

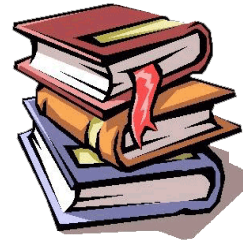


# **Elective Home Education**

## **Information for Parents**



**September 2012**



## **Elective Home Education Information Leaflet for Parents**

This booklet is designed to help parents / carers who are considering educating their child(ren) at home. This is referred to as 'education otherwise' in Section 7 of the Education Act, 1996.

Some first thoughts for you:

Do:

- Think long and hard. You alone will be responsible for ensuring that your child(ren) receives a broad and balanced education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability.
- Plan what you intend to do with your child(ren) before making a decision.
- Consider the costs involved – books, equipment, visits, tutors.
- Remember that your child(ren) may miss the social aspect of school including activities, group work, friendships, as well as access to specialised facilities and equipment.

Don't decide to educate your child at home if:

- You have not been sending your child(ren) to school on time or on a regular basis.
- Your child is putting pressure on you to allow them to stay at home
- Because you have had a disagreement with a Head teacher, member of staff or school governor.

If any of the above applies to you or your family the issues may be resolved through contacting The Inclusion Welfare Service (01352 / 704056) or the Parent Partnership Service (01352 / 706823)

What do I need to check before making a decision?

- Your child is positive about the decision
- You are convinced it is the best course of action for your child
- You have the time to devote to your child's education on a regular basis
- You have the necessary expertise to teach your child effectively
- You are prepared to buy the necessary resources or have access to them
- You have some support available
- You have the space available for a quiet working area
- There are opportunities for physical exercise
- Social experiences with other children are available

## Parents Responsibilities

All parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive an efficient, full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996). However, the law allows parents to educate their children at home instead of sending them to school, if they fulfil certain conditions. Parents may find the following guidelines useful when considering educating their children at home.

When a parent decides to withdraw their child from school to home educate, it is important that they notify the school where the child is registered. The school will then remove the child from their register and inform the local education authority (LEA). Although parents are not legally required to inform their LEA, we suggest that they do so to ensure that the LEA is aware of the change. Additionally, it is recommended that parents also inform their LEA of any significant changes in their circumstances relevant to the effective education of their child e.g. a change of address.

## LEAs' responsibilities

The LEA will maintain a register of pupils being educated at home.. This will enable Officers to make contact with parents to offer support and work in partnership.

The LEA will need to be satisfied that a child is receiving suitable education at home, and will probably ask to meet with the family in order to talk to the parents and to look at examples of work and learning. LEAs have no automatic right of access to a parent's home. However, parents may, if they wish to, permit access to their home, or offer an alternative venue for a meeting. At the initial meeting, the nature and frequency of future contact should be agreed. Where it appears to an LEA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving efficient or suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the LEA is under a duty to serve a notice on the parent requiring them to satisfy the authority that their child is receiving suitable education "otherwise than at school". If the parent's reply is unsatisfactory, or if they fail to reply, the LEA may issue a School Attendance Order (under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996). LEAs may also apply to the Court for a child assessment under the Children Act 1989, if they have reasonable cause to do so.

When alerted to a request by Parents to Home Educate, or, made aware 'otherwise', for example by our partner agencies, of Parents who may be Home Educating, particularly those children who may never have been registered at a school or have moved into County, the LEA may ask the Inclusion Welfare Officer and the School Nurse to pay a joint home visit and be the first point of contact.

## Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children and young people with statements of special educational needs can be home educated. When a child has a statement of special educational needs which names a special school, the child's name may **not** be removed from the register of that school without the consent of the education authority.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 recognises parents' right to choose to educate their child at home. Such arrangements are described as 'education otherwise than at school'. In such cases, if the child has a statement of special educational needs, it remains the LEA's duty to ensure that the child's needs are met. The statement must remain in force and the LEA must ensure that parents can make suitable, provision, including provision for the child's special

educational needs. If the parent's arrangements are suitable the LEA are relieved of their duty to arrange the provision specified in the statement. If, however, the parents' attempt to educate the child at home results in provision which falls short of meeting the child's needs, then the parents are not making 'suitable arrangements' and the LEA could not conclude that they were absolved of their responsibility to arrange the provision in the statement. Even if the LEA is satisfied, the LEA remains under a duty to maintain the child's statement and to review it annually, following the procedures set out in the Special Needs Code of Practice, 2004, Chapter Nine.

