

Welcome to School District #67



Home Learners' Program

Parent Handbook

"Working Together for Student Success"



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Home Learners' Program

The Home Learners' Program is a teacher-led distributed learning program that provides options for families who prefer to have their students educated in the home, or who require time tabling flexibility.

We offer families:

- resources, support, and instructional assistance needed to plan and deliver a quality educational program reflective of individual needs, values and philosophies
- ongoing communication between families and our staff, using a variety of modes
- teacher-led assessment and evaluation, linked directly to provincial learning outcomes
- options in methods of course delivery, such as paper-based or online, determined after consultation with teachers
- unique opportunities for students to work with peers on an ongoing basis through a variety of activities

Our mission statement:

The Home Learners' Program strives to create a rich learning environment that meets the unique needs of students through a variety of innovative educational programs. We believe that students need to be supported and encouraged by a community involving their families, educators and others within their network.

Distributed Learning at the Home Learners' Program: What Does It Look Like?

Distributed Learning takes place when a student is primarily at a distance from the teacher, whether the student is at home or connecting to teachers from another facility. At the Home Learners' Program, families that are registered with us have chosen to have their children educated at home. The HLP is a part of the Okanagan-Skaha School District, and as such, we are accountable to the BC Ministry of Education. The curriculum that is provided for students meets the required learning outcomes, which are available on the ministry's website at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/> .

Developing a Student Learning Plan

Essential to successful learning at home is the ability of the teacher, parent and student to work together to reach the learning goals set out for the student. Together they create a learning plan that best meets the needs of the individual student. These learning plans may not look the same, but they all serve the same purpose. Each plan outlines the topics the student will study over the year, identifies key resources, and possible samples of student work that will go into the student's portfolio to demonstrate progress. Suggested timelines are included. External activities that supplement the student learning are also recorded. Student learning plans may change over the course of the year as new interests or student needs are identified. For high school students (grade ten and up), the student learning plan defines their path to meeting graduation requirements and helps the student focus on future career goals. (For more information on graduation requirements, please refer to <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/>).

Student Assessment

The Ministry of Education requires that three formal written reports and two informal reports be provided to parents each year. Our formal reporting periods are usually in November, March, and at the end of June. Timelines and expectations for the submissions of student work samples throughout the year are determined through consultation with the teacher or principal. As well, an HLP teacher meets with families before each reporting period to review learning plans, assess portfolios and work submitted, and set learning goals for the upcoming term. Typically, the submission of work is as follows:

- Kindergarten through grade three: a primary portfolio will be submitted a minimum of three times per year, and /or upon completion of specific units
- Grades four through nine: work submissions once every two weeks and/or upon completion of units/modules/assignments
- Grades ten and up: Work submissions once every two weeks and/or upon completion of assignments, with an understanding that if the student has not submitted an assignment within a designated time (given by the teacher) that the student may be considered inactive and withdrawn from the course.

The HLP teacher is ultimately responsible for the assessment of student progress in relation to the BC Ministry of Education learning outcomes. The parent and student help the teacher determine which samples of student work best illustrates student achievement and growth. A variety of assessment tools (rubrics, project criteria, tests, portfolios, etc.) and strategies (self-assessment, observations, etc.) help to ensure that individual learning styles and learning rates are considered when assessing a student. We encourage families to involve students in assessing their own growth and progress, and in selecting samples of their work for inclusion in their portfolios. Families are required to provide sufficient samples of student work for teachers to make reasonable, professional judgments about the progress of the student throughout the year. Samples can be shared in a variety of ways and forms (ie, print, video, audio tape, online). Students are also given the opportunity to participate in provincial assessments, such as the Foundation Skills Assessment in grades four and seven, provincial exams for students in grades ten and up, and individual assessments using the Performance Standards to help direct your child(ren)'s learning.

"Working Together for Student Success"

Working as Collaborative Partners in Student Learning

Working as partners to reach the goals in a student's learning plan is essential to success in the Home Learners' Program. With this in mind, it is important to outline the responsibilities that are shared by all involved in the learning process.

- **The role of the teacher:**

HLP teachers work with parents to generate student learning plans, collect student work samples on a regular basis, complete the ongoing assessment and evaluation of student work, and provide support to families.

- **The role of the parent:**

We recognize that parents are the primary facilitators of their children's learning at home. Parents assist with the day to day management of the student's educational program and ensure that student work samples or assignments are submitted on an ongoing basis.

