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TO : The Ambassador
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PRETORIA
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ICW : Home Education policy in Northern Ireland

Dear me. Macgregor

Since its inception in 1992, the Association for Homeschooling represents the homeschooling community in South Africa.

During apartheid, home education was illegal in South Africa. The parents Andre and Bokkie Meintjies were jailed in 1994, and their children were placed in an orphanage, because they educated their children at home. However, a few years later, the Mandela government legalised home education with the publication of the South African School Act in 1996. Since it was legalised, homeschooling has the fastest growing education model in the country.

The Universal Declaration of Human Right states that: "*Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.*" The right to choose the education of their children is a fundamental human right that all parents have.

Home education has also been growing in the UK and Northern Ireland that has benefitted thousands of children. Unfortunately the freedom of parents to choose the best education for their children is threatened by the education board in Northern Ireland that has recently released a draft policy which will require mandatory registration, approval to home educate, approval of curriculum, home inspections and interviews with children. This is very alarming for the hundreds of families in South Africa.

The Association for Homeschooling in South Africa would like to urge British High Commission to protect the freedom of parents in Northern Ireland that is threatened by the education board in Northern Ireland, by bringing the concern of South African parents to the attention of the relevant authorities.

Yours sincerely

Bouwe van der Eems