In such situations section 324 (4A) of the Education Act 1996 does not require the **name** of a school to be specified in Part 4 of the statement. Part 4 should state the type of school the LEA consider appropriate but go on to say that: "*parents have made their own arrangements under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.*" The statement can also specify any provision that the LEA have agreed to make under section 319 to help parents provide suitable education for their child at home.

**In the case of children deemed to have Special Educational Needs**, the Authority will consider each applicant separately. As such cases are generally very complex, it is impossible to deal with the wide range of circumstances in this document.

### [De-registration from school](#)

If the child is currently or has previously been educated at a maintained school and parents wish to withdraw them to home educate, it is essential that the parents inform the school in writing so that the child's name can be removed from the register. A Unique Pupil Number (UPN) will have been allocated for the child and it is important therefore for the school and LEA to be aware of any changes in case the child returns to schooling in future.

[If the child has never attended school](#) they will not have been allocated a UPN and although there is no statutory requirement for home-educating parents to register their child with LEAs, they are strongly encouraged to do so as this will enable the LEA to carry out its duties and responsibilities in a straightforward and helpful way. Information may be shared with appropriate authorities to ensure the health and well being of young people of compulsory school age. For example the Health Service may be alerted to ensure that your child benefits from regular wellbeing screening and inoculations.

### [Costs of home educating](#)

Parents are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and think carefully about the costs associated with educating children at home (especially in the longer term when they may wish to take public examinations).

There are no funds directly available from the Welsh Government for parents who decide to home-educate their children. LEAs do not have a legal duty to provide financial support to parents who choose to home educate their children.

## Safeguarding

Parents' electing to educate their child at home does not mitigate the responsibility of the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

The welfare and protection of all children, both those who attend school and those who are educated by other means, are a paramount concern and are the responsibility of the whole community. As with school educated children, child protection issues may arise in relation to home educated children. If any child protection concerns come to light in the course of engagement with children and families, these concerns will be referred to the appropriate authorities using established protocols. [Flintshire Children's Services](#) can be contacted on 01352 701000, or after 5:00pm on 08450533116. [childprotectionreferral@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:childprotectionreferral@flintshire.gov.uk)

The Welsh Assembly Government publication: Safeguarding Children, Working Together for Positive Outcomes, 2004 is available at: <http://wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/childrenyoungpeople/403821/safeguard-child-e.pdf?lang=en>

Our partner agencies, including the [School Health Service](#), and the Careers Service will be notified that you are contemplating educating your child (ren) outside the school system. For further information of what support the Health Service can offer please contact Mrs Lesley Taylor, Interim Team Manager, on 01352 - 718390. [Careers Wales](#) can be contacted on 01352 - 755798.

Some parents may choose to engage private tutors or other adults to assist them in providing a suitable education, but there is no requirement for them to do so. However, the responsibility to ensure that tutors/teachers are suitably qualified and have the required Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check rests with parents.

The Welsh Assembly Government publication: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young People in the Education Service, 2002, is available at: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110316circular3402en.pdf>. Flintshire Children's Services can be contacted on 01352 701000, or, after 5:00pm on 08450533116. [childprotectionreferral@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:childprotectionreferral@flintshire.gov.uk)

## Frequently Asked Questions about Elective Home Education

**Is it legal?** Yes. Home-Education is legal in all parts of the UK. You do not need to be a teacher or have any other special qualifications.

**How do I start?** If your child has never been to school, there is no action for you to take prior to starting home education. However, if your child is in school you must formally de-register by writing to the head teacher and say that you intend to teach your child at home.

**What happens when I withdraw my child from school?** The LEA will contact you after they receive a copy of your deregistration letter from the head teacher to discuss the educational provision you have planned.

If you refuse to respond to their informal questions LEAs are permitted under case law to assume that you are failing to provide any education and ultimately issue a School Attendance Order (which will force you to return your child to school). You may challenge the Order in court by providing evidence that proper educational provision is being made.

**Can I home educate a child with a Special Needs Statement?** Yes. There is no law prohibiting the home education of statemented children provided they are not attending a special school, in which case you will need the consent of the LEA. However, you need to be able to show that you can provide for these special needs should the LEA enquire.

**What if my child is in a special school?** If your child has special needs and attends a special school, you need agreement from the local education authority to de-register and ensure you can otherwise cater for his or her special needs.

