that all children of compulsory school age (6 to 17 years) are enrolled in a school, or registered for home schooling.

The Act provides that all young Victorians should have access to a high-quality education. Under the Act, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) has responsibility for the registration of home schooling students. To gain registration with the VRQA, home schooling families must attest that they will provide regular and efficient instruction in the eight nationally agreed learning areas, in a manner that is consistent with the principles of Australian democracy.

As part of the introduction of legislative registration requirements for home schoolers, the Victorian Government committed to making various support mechanisms available to the home schooling community. In a document circulated in the Victorian Parliament in March 2006 it was stated:

*'The following support would be made available to home schoolers... Students registered for home schooling, and their parents, will be eligible to partially enrol at their neighbourhood Government school **for specific activities**, as agreed by the school and parent.'*

The Department of Education and Training (the 'Department') has developed the following guidelines regarding this commitment.

Principles

The following principles are expected to apply:

- A partnership approach is fostered between the school and the home schooling family.
- Inclusion and full participation is required for all aspects of the program or activity in which the child is enrolled.

Enrolment process

A home schooling family is eligible to approach their neighbourhood government school to seek to partially enrol their child (of compulsory school age) in specific activities.

Families will be required to provide the school with a copy of the official letter issued by the VRQA confirming their child's registration for home schooling. This letter is provided to home schooling families by the VRQA upon successful registration, and is the only form of evidence the principal of a school can accept which proves that the child is registered for home schooling.

In circumstances where the principal agrees to partially enrol the student, normal enrolment policies and procedures apply, including completion of all relevant forms.

Any complaints regarding declined partial enrolments that are unable to be resolved at the school level should be referred to the relevant Regional Director.

Conditions of enrolment

Registered home schooling students may partially enrol at the neighbourhood government school to undertake specific activities offered by the school such as sport, art, science, a language, etc. It is intended that partial enrolment involves the participation of home schooled students in existing activities within the school and that this participation be for select activities only.

Principals have the discretion to decline the enrolment where there are 'reasonable grounds' for doing so (such as a school decision to cap class sizes in particular year levels and/or subject areas, which have already been reached).

The period of enrolment is at the discretion of the principal, in consultation with the parent. It is possible that a school's capacity to enrol a student in specified activities may change from year to year. Consequently, it is feasible that the enrolment arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis, or as otherwise determined at the point of initial enrolment.

Post-compulsory school age subjects and activities do not currently form part of the partial enrolment commitment.

It is at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the parent as to whether home schoolers seeking to partially enrol in a Government school other than the neighbourhood Government school are permitted to do so.

Principal discretion

The school principal can exercise discretion over the conditions of partial enrolment, and the level of adherence that is expected from the student towards school-level policies and procedures. This includes student dress code, and student wellbeing and management policies.

In some cases, the principal, in consultation with their school council may choose to exempt the home schooling student from certain aspects of a school-level policy.

Schools may choose to develop their own specific policy on partial enrolment for registered home schoolers.

Examples

1. Kim approaches ABC school and seeks to enrol her daughter Jody in a sports activity currently provided by the school over 2 hours per week. Kim meets with Principal Jones and they agree that Jody will attend the school for 1 hour on Monday and 1 hour on Wednesday with the arrangement to be reviewed at the end of the school year.

2. Steve approaches XYZ school and seeks to enrol his son George for three days per week. The principal of the school does not consent to the enrolment as this does not meet the guidelines in relation to partial enrolment. Steve reapplies to the school for George to participate in mathematics, the principal agrees to George attending on Monday, Thursday and Friday mornings to participate in mathematics.

Funding and budget implications

Subject to existing conditions, students enrolled as at February Census will attract funding through the Student Resource Package (SRP) on a pro-rata basis.

A registered home schooler with a disability wishing to partially enrol in a government school (other than a specialist school) may be eligible for funding through the Program for Students with Disabilities on a pro-rata basis, if they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

Attendance

All usual attendance procedures and requirements remain relevant. Home schoolers are expected to attend at all times when the activity in which they have enrolled is delivered by the school.

Unless otherwise agreed, they are also expected to participate in all aspects of the program in which they are enrolled (including related camps and excursions).

Normal duty-of-care arrangements apply. This commitment provides important social opportunities for partially enrolled students. However, it is at the discretion of the school principal (in consultation with the parent) as to whether the student concerned is permitted to remain at the school during the lunch-time and recess breaks directly before or after the specific activity the child is enrolled to undertake.

It is also at the discretion of the principal, in consultation with the parent as to what, if any, extracurricular activities and/or other school programs partially enrolled home schooled students will be able to access (e.g. out of school hours care, camps, excursions, school concerts and performances).

Parent payments

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* affirms that students of compulsory school age enrolled in Victorian government schools are entitled to free instruction in the standard curriculum program.

In accordance with the Department's policy:

- Parents of partially enrolled students are expected to make relevant parent payments for essential education items. This should be on a pro-rata basis, where appropriate.
- Parents can also be invited to make voluntary financial contributions, subject to existing legislative principles.

Assessment and reporting

If the activity the student is enrolled to undertake is the subject of assessment, then it is expected that standard assessment and reporting policies and procedures apply. That is, parents of partially enrolled students will be eligible to receive a report on their child's progress in the specified activity.

Partially enrolled students will be eligible to sit the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This can only be administered in a school-based setting.

Parental Responsibility

Parents registered for home schooling have the responsibility for ensuring that their child will receive regular and efficient instruction in the eight key learning areas irrespective of any partial school enrolment for specific activities.

Student transport

Access to student bus services and/or a conveyance allowance is subject to normal eligibility criteria. In accordance with existing procedures, this is dependent on the authorisation of the principal.

Further information

Additional information, including frequently asked questions, and a downloadable copy of the *Guidelines for Partial Enrolment for Registered Home Schooling Students* is available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/homeschool.aspx>

Further details regarding the registration requirements for home schooling families can be accessed on the VRQA's website at:

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/homeschooldefault.aspx>

Appendix C: Example educational programs

The following sample educational programs are available from the QLD and NSW governments at:

- QLD - <http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/home-education/resources/sample-2.pdf>
- NSW - http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/pdf_doc/home-edu-info-pack-13.pdf