- **The role of the student:**

For our younger students, much of the responsibility for learning is in the hands of their parents. However, for our older students (especially those in high school), to be a successful home learner involves a great deal of commitment. If you are not sure if home learning will be a successful educational choice for your high school student, you might want to visit <http://www.bclearningnetwork.com/?page=whatis> to see if your child would be a good candidate for distributed learning.

Options Offered Through the Home Learners' Program:

The Home Learners' Program works to provide learning plans that meet the needs of the families we serve. Parents choosing to register students in the Home Learners' Program may register in the following options:

- Option I - Distance Education (Kindergarten - Grade 12)
- Option II - Blended Education Program (Grade 6 - Grade 9)
- Option III - Stand-alone courses (Grade 10-12)

Option I: Distance Education (Kindergarten and up)

This option is designed to allow a student in kindergarten through grade 12 to work on an educational plan in the home setting, with a parent facilitating the learning. In this option, a teacher from the Home Learners' Program and the parent work together to develop the learning plan for the student. The plan includes brief descriptions of subjects, approximate timelines, and instructional methods and resources that will be used. Student work is submitted on an ongoing basis in order for the HLP teacher to complete the assessment and evaluation of the work.

In Option I, the school district provides students with copies of approved learning resources (textbooks, applicable workbooks and online materials where appropriate). The use of a computer and internet services are available if needed. All students in the Home Learners' Program have access to an array of educational activities, including optional weekly classes, monthly field trips, and a variety of music, drama, art, and sports opportunities to enhance learning in the home.

Option II: Blended Program (Grades 6-9)

This option is similar to the district's distributed learning program described in Option I with a notable difference being that students in the Blended Education Program are able to complete some of their educational courses at one of the schools in the district. The option of attending classes at a district middle school or high school is dependent on space available within the requested class. For those students who wish to take part in a blended program, we recommend that a letter outlining this request be given to the HLP principal, who will then contact the district school principal to ascertain whether this is a viable option for the student.

Option III: Stand-Alone Courses (Grades 10 and up)

Students in grades ten through twelve have a unique option available to them. Students are able to enroll in their chosen courses at any of the distributed learning programs throughout the province, as well as enrolling in a district school. This option can look different for each student. One student may choose to take their grade ten academic courses through HLP, while at the same time enrolling at a local high school for their electives. Another student may choose to take one or two courses through HLP, a course at a local school, and an elective not offered in our district at yet another DL (distributed learning) program in the province. There is no cost involved for the student if they enroll in more than one program or school. Because this option is available to students, the Home Learner's Program course options for high school are limited to the required grade ten courses leading to graduation, and only courses that are teachers specialize in at the grade eleven and twelve level. For students in these grades, we also offer help in facilitating course planning through other DL programs.

Although we encourage our high school students to explore the options available to them through other DL programs in the province (visit www.mybcschool.gov.bc.ca), the advantage to taking courses offered through the HLP is the direct teacher link, and the availability of face-to-face support from our high school teachers. For many students, the option of taking some courses at a district high school, and others through HLP, allows for the flexibility and choice that they need.

The Curriculum

A student's curriculum is based on the Ministry of Education requirements. HLP provides students with approved learning resources (including textbooks, workbooks, and online course material) to fulfill and enhance individual learning plans. In addition to the required resources that are provided, families are also able to access the following:

Face-to-Face Activities

The Home Learners' Program is distinct from many distributed learning programs because of the many opportunities offered for face-to-face activities. They include:

- **Weekly classes:**

We offer optional classes for our students at the Annex on a regular basis. Students from grades one through seven can take part in a theme-based day every Monday, incorporating a variety of learning strands. Teacher supervised breaks are provided during the day for those students who choose to enroll in all classes. Classes run on a seven week cycle each term.

Our students in kindergarten meet every Wednesday for a circle time, in which students participate in early literacy activities, exposure to beginning math concepts, and of course- music, art, and social play!

For our older students, we also offer a weekly class that focuses on English skills, French conversation, and special projects. This is also a chance for students to meet face to face with their peers.

- **Field Trips:**

Field trips are a wonderful way to meet many learning outcomes, and provide an opportunity for socialization and networking among our families. We usually offer one field trip a month, and these can range from an outing to a local farm, a visit to the Vernon Science Centre, attendance at the Okanagan Symphony, amongst others. Pre-registration for field trips is mandatory, as the cost for transportation and entrance fees is usually paid for or supplemented by HLP. Families who register and do not attend a field trip without providing sufficient notice or reason may be asked to reimburse the cost of their tickets.

