

# TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 6

June 1997

## MOE Passes Names of Home Schoolers to Ministry of Health

### Privacy Act Cited

In an unusual move by a central government agency to track down home schoolers, the Central Regional Health Authority has contacted the Ministry of Education for the names and addresses of school aged children holding exemption certificates. The Authority wants to send out information to all such children's caregivers to ensure that they are aware of the free MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) immunization programme currently being organised. Children ARE NOT required to be immunized. But it is important that all parents and guardians are aware of the programme, the possible benefits and possible side-effects, and to have the opportunity to make an informed decision as to what to do.

Derek Miller of the Ministry of Education contacted TEACH editor Craig Smith on Wednesday 4 June to inform him and all TEACH Bulletin readers, of the situation. This was followed up with a letter confirming the situation and a copy of the letter from the MOE to the CRHA advising them under what conditions the MOE will supply the details of home schoolers. These two letters are reproduced on pages 2 and 3 in this TEACH Bulletin, although other information documents referred to in the letters are not reproduced.

For information about the immunization programme, ring toll-free

**0800-4632-7537**

### Alternatives to Immunization

The information given by the Central Regional Health Authority says that measles can make children very sick. To quote the CRHA document, "It can also cause chest or ear infections, brain damage — or even death. In the 1991 measles epidemic hundreds of children were admitted to hospital. Six people died."

Many of us parents can remember being ill with these diseases as children. The beauty of it is, once you contract these diseases, your body creates antibodies against them so that you do not get the disease again. And you wouldn't want to, either. Mumps in males who have reached puberty is said to be incredibly painful and can easily cause sterility. Rubella (a form of measles) caught by an expectant mother in the early stages of the pregnancy can cause birth defects. So ideally you want your children to have the antibodies before they get too old. Either they can get the disease and acquire the antibodies naturally, or they can be immunized. In this case a "mild" form of the disease is injected into the child so that you know the child will develop the antibodies. However, there have been stories of serious side effects, including getting the disease the immunization was supposed to stop. For information in this area contact:

**Hilary Butler**  
25 Harrisville Rd.  
Tuakau

Apparently a simple blood test is available through your GP which can confirm whether your child does or does not already have the rubella antibodies.

### MOE Mailing List

Following a meeting with Kathy Phillips and Derek Miller of the MOE, it was reported in TEACH Bulletin that the MOE would be pleased to receive notice of various home school support groups who would then go onto a MOE mailing list to receive information direct. This was a miscommunication with the MOE. The corrected information is in a letter from the MOE reproduced here on page 4.

### Auckland Home Schooling Information Workshop Big Success

Many thanks to Dorinda Duthie, Lesley Clements and Lyn Strong for organising a very pleasant and informative day. Around 200 parents from as far away as Lower Hutt gathered at the Mairangi Bay Baptist Church buildings (a huge ex-pub complex!) There was one general session, plus two sets of six workshops to choose from. There was quite a range of resource people there, morning and afternoon teas were provided, and all for only \$20 per couple! How did you three do it?

### Auckland Home Educators Inc.

This new regional group intends to complement existing national home schooling organisations/networks and link local groups together. Inaugural AGM is set for 2 August 1997, 7:30pm at Freemans Bay Community Centre, 52 Hepburn St., Ponsonby. Write AHE Inc, PO Box 91530, Ak 1030 or ph Michele (09) 634-0619.

Copy  
Desk

# TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of TEACH Publications, and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists, and other items of general interest to home educators. There is also a regular opinion poll regarding educational issues of the day that may impact home schoolers.

TEACH Bulletin is available for a suggested donation of \$16 per year for 11 issues (none in December), or by becoming a member of TEACH for a suggested donation of \$30. Some of the benefits of membership are:

- Discounts on Christian Home Schoolers of NZ National Family Conference fees.
- Discounts on TEACH National Leadership Conference fees.
- Coaching on how to participate in the Parliamentary process via letter writing, making submissions, lobbying MPs, etc.
- An annual free gift.
- Discounts on resources, books, T-Shirts, etc.
- Discounts on Sonshine Educational coach tours.
- An official TEACH tax-deductible receipt for your donation.