**How does compulsory school age affect home educators?** As a parent, you must provide an education for your child during "compulsory school age" (age 5 to 16). The law says that this can be at home. Compulsory education ends on the final Friday of June in the year your child has their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Will I be checked or monitored in any way?** The local education authority (LEA) has a duty to ensure that you are providing efficient and suitable education for your child. You can provide evidence your child is receiving an efficient and suitable education by:

- Writing a report
- Providing samples of your child's work
- Inviting an LEA Officer to your home with or without your child being present.
- Meeting an LEA Officer at a neutral venue.

Many parents whose children have never been to school or have moved home since leaving school are unknown to their LEA and therefore have no monitoring. However, the Welsh Government believes that positive relationships and mutual respect between local authorities and parents is the best way of ensuring that the best interests of the child are safeguarded.

**Do I have to teach the National Curriculum?** The National Curriculum only applies to state schools. As a home educator it is up to you and your child what, how and when you study.

**Suggested characteristics of an efficient and suitable education might include:**

- ◆ Consistent involvement of parents or other significant carers
- ◆ Presence of a philosophy or ethos (not necessarily a recognised philosophy), with parents showing commitment, enthusiasm, and recognition of the child's needs, attitudes and aspirations
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- ◆ Opportunities to support the child's literacy and numerical skills

- ◆ The opportunity for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences
- ◆ Involvement in a broad spectrum of activities appropriate to the child's stage of development
- ◆ Access to appropriate resources and materials
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- ◆ The opportunity for an appropriate level of physical activity
- ◆ The opportunity to interact with other children and adults

**Can my child still take exams?** Yes, you can arrange for children to take exams as external candidates at various exam centres such as colleges of further education. You will need to contact the examination boards who should be able to provide a list of centres near your home and talk to other home educators in your area. However, there are no grants available to cover the costs.

**What should I do if I want to return my child to school?**

If at any time you wish your child to return to school full time then you need to apply to our Schools Admissions Service at County Hall, 01352 – 704068, which has detailed information on making applications for school places. Successful applications will be subject to a place being available in the appropriate year group at the school.

**What is “flexi-schooling”?** This is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school in the normal way but where the child attends the school only part time; the rest of the time the child is home-educated. "Flexi-schooling" is a legal option but you will need the agreement of the head teacher at the school concerned and, in most cases, the local education authority as well. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of "flexi-schooling" are referred to on the Home Education UK's website at [www.home-education.org.uk/flexi-school.htm](http://www.home-education.org.uk/flexi-school.htm).

### **Further Information**

You may be interested in looking at GCSE and other accreditation at:

WJEC

245 Western Avenue

Cardiff

CF5 2YX e-mail: [info@wjec.co.uk](mailto:info@wjec.co.uk) Phone: 029 2026 5000

Curriculum online([education.guardian.co.uk/curriculumonline](http://education.guardian.co.uk/curriculumonline)) Key Stage 1 & 2, Special Needs and Early Years.

Information on home education can also be found on the Parents Centre website at

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment)

[www.homeworkelephant.co.uk](http://www.homeworkelephant.co.uk) – Primary & secondary

[www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools/digger](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools/digger). for 5 – 11 year olds

[www.bbc.co.uk/learning/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/index.shtml) & [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/index.shtml)

[www.skool.co.uk](http://www.skool.co.uk)

[www.technquest.co.uk](http://www.technquest.co.uk)

Welsh Government [wag-en@mailuk.custhelp.com](mailto:wag-en@mailuk.custhelp.com)

- Welsh: 0300 0604400 or 0845 010 4400
- English: 0300 0603300 or 0845 010 3300

National Assembly for Wales, 2002, Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales.

National Assembly for Wales 34/02: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working With Children and Young Persons in the Education Service

### **Independent organisations that deal with issues surrounding Home Education**

Education Otherwise [www.education-otherwise.org.uk](http://www.education-otherwise.org.uk)

Christian Home School: [www.homeschool.co.uk](http://www.homeschool.co.uk)

Home Education UK: [www.home-education.org.uk](http://www.home-education.org.uk)

Home Education Resources: [www.home-education-resources.co.uk](http://www.home-education-resources.co.uk)

Muddle Puddle - an independent site focusing on learning for 0-8 year olds: [www.muddlepuddle.co.uk](http://www.muddlepuddle.co.uk)

The Home Service - a national Christian home education group: [www.home-service.org](http://www.home-service.org)

Home Education Advisory Service [www.heas.org.uk](http://www.heas.org.uk)

Inclusion Service, County Hall, Mold. 01352 – 704070



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