

Considering online schooling for 2023? What you need to know...

 By [Louise Schoonwinkel](#)

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Technology is changing education in dramatic ways, resulting in parents having more options than ever before when it comes to schooling for their children. One of the big changes that we've seen in recent years has been the fast-growing number of online schools in South Africa.



Image: Supplied

Online schooling is in its early phases, but with advances in technology, we can expect it to grow. Here are four things you need to know if you're considering going this route in 2023.

Structured flexibility

While online schooling is by its nature virtual, it actually mirrors traditional school structures closer than many people think. When enrolling in an online school, your child is placed in a dedicated class, where they interact with the same children, and have a class teacher, as well as teachers for specific subjects, who guide the lessons.

Impaq's Online School, for example, sets a fixed timetable and has qualified teachers on board to guide learners through their work. The teachers ensure that learners are on track, and give regular feedback to parents. There is also collaboration among learners as they do group work.

The biggest difference between online schooling and at-school learning, is of course, that this structure occurs within your home environment, which enables your family to have more flexibility. This means that your child can continue their schooling, even when your family is travelling, and as long as you have an internet connection.

Even at home, you can plan your day more easily around your child's online schooling schedule, especially when considering that you don't have to travel back and forth to drop off and fetch your child or children.



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Online schooling is not homeschooling

Homeschooling is more self-directed, with parents or guardians taking on the responsibility of their children's education and making sure they're on track with their work and progress. At Impaq, for example, we do give our homeschooled learners detailed recommended year plans and timetables, but overall, it is self-directed learning and learners have flexibility to study at their own time, at their own pace.

Online schooling gives you the flexibility of learning from wherever you are, but with the additional structure and guidance that many parents feel they need.

Importance of curriculum and credibility

For parents considering the online schooling route, it's crucial that they find a credible provider that works with a known curriculum.

With credibility and a trusted curriculum structure, if you do decide to re-enter a traditional schooling environment again, your child will find the transition easier. Your child will also be able to work towards achieving university exemption and other tertiary education paths after school, as the curriculum is accredited and recognised.



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Regulation on its way

South Africa's government is currently working on a draft framework for online schooling. This is expected to place requirements on online school providers to be registered with the Department of Basic Education. Again, this will engender greater trust and transparency in the space.

For you as a parent, online schooling could be the ideal way to blend quality, structured learning with home-based flexibility, however it's important to know that you need to select a provider that is fully committed to complying with these

requirements and who is fully aware of these going forward.

ABOUT LOUISE SCHOONWINKEL

Managing Director at Optimi Home

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