

Ian Budd
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Educating your child at home

Dear Parent

As you have decided, or considering educating your child(ren) outside the school system, the following information is intended to help you understand Flintshire Education Authority's responsibilities and the ways in which it can work with you, to ensure that your child is being appropriately educated.

1. Parental Responsibilities

I am sure that you have given much thought to the best means of educating your child, and hope that you are satisfied that the decision you have taken is in their interest. However, in order to clarify the legal requirements, under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, I am obliged to inform you that parents of children of compulsory school age have a duty "to cause (the child) to receive full time education suitable to her age, ability and aptitude (and to any special educational needs s/he may have) either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

2. Local Education Authority (LEA) Responsibilities

The Education Authority also has a clear **duty** in this matter. It is necessary for the Authority to ensure that the child is "receiving *efficient* and suitable full-time education".

The term "efficient" is not defined in the Act and it is therefore up to parent(s) to fulfil their duty according to any reasonable interpretation of the term. Certainly what is provided need **not** be the same kind of "lessons" as are provided at school, it will be up to the parent(s) to show that the programme of work is helping the child to learn and that the child **is** developing according to age, ability and aptitude. Information may be shared with appropriate authorities to ensure the health and well being of young people of compulsory school age.

3. How will the Authority assess that the education being provided is satisfactory?

The Authority will be requesting that one or two of its Officers should visit your home in order to assess that the arrangements which you are making for your child are satisfactory. This visit should be viewed in a positive light and should provide the opportunity for open discussion between yourself and the Officer(s) on the education being provided.

It may be helpful for you to be aware of some of the areas which the Officer(s) will be looking at when they visit your home:

- i) Breadth, balance and appropriateness of your curriculum
- ii) Variety of teaching/learning styles
- iii) Effectiveness of the:
 - a) Planning, organisation and delivery of your curriculum and how this relates to the National Curriculum
 - b) Monitoring of progress and achievement of your child
 - c) Range of relevant social experiences
 - d) Teaching and learning environment

4. Children with Special Educational Needs If a parent wishes to withdraw their child who is a registered pupil at a Special School, the situation is rather different. Regulation 9(2) of the education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 provides that: *The parent of a child who is of compulsory school age and is registered as a pupil at a special school in accordance with arrangements made by Local Education Authority shall not withdraw the child from that school without the consent of the Local Education Authority; but any such parent aggrieved by refusal of the Authority to give their consent may refer the question to the Secretary of State, who shall give such directions thereon he thinks fit.*

4.1 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.

4.2 Assessment. Where the Authority is of the opinion that a child has Special Educational Needs, and it is necessary for the LEA to determine the special educational provision which any learning difficulty the child may have call for, then the LEA must serve notice on the parents informing them that they are considering making an assessment. This notice will set out the procedure for the assessment and give the parents an opportunity to make representation as to whether the child should be assessed, then the LEA must proceed with the assessment (s323 Education Act 1996).

4.3 If the child has never attended school although there is currently 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.

5. What happens next?

A) Following the visit by the Officer(s) a letter will then be sent to you to confirm whether the arrangements you are making for your child's education are satisfactory or not.

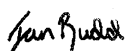
B) Our partner agencies, including the School Health Service, will be notified that you are contemplating educating your child (ren) outside the school system. For further information of the support the Health Service can offer please contact Mrs Lesley Taylor, Interim Team Manager, on 01352 718390.

6. If the arrangements are satisfactory? The Officers(s) will continue to monitor the educational provision.

7. What if the arrangements are not satisfactory? The LEA has a **duty**, if it appears to them that any child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, to serve a notice on the parent(s) requiring the parent(s) to satisfy the LEA, within a specified period, that the child is receiving such education. The period specified must be no less than 15 days (s437 Education Act 1996). If the parent(s) fail to satisfy the LEA then the Authority must serve on the parent(s) a School Attendance Order. A parent who fails to comply with an order may be prosecuted.

In order to help my Officer(s) prepare for their visit I would be most grateful if you would complete the questionnaire and return it the enclosed envelope within fourteen days of receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



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