

Welcome

As you arrive, please place the die found on
your seat into the jar
that best represents your family.



Homeschooling in BC

What is it, and is it right
for your family?

Presented by:
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of BCHEA



Welcome



bchea








BC Home Educators' Association

British Columbia Home Educators' Association (BCHEA) was founded in 1988 as a grassroots movement of home educators in response to an upcoming overhaul of the BC School Act. The effort was instrumental in the creation of section 12, enshrined in law as the right to home educate in BC. BCHEA remains a non-profit, secular, and inclusive organization representing all home schoolers in the province.

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO HOMESCHOOL

Who is the BCHEA?

Agenda

-  Homeschooling in BC
-  Community and Support
-  Change Your Path at Any Time
-  Is Homeschooling Right for Your Learner?
-  High School and Beyond
-  BC Home Educators' Association
-  Q & A



Slide Deck and notes will be available on request after the conference

Homeschooling in BC



The BC education system offers many pathways for learners of all ages, allowing individuals and families to pursue an education that fits their goals, interests, needs, and philosophies.

One of those options is choosing not to participate in the school system and homeschool instead.

DEFINITION

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Homeschooling in BC is most often defined by what it is not.

It is not supervised by any outside authority and you don't report your learning to anyone.

You don't travel through grade levels or complete mandatory testing.

You are not required to follow any curriculum including the BC Curriculum.

It is not funded by the government.

Homeschooling offers an alternative to enrollment in the BC education system, where parents or caregivers assume full responsibility for the child's educational program.

Homeschooling is not a part of the BC School System.

The parent holds to full authority over their child's learning, with no required reporting to a higher authority.

You are not connected to a school or teacher and are not required to follow the BC Curriculum.

You are opting out of the publicly funded school system.

Ministry Source:



Homeschooling vs. Online Learning

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School Status	▶ Registered Homeschooler outside of the school system	Enrolled Student within the school system
Supervision	▶ Parent-supervised education	Learning must be teacher-supervised
Curriculum	▶ No required curriculum	Students must follow the BC Curriculum
Religious Material	▶ Any material may be used	Independent schools only
Evaluation	▶ Progress is not reported on or evaluated	Progress is evaluated and report cards are created by the teacher
Assessments	▶ Not required	Must participate in Provincial Assessments

Homeschooling can be confused with Online Learning.

Online Learning is a classroom alternative *within* the BC school system. It is a flexible option for those who wish to learn at home while meeting provincial learning standards, but it is not the same as homeschooling.

These two at-home learning options have different entitlements and obligations.

This chart based on the Ministry of Education and Child Care policies breakdown the difference.

Homeschoolers are governed by sections 12 and 13 of the BC School Act

SECTION 12

A parent of a school-aged child may educate the child at home or elsewhere and must provide that child with an educational program.

SECTION 13

A parent of a child who is homeschooled must register the child on or before Sept 30 each year with a BC school of their choice. The board that has jurisdiction over that school must ensure that the registration is recorded by the school. A parent may register the child with an independent school or a francophone school, if eligible.

In 1988, the BCHEA was founded by BC homeschooling families in response to an upcoming overhaul of the BC School Act. Their letter writing and lobbying campaign was instrumental in the creation of section 12 and 13 of the school act which enshrined our legal right to educate our children at home without government involvement.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM *noun*

...an organized set of learning activities that is designed to enable learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy

- BC School Act, 1996



Section 12 tells us that a parent of a school-aged child may educate the child at home or elsewhere and must provide that child with an educational program.

An educational programme is defined in the BC School Act and is interpreted by the person in charge of the child's education -- the school board, the francophone authority, the Ministry (who are in charge of the Provincial schools), or in the case of a homeschooled child, the parents.

SECTION 13

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

Register your intent to homeschool at any time of the year and each year after that on or before September 30 between the age of 6 and 16

Section 13 tells us that a parent of a child who is homeschooled must register the child on or before Sept 30 each year with a BC school of their choice. The board that has jurisdiction over that school must ensure that the registration is recorded by the school. A parent may choose to register the child with a willing independent school or a francophone school, if eligible.

