



Botschaft  
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
Pretoria  
Embassy  
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(Bitte bei Antwort angeben)

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Mr. Bouwe van der Eems  
Association of Home Schooling

**PRETORIA**

**Email: [vto-ahs@diemoot.net](mailto:vto-ahs@diemoot.net)**

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Ref: Your fax and mail addressed to Ambassador Mr. Harro Adt, dated 30 November and 01 December 2006, concerning homeschooling/mandatory school attendance refers

Dear Mr. van der Eems,

thank you for your fax concerning mandatory school attendance in Germany.

In Germany, the laws on mandatory school attendance are based on the principle of the government's traditional responsibility for providing education for the people. Mandatory school attendance was first introduced in Germany in 1919 under the Constitution of the Weimar Republic to guarantee education for all, especially socially disadvantaged families. Then and now, equality is seen as an important democratic ideal. You may be aware of the fact that schooling in Germany is generally free of charge.

Article 7 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (the German Constitution) places the entire school system under the supervision of the Government and ensures that the Government makes education available to every citizen. Homeschooling may be equally effective in terms of test scores. It is important to keep in mind, however, that school teaches not only knowledge but also social conduct. Daily contact with other students from all walks of life promotes tolerance, encourages dialogue among people of different beliefs and cultures, and helps students to become responsible citizens.

The public has a legitimate interest in countering the rise of parallel societies that are based on religion or motivated by different world views and in integrating minorities into the population as a whole. If we are to achieve integration, not only must the majority of the population prevent the ostracization of religious minorities or minorities with different world views, but minorities must also remain open and engage in dialogue with those who think differently or share different beliefs. Such a dialogue with minorities is not only necessary but also enriches an open, pluralistic society.

It goes without saying that parents play an important role in the education of their children. They can and should pass on their values to their children. In this respect, mandatory school attendance should be seen not as an obstacle but as a complement. Religious conflict is prevented under the Basic Law, where the right to establish private schools is guaranteed. In addition, religion is not a mandatory subject at public schools; however, it is offered to those who decide to select it as a subject.

Generally, in Germany questions concerning homeschooling lay with the authorities of the Länder.

I hope this explanation is helpful to you in better understanding the German system of mandatory school attendance.

Sincerely

Dr. Bodo Schaff