Your donation toward membership also helps to develop further services exclusively for home schoolers such as scholarships, summer schools, national tours by overseas experts, curriculum and home school resource fairs, national and international field trips.

### All correspondence to:

The Editor  
Craig S. Smith  
4 Tawa St.  
Palmerston North 5301  
New Zealand  
Fax: +64 6 357-4399  
keystone.teach@xtra.co.nz

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching.  
— Proverbs 1:8

9 June 1997

Craig Smith  
Christian Homeschoolers  
4 Tawa Street  
PALMERSTON NORTH

Tena koe Craig

Nga mihi nui ki a koe. Greetings.

I am writing to confirm the information given to you by phone by Derek Miller.

The Ministry has recently been contacted by Dr Barry Borman, of the Central Regional Health Authority, who was writing to us on behalf of all the Medical Officers of Health in New Zealand. He requested the names and addresses of homeschoolers so that Medical Officers of Health could contact them to provide information about the current measles epidemic and the free immunisation that is available.

Our first inclination was to decline this request, as we have declined every other request in the past for information about the names and addresses of homeschooling parents. We offered instead to mail to homeschoolers information which the Department of Health might supply.

Dr Borman and his organising committee considered our offer and asked again for the information to be supplied. Dr Borman pointed out that it was important for local Medical Officers of Health to have the fullest possible information about their own areas. He also pointed out that the local Medical Officer of Health would provide to parents details about locations and times when the free immunisation service would be available (in addition of course to being available through a GP).

We reconsidered the matter and have agreed to provide the information on the grounds that this situation is provided for under Principle 11(f)(i) of the Privacy Act 1993 ie "disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to public health or public safety".

As a result of our desire to ensure that information was not being provided unnecessarily, Dr Borman informed us that the target group for the immunisation campaign was young children aged between five and ten years of age. We have pointed out that we have no information about five year olds who may be being homeschooled and we have therefore agreed to provide the names and addresses of all homeschooled children aged 6-10 years (inclusive).

We have been assured that the Medical Officers of Health will be contacting homeschoolers by post and will not be visiting them at their home address. We have insisted that the names and addresses of homeschoolers be destroyed once the communication exercise has been completed.

Attached for your information is a copy of our letter to Dr Barry Borman and a copy of the consent form which the local Medical Officers of Health will be distributing along with a letter providing information about the mass measles immunisation campaign. (This information has already been distributed to children at school.)

Yours sincerely  
Naku noa, na

Kathy Phillips  
Senior Manager  
National Operations



9 June 1997

Dr Barry Borman  
c/- Central Regional Health Authority  
P O Box 10097  
WELLINGTON

Dear Barry

Thank you for your fax message of 4 June 1997 concerning the current measles epidemic and the need to inform homeschooling parents of the free immunisation that is available. Thank you also for the additional information which you have provided by phone to Derek Miller.

I note that your request is for the names and addresses of homeschooled children aged 6-10 years (inclusive). Derek has explained to you that there are likely to be some five year old children who are being homeschooled, but the Ministry has no record of these because parents are not required to seek approval to homeschool children under the age of six.

The Ministry has considered the implications of your request in the light of the Privacy Act. Previously, when requested by someone to divulge the names and addresses of homeschoolers, we have always declined to do so on the grounds that this information was collected solely for the purpose of approving homeschooling applications and maintaining necessary contact with homeschoolers on matters related to the education of their children.

On this occasion, however, the Ministry will disclose the information under Principle 11(f)(i) of the Privacy Act 1993 ie "that the disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to public health or public safety".

The Ministry provides the information on the understanding that:

- (a) contact with homeschoolers will be through the local Medical Officer of Health;
- (b) all contact will be by post.

The information you have requested is supplied in the form of hard copy lists. We ask Medical Officers of Health to destroy the information when the communication exercise has been completed. On no account should it be used for any other reason than to inform the named parents about the current measles epidemic and the free immunisation that is available.