This means that from September 30th of the year your child turns 6 (or at the time you leave the school system) until the day your child turns 16, you must register that child as homeschooled if you intent to opt out of the school system.

You may remain registered as homeschooled until June 30 of the school year the child turns 19. (a school year runs from July 1- June 30 each year) People may do this if they want their teen to have access to what the school system can provide to homeschoolers.

You must re-register your intent each year on or before September 30th.

Public schools must register your intent to homeschool when you ask them to.

Independents may register you if they choose to.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that children are provided with a healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning.

-OIC 1280/89, Part D



Homeschooling parents are also bound by the education policy OIC 1280/86, Part D which states that parents must provide a safe and healthy environment that is conducive to learning.

Register as a Homeschooler

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Contact any public school in BC and ask them to record your child's status as homeschooled.

*some independent schools will do this for you too

The process of declaring that you will be homeschooling is a simple one.

You may email any public school in the province, regardless of its location relative to you and ask them to register your child as homeschooled. All public schools are required to honour your request. They will require the child's name and age and proof of residency. If the child has a PEN, provide that as well.

Please communicate through email and ask for email confirmation of your child's status. This creates a paper trail.

At this point your job of registering is done. It is now the principal's responsibility to note your child's status for the Ministry.

If the school gives you a hard time, you can contact the superintendent of the district who will advise the school of their obligations. The BCHEA can also be of help. We have a structured template letter on our website that can help the school understand the process.

Some independent schools in BC who are quite familiar with processing a homeschooled registration. They often have an easy online form.

All registering schools must provide evaluation and assessment services at your request. Public registering schools must also provide learning material if you ask. It will be on par with what the children of the same age are using and there may be a loan charge.

Community and Support



Part of the tradition (and sometimes struggle) of homeschooling is building a community. In centers with a larger number of home learners this community has been settled in place for some decades. In other areas, you may need to work to create something suitable.



How do you tell your community of all the fun things you have created?

Join you local group!

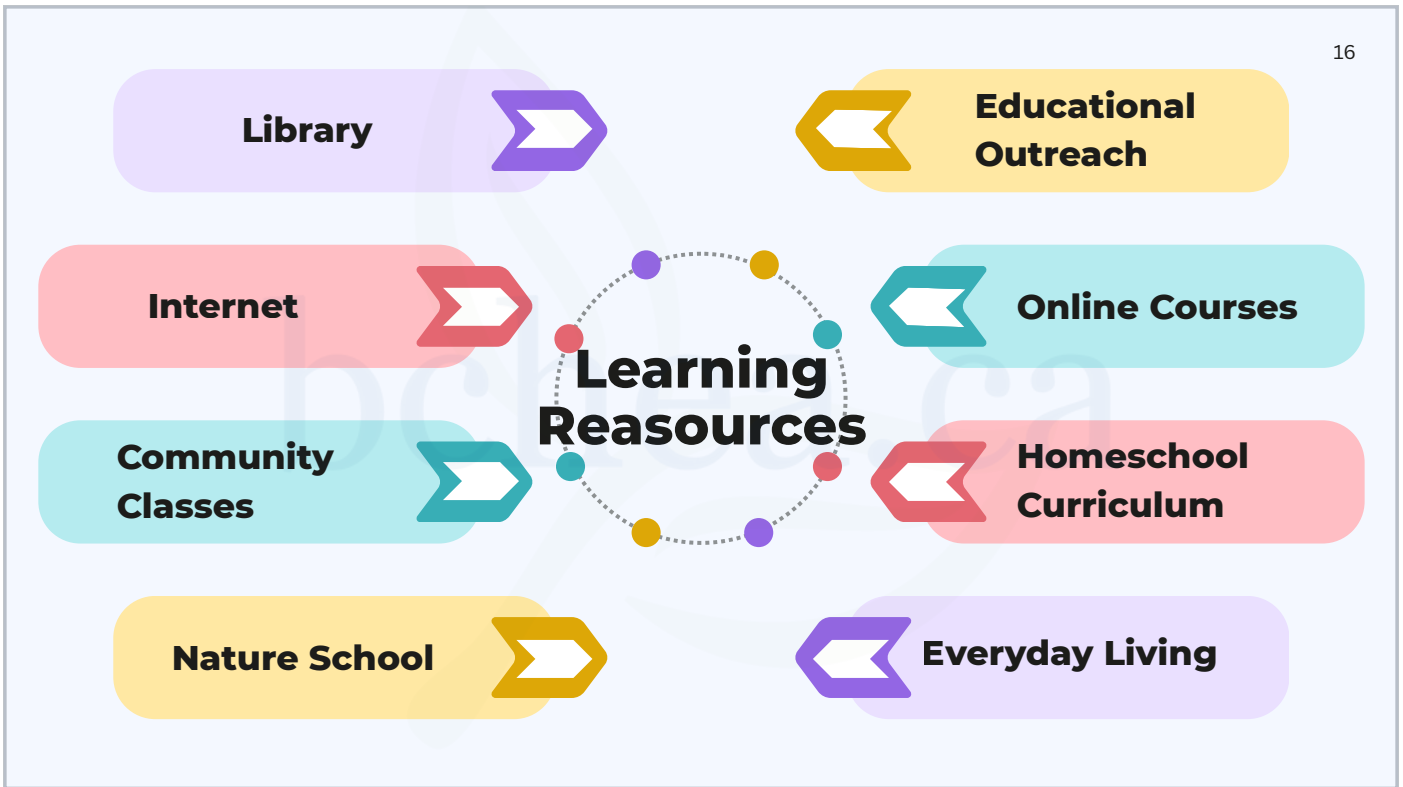
This is one of the most important thing you can do. In all areas of BC there are community groups for home learners. These group include both homeschoolers and online learners who are seeking and sharing learning opportunities and social connection.

