

EDUCATION OPTIONS 2020

The Department of Education has made the decision to re-open schools for the coming school year, 2020/2021. While many parents are preparing to send their children back to school, there are many who feel this isn't the best decision for their family.

Here at HEN we have seen a significant increase in enquiries about home-education both from a legal and practical perspective. Whilst we are unable to offer legal or medical advice regarding the decision to return to school, we can offer some guidance and support. If you are concerned about returning to school, we suggest the following:

1. COMMUNICATE

If you haven't already done so, contact your school to express your concerns and find out what new measures will be in place. Most schools seem to be informing parents of these measures and requirements in the run-up to the commencement of term. This information may be sufficient to put your mind at rest.

2. REQUEST ONLINE LEARNING

While the Department of Education have put much emphasis on social distancing and hygiene measures in schools, there has been little talk of online learning as an option for the school year ahead. Many schools managed to get online learning up and running to some degree during lockdown; this may still be an option for some children and, presumably will be implemented in the event of school closures or another lockdown.

You may be able to come to an arrangement with your school/principal. Failing that, contact the Department of Education and make your requirements known; if enough people do so, the need for online learning will have to be addressed.

'Schools will have the discretion to manage and redistribute their teaching support resources in order to best meet the learning needs of students with complex medical needs who may not be able to return to school at the end of August because public health guidelines indicate they are at "very high risk" - Citizens Information

Our advice for parents who ultimately want their children to return to school, is to first and foremost work with the school and ask them what support they can provide your child during this time.

3. HOME TUITION

In certain circumstances a child may be entitled to Home Tuition (this is not the same as home education). <https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/Home-Tuition/>
This is not granted regularly or lightly; often people are turned down on the first application and have to appeal.

4. HOME EDUCATION

Should you decide that school is not the right option for your child, you can remove them at any stage and inform Tusla (Phone: 01 771 8638) that you intend to home-educate. You will have to submit in writing your intention to Home Educate. Once this has been submitted Tusla will acknowledge your application and discuss it with you if necessary (usually within 24 hours). You are now legally covered to home-educate your child (although you are not yet registered as home-educating).

You will be required to complete an assessment process with Tusla in order to be officially registered. While they aim to start this process approx 16 weeks after the intention to register, due to high numbers of applications you could be waiting for up to a year for your assessment to take place.

Tusla will notify your child's school of your intention to register as a home-educator and require them to hold your child's place in the school until the assessment has been completed and the child is officially registered as being home-educated. The school may ask you to indicate in writing that you wish to leave but that will not alter the fact that your child remains on their register until Tusla informs them otherwise.

For more support go to the Home Education Network website
www.henireland.org



**Home Education
Network**

WWW.HENIRELAND.ORG