



Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council

Strategy with regard to 'Elective Home Education'

Statement of Purpose

Ceredigion respects that some parents, carers, or legal guardians, choose to educate their child at home or based at home, which is otherwise than at school, for a range of reasons. This is referred to as 'Elective Home Education'.

Ceredigion recognises the right of parents to educate their child at home and will work in partnership with parents to ensure their child receives a broad, balanced and efficient education suitable to their needs.

Legal Background

The Local Authority needs to be satisfied that every child in their area is receiving suitable education (as stated in Section 437 of the Education Act 1996). However, with regard to parents who choose home-based education for their children, local authorities should not behave in a way that would be 'ultra vires' and should adopt practice that avoids the need for unreasonable public expenditure.

Duties on Schools

If a parent requests that their child's name is removed from the register as they are being educated at home, then it is the school's role to inform the Local Education Authority (LEA). Schools do not need permission from the LEA to take a pupil's name off roll.

Section 13(3) of The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 makes it the duty of the Headteacher to inform the LEA within 10 school days that a parent has confirmed in writing their decision to educate their child themselves, and to confirm the child is no longer on school roll.

Overall Practice

The LEA has a team of officers who can offer advice on Elective Home Education. The LEA has also produced an information booklet for parents who are considering withdrawing their child from school. The booklet answers many frequently asked questions and suggests other sources of advice and support.

However, the LEA does not provide any specific resources, as the responsibility for providing educational resources for children on elective home based education falls to the parent and/or guardian.

Assessment of Home Based Educational Provision

It should be noted that there is no legal requirement for children educated at home to be registered with the LEA. However once a child is known to the

LEA there is a duty to seek further information in order to be satisfied that an efficient education is being provided

Ceredigion does, therefore, keep a database of children who have been withdrawn from a school within the county or whose parents have chosen to inform the LEA that they are home educating.

It should be noted that there is no statutory requirement upon the LEA to monitor the quality and range of the education provided. However, the LEA may make informal inquiries of home educating families in order to help it to decide if there is any appearance of failure of parents' duty to provide an education suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude and any special needs he/she may have.

As a matter of course, therefore, the designated Education Inclusion Officer (EIO) will write to the parents or guardians and ask for a plan of the education otherwise provision to be submitted. The EIO may then arrange to meet the parents to help confirm the quality of the education provision.

An Educational Adviser from the LEA will usually accompany the EIO on this visit. This is also an opportunity for parents to receive suitable advice and guidance, if required.

Parents could make themselves available to meet Inspectors at any suitable venue which can include the home, or agree some other suitable means of communication, so that the Inspectors can talk with the parent and view the child's completed work. At times inspectors may have the opportunity to talk with the child, although it is noted that they have no legal right to do so.

If the education provision is deemed to be suitable and efficient then the officers may not see the family again. They may, however, feel that it is appropriate to see the family again and will arrange a review meeting after a period of 12 to 18 months

Parents will receive a copy of reports compiled as a result of any meetings.

School Attendance Orders

If the education being provided fails to attain a level that the LEA deems to be efficient and suitable, the EIO will inform the parent and may refer the matter to the Inclusion Panel for allocation of a school place or a place at one of the county's Teaching and Learning Centres for the child in question.

If the allocated school place is not taken up then the Local Authority may issue a School Attendance Order (SAO). This Order will name a school or teaching centre that the child must attend. Failing to adhere to that Order may result in the Local Authority taking further legal proceedings against the parent or guardian.

Children with Additional Learning Needs

Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where that child has additional learning needs (ALN). The fact that a child has additional learning needs is not, in itself, a reason to make specific enquires concerning the child's educational provision. However, under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 the LEA is bound to make provision for the child's special educational needs unless the parent has made "suitable arrangements".

Parents who are educating a child with ALN at home do not need to make the provision that is specified in the statement.

Working with Partners

The LEA exchanges basic information (name, address and contact details) with Careers Wales West on an annual basis with regard to young people who receive home based education who would be in Key Stage 4 if on school roll. This process ensures that they are offered the same information and advice as is available to those who attended school. This will include access to a Learning Coach as and if required.

The LEA also has an information sharing process with local partners, who may be aware of cases where it appears that children or young people are not receiving a suitable education. These partners would include Careers Wales West, Social Services, the Youth Offending Team and health professionals

Staffing

A named EIO has direct responsibility for coordinating the work with regard to Elective Home Education. However all EIOs are trained in this field and are able to advise parents, schools and other agencies when required.

Training on aspects of Elective Home Education is offered to partner agencies when requested.

Child Protection

All staff involved in working in the area of Elective Home Education will adhere to the department's policy on Child Protection.