Use the directory on the BCHEA website to find the groups that are close to you and see what's going on in your area.

Join, Join, Join. Show up to these things. This is how your kids make friends and how, importantly, you make friends and connection in the community.

If you are admin of a group that isn't listed here, please share the group information.

The directory has a direct method of sharing.



Because homeschoolers are not receiving specific curriculum or resources from a teacher, it is good to understand where learning and knowledge can be found.

The basic answer is: everywhere.

Just because you are taking on the responsibility for your child's education doesn't mean ONLY you can teach your child. You can reach out to tutors, community classes, online courses, co-ops, and more.

Your library and university are great places of information. Universities have community outreach programmes which are great opportunities for learning. For instance, UBC has a Physics Circle for teens and SFU has a number of such programmes including Starry Nights at the observatory.

Online, you will find that universities around the world, as well as like minded organisations, offer a plethora of resources and packaged curriculum for free.

You can also find purpose-made homeschool curriculum. This is costly, but it is created from the perspective of a homeschooling parent who may need help explaining concepts.

Lastly, and maybe most valuable is the learning that can be found in everyday living. Counting money at the store, sorting items into categories while cleaning the house, cooking and baking, travelling, talking philosophy at supper and historical politics in the car. Learning through exploration, experimentation, and having autonomy creates deep connections and retention.

Free Learning Resources

Look For:

- ✓ **.org** - These sites are usually about purpose, not profit
- ✓ **.edu** - Usually, the purpose is education
- ✓ **Universities** - They have educational Outreach Programs and free learning material for all ages
- ✓ **Foundations** - Their mandate is often the sharing of information or material
- ✓ **Public Entities** (NASA, Library of Parliament, **.gov** is a clue)
- ✓ **Words like "OPEN", "NON-PROFIT", "COMMONS", "OER".**
- ✓ **Libraries** - online or in-person

This is a quick list of all the place you can find free, quality curriculum resources. I urge you to put in the work and you will find some spectacular, unique learning resources.



If you Build it, They will Come

In the end, the main idea is that *we* are the ones who build this community and keep it running for our children and for the future home learners.

There are organisations, community programmes, and resources that have been running and available to home learners for decades because of the work others have put it.