- **Seasonal Activities:**

In addition to classes and field trips, HLP staff also offers opportunities to participate in creating seasonal arts and crafts throughout the year. These vary from year to year, and are either staff-directed or taught by someone from the community. Our families also organize activities for students to participate in, and arrange to use the facilities at the Annex. These are wonderful opportunities for students and parents to get to know each other, and we welcome ideas and suggestions from families.

- **Activities for Parents:**

- **Parent Advisory Committee -**

We recognize the importance of networking for our families, and we feel that there is a wealth of information available from our parent group.

The HLP Parent Advisory Committee was newly formed two years ago, and continues to grow and evolve each year. The PAC meets on a regular basis (usually every four to six weeks) and every HLP student's parent (or caregiver) is automatically a member of the PAC. The group provides support, advice, and suggestions for parents and for the Home Learners' Program. Meeting dates are announced in our monthly newsletter, and information from previous meetings and ideas discussed is also included in the newsletter.

- **Annual Parent Conference-**

Our 'Best Practices for Home Educators' conference is held every year either in the Spring or Fall. It is an opportunity for our parents and caregivers to learn new ideas, network with each other, and attend workshops specifically designed with home educators in mind.

Presenters for the conference include experts from our community, HLP staff members, and parents from the HLP program. We also offer a children's program to coincide with the times of the parent conference, so that parents can rest assured that their children are not missing a day of learning!

HLP Parent Library:

Our parent library consists of a variety of materials that parents and staff have identified as being important supplements to student learning, including books (leveled readers, novels, non-fiction and others), educational kits, tapes, CDs, math manipulatives, games, and science materials. The library is open for parents to browse and sign out items any time during office hours, with the exception of times when students are attending classes. The library will be locked during class time, but will be open before and after classes for book sign-out. Please ask one of the HLP staff when you are ready to check out your books. If, for whatever reason, the HLP staff is unable to assist you at that time, there will be a sign-out sheet posted for parents to record the barcode numbers of the items they are borrowing. Most items will be on a three-week loan period, unless items are course materials and are required year-round. Please return your materials by the due-date, or let us know if you'd like to renew them. The library is arranged by the Dewey Decimal System, which can be confusing at times, so if you need assistance, please ask. As well as the library resources, there are some parent resources available on the bookshelves in the teachers' office. These include math manipulatives, language arts workbooks, beginning readers, and so on. For these items, please have an HLP staff member sign them out, or record the barcode numbers on the sign-out sheet provided. These resources are available at all times during office hours.

Computer Accessibility:

HLP utilizes technology to support our learners in many ways. Online learning is an essential part of our high school students' curriculum, and we provide access to programs to supplement our younger students' learning plans. Because of this, the district will loan a family a computer for the time they are registered with the Home Learners' Program, if needed. A computer technician is available if you need assistance or are experiencing difficulty with your computer. Please refer to the contact numbers at the end of your handbook.

SuccessMaker:

The SuccessMaker software curriculum includes courses in mathematics and reading/language arts for students in grades K-8. A feature of this program is the management system that allows customizing and tracking of student progress. We recommend this tool be used to supplement student learning, and suggest that it be used three times a week, for a minimum of fifteen minutes per session.

Communication: An Important Key to Learning Success

One of the most important aspects of the Home Learners' Program is regular communication with families. A monthly newsletter is sent out to inform families of upcoming activities, events, and important dates. This newsletter is also posted on our website, and previous newsletters are also archived and can be accessed at any time. There are many times that we have information that we wish to pass on to families that is not in the newsletter because of its timely nature, and in most cases we will email this out to everyone. Please check your email on a regular basis in order to stay informed. For those who do not have email, you will receive a phone call with the information.

Our website is also a place to go to get information, and we try to keep this as up to date as possible. The website address is:

<http://sd67.bc.ca/schools/homelearners/index.html>

Home Learners' Program Contact Names and Numbers

HLP Address:
225 Kinney Ave.
Penticton, B.C.
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Website Address:
www.sd67.bc.ca

Name:	Contact:	Responsible for:
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Claire Thompson, Teacher	cthompson@summer.com 770-7718 (ext. 5)	Grades 8 and up Science/Math
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