Elective Home Education

Guidance for Parents and Carers
Introduction

If you have decided, or are considering, the option of home education for your child or children, this document is designed to provide you with some useful information to help you.

What is Elective Home Education?

Elective Home Education is when parents or carers decide to provide education for their child(ren) at home instead of sending them to school. It is not home tuition provided by the local authority.

Parents choose to educate their children at home for a variety of reasons. This is not a decision to be taken lightly as it means you will be responsible for all aspects of their education. It requires a considerable commitment of time and energy. You will not be entitled to any financial support for books or equipment, examination entries or work experience.

What is the Parents’ Responsibility?

Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring their child(ren) receive a suitable education. The majority of parents choose to use schools, but some parents exercise their responsibilities directly by providing an education based at home and/or in the community. Home educators undertake a considerable commitment and need to carefully consider all of the implications such as time requirements, planning and resources required, who will need to be involved in the education of your child, the cost involved, preparation for examination, social integration and your child’s opinion.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age “to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Suitable and efficient education is described as: equipping a child for life within the community ensuring it does not close down the child’s options for their future.

Although there is no legal definition of “full-time”, children in school normally spend between 22 and 25 hours working at school each week. Depending on the age and ability of your child, we would recommend aiming for this as a goal.
Guidance on the Law

Under the 1944 Education Act education was defined, for the first time, as compulsory. For the vast majority of families this was translated into an assumption that children had to be educated at school. However, it was, and still is ‘education’ that is compulsory, not ‘school’. The 1944 Act clearly stated that it was the duty of parents to ensure their children were educated either at school or otherwise.

The responsibility of parents is recognised in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 - previously section 36 of the Education Act 1944

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude and

b) to any special educational needs he or she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A “suitable” education is one that equips a child for life within society.

Although this responsibility is usually delegated to schools, parents may decide to educate their child/children at home. This may be for a range of reasons including religious, cultural and philosophical beliefs.

Home education can take many different forms. In some cases you might take on the task of teaching children yourselves, employ private tutors, subscribe to a distance-learning package and/or work together with other home-educating families. What is suitable for one child may not be suitable for another, but all children should make reasonable progress.

It is reasonably expected that the provision should include the following characteristics:

- consistent involvement of parents or other significant carers
- recognition of the child’s needs, attitudes and aspirations
- opportunities for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences
- access to resources/materials required to provide home education for the child – such as paper and pens, books and libraries, arts and crafts materials, physical activity, ICT and the opportunity for appropriate interaction with other children and other adults
Local Authority (LA) Involvement

The Local Authority believes in the value of school-based education which provides a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural, physical and mental development and prepares all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life, however, it respects your right as a parent and carer to choose to educate your child/children other than at school.

Section 437 of the 1996 Education Act states:

“If it appears to a Local Education Authority that a child of school age in their area is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or ‘otherwise’ they shall serve notice in writing on the parent requiring him/her to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education”

The LA’s legal duty is only concerned with children who do not appear to receive suitable education. The LA has no automatic legal right of access to the home. Parents may, if they wish to, permit access to the home, or offer an alternative venue for a meeting.

If necessary, where the LA’s assessment is that the education is not suitable they will consider for an application to the courts for an education supervision order. This will enable home education to continue under supervision and allow education staff to engage, advise, assist parents and carers.

In some exceptional cases – as a last resort – the LA will issue a school attendance order. This order specifies that a child should return to school and names the school where your child should be registered. If you do not comply with a school attendance order you will have committed an offence, unless you can demonstrate that your child is receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

National Curriculum

The national curriculum does not apply to children educated at home.

The national curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools so children learn the same things. It covers what subjects are taught and the standards children should reach in each subject.

The LA is required to monitor the number of children whose parents have arranged for them to be educated otherwise. They must also monitor the efficiency and suitability of the education. They are not expected to provide guidance in relation to curriculum or teaching approach nor are they required to fund any resources.

Education can provide opportunities for physical, intellectual, social, spiritual and emotional development.

It should be broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated:

**Broad**  It should provide the pupil with a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding

**Balanced**  There should be sufficient time for each aspect, allowing for all essential parts of learning

**Relevant**  This should be related to the pupil’s experiences and to adult life.

Learning should be matched to the pupil’s ability and aptitude. There should be opportunities to mix with, and relate to, other children, young people and adults and a possible mix of:

- national curriculum subjects
- information technology
- health education
- personal and social education
- citizenship
- careers education
- physical education

Children learn in different ways, at different times and at different speeds. It is a good idea to have a timetable or plan to show what you are doing.

It is a parent’s/ carer’s responsibility to plan and carry out your child or children’s educational experiences.
Procedures for Notifying the Local Authority or Current School

There is no legal obligation on the parent to notify the LA unless the child is already registered as a pupil, however, if parents wish to they may inform the LA directly.

If your child is attending school, you must notify your child’s Head teacher if you elect to educate your child at home. De-registration of pupils is allowed if the Head teacher has received written notification from you that your child is receiving education otherwise than at school.

When a school receives written notification of a parent’s decision to home educate, they can remove a child from the school roll and the Head teacher will inform the LA within 10 school days.

