

On behalf of the Jersey Association of Home Educators, we wish to submit our contribution to the scrutiny review about the impact on children and young people during COVID 19.

This feedback is based on discussions we have had with some of our community to date however, this does not represent the entire home educating population which includes children who are electively home educated and children who are educated otherwise than at school for various reasons.

Detailed below is our response and we would be happy to discuss this further in person, if that would be considered appropriate:

***Our community continued to home educate their children in the same manner as prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, in line with the current EOTAS policy, either by following the Jersey curriculum, child led learning or with a more unschooling approach. Our children were fully supported in their learning journeys, continued to thrive in their usual learning environments with their parent(s) academically, emotionally and cognitively, and remained confident throughout the pandemic.***

***For those home educated children with a parent who would usually be working outside of the home on a daily basis, our children benefitted from the additional time they had with that parent and the presence that parent had within the home whilst working remotely. This only added to the positive family experience of home education.***

***During the stages of the pandemic where children were permitted to return to school however, socialising outside of school was very restricted, it felt as though our community "slipped between the cracks". It became increasingly challenging for our home educating community or "bubble" to socialise our children together, even outdoors. The children's usual recreational activities were paused for a significant period and our community were compelled to be very creative in order for our children to keep in touch their friends (e.g. video calls, messaging, letter writing). We would have much appreciated being considered more at this time and given the option to socialise our children in 'bubbles', given our children are so naturally keen to socialise and have fun with their friends.***

***Our children were shielded from many of the actions and decisions surrounding the pandemic at its peak, which meant that their learning journeys continued in the same manner as previously, the children continued to feel safe and did not need to adapt to changes within their learning environment. Our children were aware of the pandemic and we communicated with them about it at an appropriate level for their ages. In addition there were opportunities for some of our children to learn around the topic of the pandemic, including but not limited to, how hand sanitisers work and their purpose, conducting experiments using different household products to make sanitisers and what a virus is.***

***It was noticeable that, when restrictions lifted and our children were able to socialise more in public areas, many children outside of our community appeared more anxious about mixing, more concerned about the pandemic and more reluctant to play with others in playgrounds / public environments.***

***Given that restrictions have now eased, our children have been able to resume their recreational activities and their usual classes (e.g. music, Forest School, gymnastics, martial arts, SCOOP learning programme, Durrell Projects, play dates, group play meets, to name just a few). Our***

*children have been able mix more openly within and outside of our community which has been wonderfully positive.*

*Whilst we sincerely hope that there won't be another occasion or pandemic situation arising where such unprecedented actions / restrictions are required, if that does happen in the future we would wish for further consideration to be given to our community at such time as when schools reopen and children are permitted to mix within those environments. Our children should also be given equal opportunities to safely socialise at such times, if parents wish.*

We thank you for the opportunity to feedback in this manner.

With best wishes.

Lucy Haley  
**Chairperson**  
**Jersey Association of Home Educators**