

# Home Education Newsletter Winter 2025



## Welcome to the Winter 2025 AEARS Newsletter

We are delighted to share the second **Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service (AEARS) Newsletter**. This newsletter is designed to keep parents and guardians informed about important updates, developments, and resources related to home education and alternative education settings in Ireland.

Our goal is to provide clear, timely, and helpful information to support families navigating the registration and assessment process under Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Whether you're new to home education or have been on this journey for some time, we hope this newsletter will serve as a valuable resource to keep you connected with the AEARS team and the wider community.

In this issue, you'll find information on;

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Online applications and a new home education video .....           | 2 |
| Improving Communication: Moving Towards Email Correspondence ..... | 3 |
| Engaging Families & Clarifying Registration Requirements .....     | 4 |
| HSE's Public Health Screening Programmes.....                      | 5 |



01 7718635

017718854



[home.education@tusla.ie](mailto:home.education@tusla.ie)

## Online applications and a new home education video

The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service (AEARS) is introducing improvements to make the home education application process easier for families.

### **New Fillable R1 Application Form**

We have launched a fillable PDF version of the R1 application form, now [available on the website](#). This user-friendly format allows parents and guardians to complete the form digitally, streamlining the application process.

### **Electronic Signatures Coming Soon**

To further support this transition, AEARS is working towards accepting electronic signatures for the consent section of applications—making submissions more straightforward.

### **New Information Video Available**

AEARS has released a [short video](#) for parents and guardians considering home education for their children. This is part of a series designed to explain the Section 14 registration requirements and offer insight into AEARS's regulatory role. [Watch the video here](#)

### **Next in the Series**

The next video will focus on the assessment process, providing detailed guidance for families preparing for registration.

---

## Improving Communication: Moving Towards Email Correspondence

We are making changes to how we communicate with families to improve efficiency and reduce delays.

### **Challenges with Registered Post**

Currently, much of our correspondence is sent via registered post, which requires a signature upon delivery. This can be inconvenient for parents and guardians who may not be available to receive the post, often resulting in returned mail and delays in the registration process.

### **Transition to Email Communication**

To address this, we are moving towards issuing reports and correspondence via email wherever possible. This change will benefit both families and the service by speeding up communication and reducing logistical issues. Parents who wish to communicate via postal methods can still do so and the report will be issued by post.

### **Secure and Verified**

Before sending correspondence by email, we will verify email addresses and phone numbers for both legal guardians. It's important that **each guardian responds** to verification requests. Assessment reports sent via email will be password protected, and the password will be sent via text message from "Tusla."

### **Keep Your Contact Details Up to Date**

If your email address changes, please notify us so we can update our records and ensure you continue to receive important information without delay.

## Engaging Families & Clarifying Registration Requirements

The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service (AEARS) continues to strengthen its engagement with families who choose to home educate, while also clarifying important registration requirements.

### **Annual Service Meeting**

In collaboration with the Home Education Network, AEARS has invited a small group of parents and guardians to attend an annual service meeting. This initiative offers an opportunity to meet the AEARS team, share perspectives on the benefits of home education, and provide feedback to help improve service delivery.

### **Conditions of Registration – Written Agreement**

As noted in the previous newsletter where a child's home education assessment results in registration with specific conditions, a written agreement to those conditions is required. The agreement letter needs to be signed and returned before the child's name can be added to the Section 14 Register.

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) available on the website provide an explanatory note on the difference between conditions and recommendations. The link below will take you to the [FAQ's](#).

### [Resources and Information Tusla – Child and Family Agency](#)

### **Applies to New and Existing Registrations**

This requirement also applies to children who are already registered. In such cases, we will include an agreement letter alongside the final registration letter. The signed agreement should be returned promptly to avoid delays in completing the registration process.

### **Timely Response Matters**

To ensure your child's registration is not delayed, please return the signed agreement as soon as possible upon receipt.

## HSE's Public Health Screening Programmes

### HSE Public Health Screening Programmes

The HSE currently provides information and services on childhood health screening—including hearing, vision, and dental checks—to parents and guardians of children attending recognised schools. These screenings play a vital role in early detection and support for children's health and development.

### **Bridging the Gap for Home-Educated Children**

At present, families whose children are registered for home education under Section 14 do not routinely receive this information. AEARS and the Public Health Department recognise the importance of ensuring **equitable access** to these services for all children, regardless of their educational setting.

### **Collaborative Efforts Underway**

To address this gap, AEARS is actively collaborating with the Public Health Department to explore how best to communicate screening programme details to parents and guardians of home-educated children. The goal is to ensure that families are informed about available services and can access them in a timely and supportive manner.

This initiative reflects AEARS's ongoing commitment to supporting the wellbeing of children in home education and ensuring that families have access to the same essential health resources as those in mainstream education.