If you build it, they will come.
If you see a need, fill a need.

Change Your Path at Any Time



You are not locked in to yesterday's decision

What you decide today is not what you need to stick with.

The idea of choice in education is that it is there when you need it. What your child or family needs today might not be what works next year.

You can move between all three educational options at any time of the year for any reason. And there are many reasons you might like or need to change what you are doing.

Physical schools and Online Learning schools have the question of space to consider, but a physical public school is required to find you a space somewhere in the district if you want to attend.

Homeschooling on the other hand isn't something that fills up. You aren't joining something, you are opting out of something else. Moving into homeschooling is simply a process of letting the school system know you won't be attending. Enrolling in a school may take a short bit of time and some paperwork.

Is Homeschooling Right for You and Your Learner?



Homeschooling is one of several educational options available to families in British Columbia. Families consider a range of factors when making this choice, and educational pathways can shift over time as needs, goals, and circumstances change.

CONSIDERING ALL YOUR OPTIONS

*you can change your mind
at any time

Classroom Learning

Teacher provides the instructions and oversees the learning

Online Learning

Parent provides the instruction and the teacher oversees the learning

Homeschooling

Parent holds the full responsibility and authority of the education.

Families in BC have three educational options to choose from.

Classroom schooling: Enrol your child in a traditional public or independent school. The child's teacher provides the instruction following the BC Curriculum learning standard and oversees the learning.

Online Learning: Enrol your child as a home learning student in one of the government-funded Online Learning schools where you will follow the BC curriculum learning standards using approved resources and the method of your choice. Your child will have a BC certified teacher who provides you with guidance and oversight. Learn more about this BC classroom alternative here: [Online Learning](#)

Homeschooling: Opt out of the BC school system. You will hold the authority and full responsibility over your child's education. You will be required to provide an educational program as you interpret the definition set out in the BC School Act. Learn more about this self-directed option here: [Homeschooling](#)

Have a clear understanding of the legal and practical differences when thinking about your options.

What is your Family Style?

Things to think about:

What do you believe education is for?

What kind of childhood do you want your child(ren) to have?

How important are structure, routine, and formal academics?

How does learning fit into your daily family life?

Homeschooling is not one-size-fits-all. You have the freedom to shape your child's education based on your values, your goals, and your family life.

Things to think about:

What do you believe education is for?

What kind of childhood do you want your child to have?