Yours sincerely

Ross Boyd  
Manager  
National Operations

## Education Reviews Begun

Three big reviews of education policy have begun with the publication of a Green Paper on a future qualifications policy and the National Qualifications Framework. This discussion paper will be followed in August and in September by reviews of tertiary and teacher education.

Education Minister Wyatt Creech said these Green Papers would set out the Government's thinking, its assumptions and the reasons for its attitude. The Government wanted educators and the public to make submissions that could be used to develop final policies to be published in a White Paper. (From Wellington *Dominion*, 4 June 1997, p. 2.) (You should be able to get a copy of this Green Paper, possibly for free, by ringing your local MP's office and asking for one. They will at least be able to tell you the nearest place to get one.)

## Home Schooler a Champion

Rebecca Sealson overcame a bad case of nerves to win the 70th United States Spelling Bee by correctly spelling the word "euonym". Rebecca is a home schooled 13-year-old from New York. She took the top honours from a field of 245. (Wellington *Dominion*, 31 May 1997, p. 4.)

## A Resource Directory for Home Educators (Auckland Edition)

This was a hot item at the recent Home Schooling Information Workshop. For \$10 one gets 68 pages packed with information on getting started, resources and curricula, organisations, publications and support groups and more. Write to Kate Jaunay, Home Educators' Network of Aotearoa, PO Box 11-645, Ellerslie, Auckland 1131.

30 April 1997

Craig Smith  
4 Tawa Street  
PALMERSTON NORTH

Tena koe Craig Smith

Nga mihi nui ki a koe. Greetings.

Thank you for sending me a copy of the results of the TEACH Bulletin Opinion Poll 1.

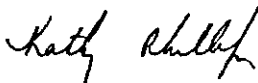
When we met earlier this year, you indicated that you could supply contact details for homeschooling support groups that it might be useful for the Ministry to maintain links with.

I gather that since then you have invited local support groups to make themselves known to the Ministry. On three occasions so far, people have written direct to me, asking to be put on our mailing list. I have attached a copy of one such letter and my reply.

What I envisaged, when I spoke with you, was that Ministry management centres would appreciate up to date information about homeschooling support groups operating within their area and there might be occasions when information from the Ministry could be disseminated through newsletters put out by a group.

It is not our intention, however, to maintain a national database of local homeschooling support groups. On matters of importance, the Ministry's national office will correspond with your organisation and the Homeschooling Federation of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely  
Naku noa, na



Kathy Phillips  
Senior Manager  
National Operations

enc

National Office,  
45-47 Pipitea Street, Thorndon, Private Box 1666, Wellington, New Zealand  
TELEPHONE: (04) 473-5544, FACSIMILE: (04) 499-8207

#### Manukau Home School Support Group

To Our Fellow Home Schoolers,

Our group was one of the first to meet with Rob Germon regarding his proposal to listen to Vicky Brady's audio tapes with a view to set up a similar programme in New Zealand. We are very excited about the effects that such a nation-wide link will have on home schoolers and the community in general. We suggest that you listen very carefully to Rob's ideas, he has a strong vision and the expertise to achieve goals on our behalf.

We have also been very fortunate to have met with Vicky Brady in person. As Rob will tell you, she hosts a home schooling radio show in the U.S. and is the author of the book "The Basic Steps To Successful Home Schooling". She is full of inspiration and has been generous in allowing Rob to set up a tape mail order service of her show at minimum cost (this is certainly not a money-making vehicle for either of them!).

We feel that this is only the beginning stage of networking home schoolers everywhere and are delighted at the prospect of being involved at the ground floor level. Who knows where this could lead us!

Yours sincerely

Angela Davis  
Newsletter Editor/Librarian

(on behalf of MHSSG)

## Employer Rings for Home Schooler

We all knew it was going to happen soon. We have been very confident that once the products of home schooling got out into the workforce, employers would start lining up to get them.