We respect your decision to educate your child at home. The Local Authority has a responsibility to check your child is receiving suitable education. The Local Authority’s Attendance and Placement Team will arrange a visit to see how you are getting on. This will usually take place within 12 weeks after you start to educate your child at home.

You may choose to meet the Attendance and Placement Officer at your home, or at a mutually convenient location, or you may choose not to meet at all. If we do not hear from you, an Attendance and Placement Officer will be in touch.

The purpose of the visit is to ensure you are aware of the requirement to offer a suitable education for your child and signpost you to any other support you may need to ensure education is suitable. We recognise that there are many, equally valid approaches to educational provision.

The Attendance and Placement Officer will be keen to discuss with you the ways in which you feel that the education you offer is the most appropriate for your child.

The Attendance and Placement Officer will need to understand how you intend to fulfil your duties under the 1986 Education Act to provide an efficient full time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs of your child.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

Parents of children with statements of special educational needs may choose to arrange education for their children otherwise than at school. However, it remains the LA’s duty to ensure that the child’s needs are met. The statement remains in force, subject to review, and the LA must ensure that parents can make suitable provision, including provision for the child’s SEN. If the parents’ arrangements are suitable, the LA is still required to review the statement annually and may amend or cease to maintain it according to normal procedure.

Should disagreement arise between parents and the LA regarding the outcome of a review the parents continue to have the right of appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal. The LA must ensure that parents are advised of this.

Parents wishing to arrange education for a child with a statement of special educational needs and who is registered at a special school must seek the consent of the LA before withdrawing their child from school.

When a child with a statement is educated other than at school, the general timetable and arrangements for the annual review of the statement will remain the same as for children in schools. However, the LA will convene the review meeting, and invite the child’s parents. The range of professionals involved may be wider and, in some respects, different from those involved in a school-based review.
Other useful sources of information

It is hoped that the following information will be of some assistance to parents in the successful education of children at home. However, the local authority does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this information or the quality of information provided by any of the contacts.

Parents choosing to educate their child at home should seriously consider the benefits of access or a computer with Internet facility. The internet enables parents and children to have access to a wide variety of information directly from websites and also from home educators from other countries.

Please note some websites may contain “chat rooms” parents should check the safety of these and ensure that children do not give personal details over the web and never arrange to meet anyone without adult supervision.

For enquiries relating to Elective Home Education please contact:

Rob Moffatt
Operational Manager, Attendance and Placement Service
rob.moffatt@northtyneside.gov.uk
0191 643 8392

Linda Sadler
Attendance and Placement Officer
linda.sadler@northtyneside.gov.uk
0191 643 8392

Home education contacts

Education Otherwise Association Limited
(A self-help group that supports home based education)
www.educationotherwise.net

Home Education UK
www.home-education.org.uk/faq-carers.htm

Home Education Advisory Service
PO Box 98
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AN
Telephone: 01786 831066
www.heas.org.uk

Home Education Resources
www.home-education-resources.co.uk

Connexions North Tyneside
For careers and post 16 advice:
www.connexions-tw.co.uk/contact-connexions-north-tyneside-1
Sources of additional information

National Curriculum Documents
- separate subject books or a complete set in one booklet, relevant for Key Stages 1 –3 can be bought from:

Stationery Office
PO Box 276
London
SW8 5DT
Tel: 0171 873 9090

Stationery Office
68 –69 Bull Street
Birmingham
B4 6AD
Tel: 0121 236 9696

Children’s Legal Centre
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
CO4 3SQ
Tel: 01206 873935 & 0845 120 2966

Advisory Centre for Education
- ACE
ACE Education Advice & ACE Education Training
36 Nicholay Road
London
N19 3EZ

Examination Boards

OCR Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
1 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1GG
Tel: 01223 552 552
www.ocr.org.uk

OCR Birmingham Office
Mill Wharf
Mill Street
Birmingham
B6 4BU
Tel: 0121 628 2950

OCR Coventry Office
(formerly Royal Society of Arts Examination Board – RSA)
Progress House
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ
Tel: 0121 628 2870

IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education)
The IGCSE Co-ordinator,
University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU
Tel: 01223 553 311

AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance)
Formerly:
Northern Examination and Assessment Board (NEAB)
Southern Examination Group (SEG)
Associated Examinations Board (AEB)
City & Guilds
Entry for GCSE and A level courses and syllabuses will be made through one of three AQA offices: Guildford, Manchester and London.

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) AEB/SEG
Stag Hill House
Guildford
Surrey
GU2 5XJ
Tel: 01483 506 506
www.aqa.org.uk

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) NEAB
Devas Street
Manchester
M15 6EX
Tel: 0161 953 1180
www.aqa.org.uk

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) City & Guilds
1 Giltspur Street
London
EC1A 9DD
Tel: 0171 294 2468
www.aqa.org.uk

A useful free booklet:
NEAB Supplementary Information for Private Candidates is obtainable from:
AQA
Devas Street
Manchester
M15 6EX
Tel: 0161 953 1180
www.aqa.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
CO4 3SQ
Tel: 01206 873935 & 0845 120 2966

Advisory Centre for Education
ACE
ACE Education Advice & ACE Education Training
36 Nicholay Road
London
N19 3EZ
Procedures for locating missing pupils and the removal of pupils from roll