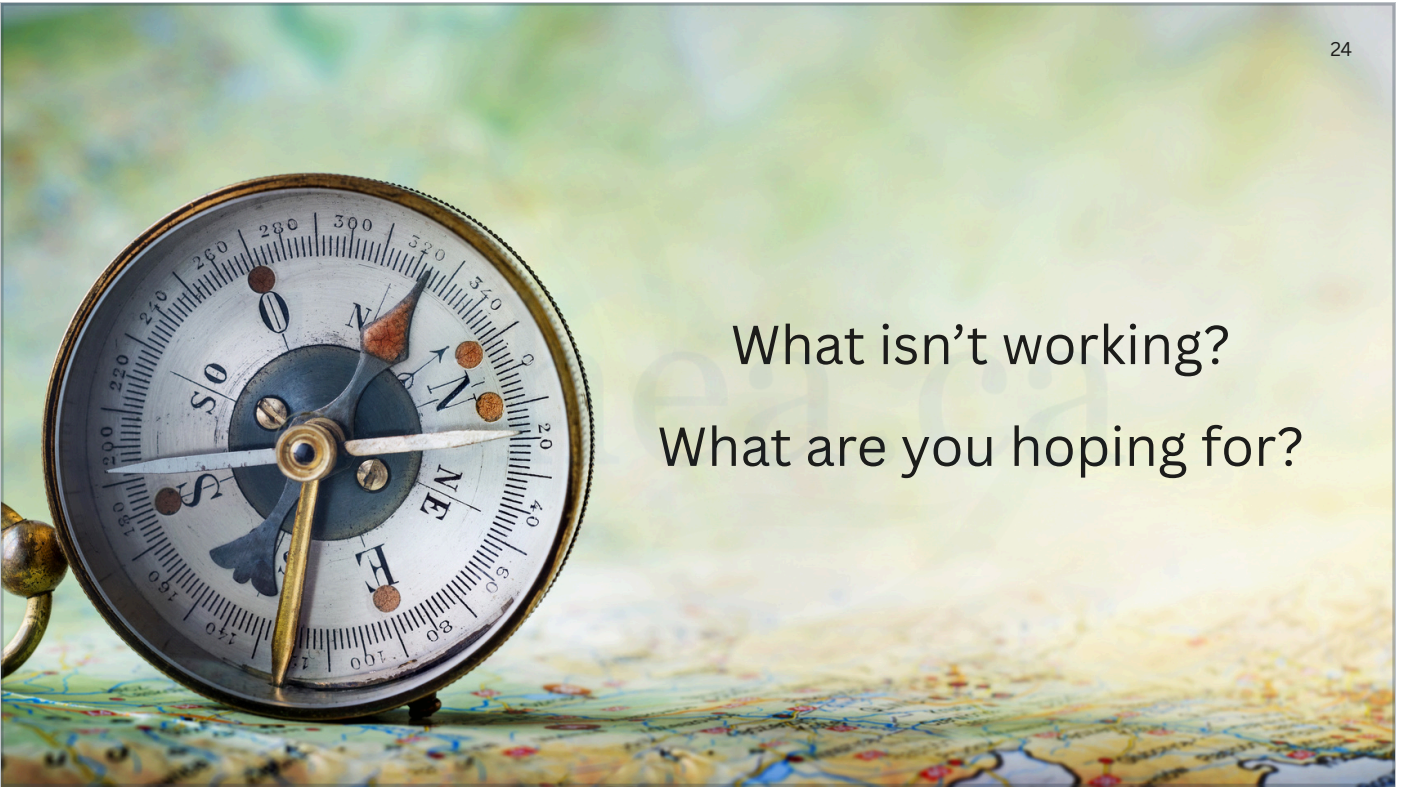
How important are structure, routine, and formal academics?

How does learning fit into your daily family life?

Your answers will shape your approach. You may lean toward a structured, classroom-style model, or toward a more flexible, child-led approach. Many families find themselves somewhere in between. Your philosophy doesn't need to be fully formed right away. It will develop over time as you gain experience and confidence.

- Start by learning about different approaches and seeing what resonates with you.
- Read a few general homeschooling books or articles
- Explore different methods and teaching styles
- Talk to other homeschoolers about what works for them
- Use available resources including libraries, online content, and community groups, but read broadly and think critically.

Over time, your philosophy will take shape as you gain experience.



When thinking about your child's education take stock of what is going on every once in a while.

Think about what's working and what isn't. And consider what your vision is. Is it reasonable and doable? Will it fit your child's learning style and future plans?

Never fear changing your approach or style. Always consider all of the schooling options available to BC children.

Homeschoolers do have access to various outside sources of education, but they also have access to the BC school system - either by enrolling as student or by dabbling within the system while remaining a homeschooler.

High School and Beyond



A question we are often asked is: “What happens when homeschoolers reach the high school years, pursue post-secondary education, or enter the trades?”

There is a common misconception that homeschooling limits a student’s future opportunities or prevents them from pursuing higher education. In reality, homeschool graduates regularly go on to attend colleges and universities, enter skilled trades, start businesses, and follow many different career paths.

In British Columbia, there are multiple pathways available to homeschoolers, and families are not “locked into” a single educational route. Homeschooling through the teen years can provide flexibility, individualized learning, and opportunities for students to pursue their strengths and interests while preparing for adulthood and future goals.

School System Access

Audit K-12 for Interest's Sake

Cross-enrol for Credit on a BC Transcript

Cross-enrol for a Dogwood Diploma

Cross-enrol for Adult Diploma

Enrol in the Graduation Program

Enter Directly into Post Secondary

In British Columbia, homeschooling families are not “locked into” a single educational pathway. Homeschoolers can access opportunities within the school system while continuing to homeschool.