Genevieve Smith, 17, of Palmerston North has never been to school. She has experienced ACE, unschooling, the delight directed approach (what delighted her dad to teach, not what the children delighted in learning, although they did), Carey College Correspondence, and writing her own programme of study. Consequently she finds her Polytech classes two nights a week studying to become a Legal Executive to be enjoyably challenging. She has been employed as a legal secretary for about 2 years by Robert van Wichen, Barrister and Solicitor. A couple of weeks ago, the workload had reached another high-mark. He rang the local Manawatu Home Educators Inc. co-ordinator, who happened to be Genevieve's mum, and asked if she could recommend another home schooler to help out as a law clerk. Teresa Procter's name came instantly to mind, and there and then it was arranged that she start the following Monday.

Do you have a similar story? Please send it to the Editor. Thanks-Ed.



26 June 1997

## Making the Difference

Embargoed until the Treasurer finishes reading  
the Budget Speech to Parliament on 26 June 1997.

Hon Winston Peters  
Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer

### EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE TO WIDEN COVERAGE

Parents homeschooling their children or sending them to kohanga reo will have more confidence in the quality of their children's education as a result of additional funding for the Education Review Office (ERO). Brian Donnelly, the Minister responsible for ERO announced today.

The extra \$2 million over the next three years honours commitments made in the Coalition Agreement to broaden the scope of ERO's reviews.

"ERO has not done regular reviews of homeschooling since 1994," Mr Donnelly said.

"The number of students being exempted from school has now reached 5,000. The Government has recognised the significance of this increase by providing in this Budget \$1.4 million over the next three years to review homeschooling."

Mr Donnelly said the Government has an obligation to ensure that children being homeschooled are in a safe environment.

"These students are also entitled to a good education and these reviews will give parents the opportunity to be reassured that they are providing it."

Extra funding in this year's budget will also mean the Education Review Office can increase the number of reviews of kohanga reo.

"The new funding of \$450,000 over the next three years will allow ERO to increase the frequency of kohanga reo reviews," Mr Donnelly said.

A sum of \$150,000 has been allowed for the review of the Education Review Office announced by Mr Donnelly on 21 May.

Ends

---

For further information: Iain MacLean (04) 471-9131  
(04) 239-9237

# STOP PRESS

The message on the previous page, an excerpt from tonight's budget, was faxed to the TEACH Editor by a regional newspaper for comment. The TEACH Editor was able to read the reports that were generated by the many meetings of local home school support groups during 1996 specifically to discuss the issue of annual reports. It was clear that the issue of being reviewed in one way or another was not generally considered by home schoolers to be a negative thing or something to be overly concerned about. This is what was communicated to the newspaper reporter over the phone.

However, the fifth paragraph of this budget excerpt does give some cause for concern. It reads, "Mr Donnelly said the Government has an obligation to ensure that children being home schooled are in a safe environment." What exactly does this mean? What exactly will they be looking for in our homes to determine their safety? Smoke detectors? A frayed toaster cord near the kitchen table (especially if we actually use the kitchen table for our schooling)? That the words, "Emergency Exit" are clearly displayed above all doors leading outside?

In the January 1997 TEACH Bulletin there was a report of the Editor's interview with Brian Donnelly immediately after he first announced that home schoolers were once again to be reviewed by the ERO. To quote: "When asked what exactly was to be reviewed, Mr Donnelly said that the Review Officers would be looking at the child and the environment, to ensure their right to an education is being protected, and that they are in a safe and secure environment. In fact, he said he couldn't see how a review could take place in any other locality than in the home, as that was the equivalent to the classrooms the Education Review Officers review in schools. They would want to see the child's learning 'environment and conditions'".

Homes are NOT like classrooms. They are designed to accomplish different things. Is a home safe when compared to a classroom? It probably depends on what you look for. Classrooms usually do not contain things like laundry detergents, bleach, rat poison, weed killers, insecticides, an array of carving knives, open fire places, stoves, ovens, hotplates, etc., etc. If our homes are going to be compared to school classrooms along these lines we can expect to be found wanting.

Obviously this whole review issue has a few areas that need clarification to protect the domestic privacy of home schoolers and the professionalism of Review Officers. Support groups may want to discuss what practices would and would not be acceptable for a review by the ERO. Because home schoolers have such varying philosophies of education, of teaching methodologies, of educational objectives, it does not seem reasonable to be Reviewed along the same criteria as a state school classroom.