

# Homeschooling vs online schooling - which is the right route for you?

 By [Louise Schoonwinkel](#)

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In 2020, the education landscape has changed permanently. Covid-19 has pushed schools, teachers, learners and parents into unfamiliar territory, and many have had to adapt to teaching and learning methods they might not have considered otherwise.



Louise Schoonwinkel

While this experience has undoubtedly been disruptive, it has also been one of immense opportunity. For learners and parents who have been curious about homeschooling, this situation has provided a valuable push.

If you're a parent still considering homeschooling as a viable long-term solution for your child, it's important that you know what to look for in a homeschool education provider. Many new online and homeschooling providers have emerged this year and navigating this landscape is key to finding the right provider.

## **Homeschooling versus online schooling: what's the difference?**

When the pandemic first hit, many schools were forced to make the switch to online schooling. Traditional learning programmes were conducted virtually through a variety of tools, and children across grades had to tune in for their lessons at specific times.

Although this approach to teaching sometimes forms part of homeschooling, the latter is generally very different. The most important distinction is that, until Grade 9, a parent or guardian typically takes responsibility for the education of a child who is being homeschooled, rather than a school. Between Grade 10 and 12, the child becomes a distance learner, and has to be enrolled at an accredited distance learning provider in order to receive a matric certificate.

Covid-19 has taught teachers, learners and parents that learning doesn't have to involve physical interaction. Blended approaches can work just as well, as can those that are entirely virtual. As a result, there has been a growing trend in favour of homeschooling.

## The benefits of homeschooling

One of the most important benefits of homeschooling is the flexibility it affords parents and learners. It allows learners to study at times of the day that work best for them, both in terms of when they are more alert and in terms of their sporting or cultural commitments. It can also be tailored to suit parents' schedules. Online schooling, on the other hand, which is usually guided by timetables, can be quite regimented.

Homeschooling also provides learners with the option to move quickly through material that they understand, and to slow down for material with which they are battling.

## What to look for in a homeschooling provider

The most important thing to keep in mind is that your homeschooling provider must not be fly-by-night. The organisation you choose has to be credible, and it's wise to go with one that has been working in the field for a long period of time.

*“ If you want to go the CAPS curriculum route for a child in Grade 10 – 12, it's also important to make sure that the organisation that you choose is accredited by the relevant examination body. That is, if you want your child to complete the NSC certificate (Matric), ensure that the provider is registered with SACAI or the IEB. ”*

It's worth looking for an organisation that is properly equipped to support you on your journey. Homeschooling can feel overwhelming, so it's important to ensure there is available support for parents and learners with any difficulties they may encounter. Across South Africa, there are also independent tutors at hand to assist you where needed.

## A worthy alternative

Where homeschooling was once considered foreign to many, Covid-19 has taught us that it is a worthy alternative to traditional education. It opens up a whole new world of possibilities, and permits children the freedom to learn and grow at their own speed and in their own way, no matter what external forces are at play, pandemics included.

We're moving into a world where independent learning and work are increasingly becoming the norm. Homeschooling, as long as it is undertaken through a trusted and accredited provider, equips children for this future in critical ways.

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Managing Director at Optimi Home

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