There are several ways to access the school system depending on your child's goals.

This can include auditing K–12 courses for interest’s sake or cross-enrolling in Online Learning courses which will earn credit on a BC transcript. Taking the right courses will earn an Adult or High School diploma. Homeschoolers will often cross-enrol, taking individual Online Learning courses that they require as post secondary programme prerequisites. Some take Online Learning course for interest sake.

Some homeschoolers choose to enrol in the high school graduation program as students and some choose to enter post secondary directly.

Homeschooling can serve as a flexible pathway that allows students to move between different educational options over time as their needs and goals change.

This flexibility is one of the strengths of homeschooling in BC and can help support students as they plan for future learning, high school years, post-secondary education, or the trades.

ONLINE LEARNING COURSES

Homeschoolers can take Graduation Program courses for credit through BC Online Learning schools without pre-requisites.



Once a homeschooler is the age they would be in grade 10, they are able to "cross-enrol" in Online Learning courses for credit on an official BC transcript.

This means that they can remain a homeschooler and sign up for individual courses through the school system. (Online Learning only)

Homeschoolers might take Online Learning courses for interest, for post secondary program pre-reqs, for Adult Diploma credits, or even to earn a Dogwood Diploma

Homeschoolers need only to have course readiness, not the school required prerequisites. This means that a homeschooler can take only the courses they need for their post secondary plans (maybe, Math 11 and English 12), or only the courses they find interesting (like Forensic Science or Philosophy 12). Independent schools are always allowed to make their own policies.

To enrol in an individual course, take a look at the Online Learning course registry and contact the school offering it in the way you wish to take it. ask them about their process for cross-enrolling while remaining a homeschooler. This is a common practice so the schools all have an easy process. Since courses at this level are funded individually, it is easy to just sign up for one course at a time. <https://search.onlinelearningbc.com/>

You can take as many courses as you wish from any number of Online Learning schools.

The courses completed will be added to a BC transcript which can be used as need.



Homeschoolers in British Columbia have multiple pathways into post-secondary education, and they are not limited to a single route.

A common pathway is completing the required pre-req courses for a chosen program. These courses can be taken through Online Learning schools, or if you are over 18, at your local Continuing Ed. Homeschoolers do not require the public school system prerequisite courses. You can jump in and take Calc 12 without having taken any other school courses, for example. Independent Online Learning school may have a different policy, but try to prove course-readiness to get around that.

Some students choose to complete a BC graduation credential, such as the High School Dogwood Diploma or Adult Dogwood Diploma, which are both accepted for post-secondary general admission. An Adult Diploma holds the same weight as a Dogwood.

Most institutions will consider applicants who apply without a traditional transcript. They will require proof of readiness which can include the use of a portfolio of work, reference letters, entrance assessments, or other supporting documentation. Requirements vary by institution.

A common pathway to post secondary is through an institution's mature student admissions. This typically only involves an English assessment. The mature student age in BC post secondary schools ranges from 16yo to 23.

Most post secondary institutions, including the research universities, are part of the BC Transfer

System. This is a program where schools have pre-accepted credits and programme credentials from other institutions. This benefits homeschoolers in that a homeschooler can enter an institution with a low mature student age or a preferable classroom size and environment and later transfer their credits to another institution as the child themselves matures or settles on their end goals.

Ultimately, admission requirements depend on the institution and program. The solid advice is to connect with the program advisor when your child is a teen and see what they would like to see in an applicant. This is not General Admissions. This is a side door.

Homeschoolers can meet these requirements through a variety of flexible learning pathways.

Keep in mind that there is no timeline on education. You are not bound by the school system tradition of graduating at 18. In fact, within the school system you are considered school aged until the June after you turn 19yo. After that you are considered an adult student. You have your entire life to earn high school credits and even earn a diploma. These courses are free as long as you are a resident of BC. You can take courses through the online learning schools, continuing ed, and post secondary institutions.

