

1. Name/Name of Organisation/other body (optional)

Conchúr Dickinson

2. Please select the category that best describes you as a respondent:

Parent/Guardian	X
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3. Having read the Draft Policy for Elective Home Education, I consider that the draft policy:

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Not applicable
3.1 Provides relevant information about the Board’s responsibility for Elective Home Education, clearly and concisely			X	
3.2 Outlines the procedure to be followed should parents decide to home educate their children			X	
3.3 Provides parents with a greater understanding of their role/responsibilities when deciding to home educate their children			X	
3.4 Provides parents with a greater understanding of the Board’s statutory role/responsibilities for Elective Home Education			X	
3.5 Clarifies the role of the Education Welfare Service/Officer in relation to children who are home educated			X	
3.6 Clarifies the role of the School/School Principal in relation to children who are home educated			X	
3.7 Clarifies the role of other agencies in relation to children who are home educated			X	
3.8 Highlights the importance of establishing arrangements for safeguarding children/young people who are home educated			X	
3.9 Provides information and clarifies the role of the ‘Named Officer’ as appointed by the Board			X	
3.10 Provides appropriate information about the arrangements for and frequency of monitoring			X	
3.11 Highlights the minimum standards that will be used for monitoring purposes			X	
3.12 Signposts resources/information that may be useful for parents who are home educating			X	
3.13 Provides information about the process to be followed to facilitate children with identified Special Educational Needs			X	
3.14 Provides parents with sufficient information to contact the named Board Officer			X	
3.15 Overall, I consider that this draft policy provides me with a clear understanding of provision for Elective Home Education for children within the Board’s area			X	

Please use the space below to comment further:

This policy is fundamentally flawed. As a bare minimum it should have stated why it is needed, the ultimate aims of the policy and some way of measuring its success or failure. Crucially it should have some basis in law, not simply twist unrelated legislation to fit an unstated agenda and enforce wildly inappropriate restrictions on parents attempting to do their best for their children. The law states that it is a parent's duty to educate their child, and the state has no need to be involved at all unless concerns are raised that this education is not being provided. The boards have no right to appoint themselves as regulators of home education, they should instead be concentrating on ensuring that *they* provide a suitable and effective education for the children whose education *has* been delegated to their care by their parents choosing to send them to school.

The inadequate publicity surrounding the late-stage 'consultation' and the stone-walling of any questions by board representatives further undermines any faith that parents have in the board's good intentions. The language used in the draft is very prejudicial against home education and assumes that parents are automatically failing in their duty, unless they submit to some ill-defined and undoubtedly heavily biased monitoring process presided over by officials with limited experience or understanding of how education happens outside of schools.

Any policy attempting to interact with home educating families should instead be based on offering optional support and assistance for parents choosing this route. The provision of exam centres, group facilities and other educational resources would be of much more benefit to home educated children than some half-baked, stressful (not to mention illegal) mandatory inspection system.

4. Equality Consideration

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all public bodies are obliged to consider the implications of any decisions on nine different groupings before decisions are implemented.

In light of these obligations do you consider that review of primary provision in the area will impact positively or negatively on either Equality of Opportunity or the Promotion of Good Relations in any way?

Section 75 Category	Positive	Negative	Don't Know
Religious Belief		X	
Political Opinion		X	
Racial Group		X	
Age		X	
Marital Status		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Gender		X	
Disability		X	
Dependants		X	

If you ticked any of the above boxes please clarify your reason:

The policy is already discriminatory against home educators and their children, but the requirement to submit to home inspections with the possibility of any petty “concern” being immediately reported to Social Services opens families up to a wide range of potential abuses by uninformed or prejudiced officials. Any minority group is sure to be even more vulnerable and adversely impacted by the already unequal treatment being proposed in this draft.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your privacy is very important to us and we have taken every step to ensure your confidentiality and the security of your data. We will not at any time, release your personal data to third parties.