Summary

- 🌱 Homeschooling in BC is a distinct alternative to enrollment in the BC school system.
- 🌱 Community grows through connection, shared resources, and parents creating opportunities together.
- 🌱 You can move between the BC education options at any time for any reason. The decision you make today is not permanent.
- 🌱 Homeschooling doesn't preclude you from higher education and post secondary paths.
- 🌱 Homeschooling can be the right choice for a child, a family, or a period of life.





British Columbia Home Educators' Association (BCHEA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1988 to represent all home schoolers, regardless of philosophical or religious beliefs. Since its inception, BCHEA has been a grassroots movement, involving individual home educators and families.

BCHEA is run by a Board of Directors made up of Section 12 and OL-enrolled home learning parents from across British Columbia who are committed to preserving and protecting our homeschooling freedoms as outlined in the School Act.

Over the years, BCHEA has earned credibility and respect from the BC government and is recognized as a trusted voice on homeschooling matters. This high esteem also reflects back on each homeschooling family as government has acknowledged our positions that:

Each home school is unique.

Home education, due to its tutorial format, is separate from public and independent school systems.

Parents are best positioned to make choices regarding their children's education.

We maintain precise, constructive communication with the Ministry of Education, advocating for parents' rights while fostering a collaborative relationship with government authorities.

Our Mission

BCHEA exists to champion the freedom of families to educate their children at home in British Columbia. We provide guidance, information, and community connections so parents can make informed choices.

Our goal is a thriving, informed, and empowered homeschooling community across the province.



What We Do

Government Liaison and Advocacy

Protecting Your Rights

Support and Information

Public Relations and Outreach

Legal Information and Defense

Government Liaison and Advocacy:

BCHEA communicates regularly with Ministry of Education and Child Care officials and other authorities to ensure homeschooling families have a voice.

We provide guidance and input on matters affecting home education, helping ensure resources and practices reflect parents' rights and reflect their needs.

Protecting Your Rights:

We work to uphold the right to home educate with minimal government intrusion.

BCHEA offers guidance and support when families face challenges or legal questions related to homeschooling.

Support and Information:

BCHEA maintains ongoing communications with homeschool community support groups across B C.

We provide accurate, up-to-date guidance through our website, social media, and electronic newsletter to keep families informed about home education laws and issues.

We provide home educators with information, advice, and connections to community networks.

Public Relations and Outreach:

BCHEA provides information to schools, lawyers, support groups, and the public to foster understanding of home education in the wider community.

We maintain regular communication and interaction with homeschooling families across the province through virtual gatherings and other opportunities for community and dialogue.

Legal Information and Defense:

We offer guidance to families and their legal representatives regarding homeschooling rights.

BCHEA maintains resources to address landmark legal challenges related to home education.

Become a Member

By supporting the BCHEA through membership, donation, or volunteerism, you are helping to promote and protect home education freedoms in British Columbia for all families.



BCHEA is volunteer-run and member-funded, sustained by parents and community members who care about homeschooling in British Columbia. There are several ways to get involved: volunteer your time, to become a member, or make a donation.

As a member you help us actively represent BC homeschoolers in key Ministry discussions as we monitor for potential changes to legislation and policy. You will receive immediate calls-to-action when we require letter writing campaigns, petitions, and awareness-raising events. You will have a vote at our annual general meeting which directs our focus, and you will receive our newsletter and event invitations.

We have strength in numbers. We proved that at our inception when we led the Ministry to include provisions for home education in the School Act. We are invited as stakeholders to the table when discussions surrounding homeschooling are taking place. Our voice is heard.

Membership is by donation to ensure that every family can be part of our organization. We feel that it is important to remove any barriers that might stand in the way of your membership.

BCHEA is a member-funded, non-profit society. All donations are used for the operation of the organization and support of our members.

Suggested donation is \$25. Membership runs from September 1 – August 31, however we are happy to accept members all year-round.

Thank You



bchea.ca



contact@bchea.ca



Thank you for your interest in BCHEA's information session about Homeschooling in BC.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Join us on our social media channels for news and upcoming events.