

Pembrokeshire County Council  
Education Department

Educa

Guidance for Parents  
on  
Elective Home Education

October 2006



## Guidance for Parents on Elective Home Education

This booklet is designed to help parents/carers who are considering educating their child(ren) at home. This is often referred to as “**Elective Home Education**” or “**education otherwise**” as in Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act which states:

*“It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability (and to any special educational needs he/she may have) either by attendance at school or otherwise”.*

This means that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is educated whether in school or otherwise. This can be by means of other arrangements, including Elective Home education.

Deciding to educate your child(ren) at home is a major step, which may take up a very considerable amount of time, energy and money. It is hoped that these guidance notes will help you decide whether you can provide the best education for your child(ren) or whether your child(ren) would benefit from receiving their education at school.

### Some Considerations

- ◆ Think long and hard. You 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.
- ◆ Look at the possible costs involved – books? equipment? visits? tutors?
- ◆ Remember that your child(ren) may well miss the social side of school, extra curricular or joint activities, group work, sports activities, friendship as well as access to specialised facilities and equipment.
- ◆ Talk to the Headteacher if you are considering Elective Home Education because of a disagreement with members of school staff, Governors or because of any other concern with a school. Alternatively contact the Education Department at County Hall, Haverfordwest for help and advice.
- ◆ Contact the Education Department if your child has not been attending school regularly, as they may be able to help you resolve the situation.
- ◆ Speak to the school and the Education Department if your child is putting pressure on you to allow him/her to stay at home rather than go to school, or if he/she refuses to go. They may be able to give you help and advice on the best way to resolve these kinds of issues.

- ◆ Remember that this decision does not have to be a final 'once and for all' decision. You may well decide that you cannot teach your child as he/she get older and that you cannot make arrangements for all curriculum areas and examinations.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### **Does my child have to go to school?**

The 1996 Education Act imposes a duty on parents/carers to "secure the education of their children.....of compulsory age" (5-16 years) but this can be done "otherwise than at school".

For most children this means that they will normally go to school, but for various reasons a small number of parents decide to undertake the responsibility of educating their children outside the school system.

#### **Do I need anyone's permission?**

No. However, you need to inform the Headteacher in writing that you intend to educate your child and that you want his/her name removed from the school roll. The Headteacher will inform the LEA.

#### **What will happen if I don't notify the school or the Education Department?**

If your child is on a school register and not attending, then school and a Local Authority Pupil Support Officer will follow up that non-attendance. It remains your responsibility to notify the school.

#### **What are parents' responsibilities?**

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Act parents of children not attending a school need "to cause (the child) to receive efficient full time education suitable to his (or her) age, ability and aptitude (and to any special educational needs he (or she) may have) either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

#### **Does this mean I have to follow the National Curriculum?**

No. You do not have a legal duty to provide your child with the National Curriculum although you may find it useful to know what it is and to follow it if practical. It will provide you with a useful framework for levels of achievement across the subjects. It may also help if your child returns to school in the future.

Currently, those subjects included in the National Curriculum are English, Mathematics and Science as core subjects, with Technology, History, Geography, Art, Music, Physical Education, Welsh, Modern Foreign Language (from age 11) and Religious Education (unless parents exercise their right to withdraw a child).

Many of the commercially produced workbooks available from bookshops now relate their content to the National Curriculum.

### **Do I have to work school hours?**

No. Full time does not mean necessarily working school hours although some parents may wish to provide education in a more formal and structured manner. Other parents may decide to make more informal provision that is responsive to the needs of their child/ren. The Education Department will offer some general advice and suggestions about resources, methods and materials if required.

### **How should I organise the teaching and learning?**

There is no one approach or style that can be recommended but it may be reasonable to include:

- Development of numeracy and literacy skills suitable to your child's age and ability
- Opportunities for your child to be stimulated by his/her learning experiences
- A broad spectrum of activities to cater for wide varieties of interests
- Access to resources and materials
- The opportunity to interact with other children and adults.
- IT opportunities and access.

### **Do I have to provide all the education?**

No. But it is your responsibility to ensure that an efficient programme of work is provided. The parent or parents can do this. You can also use suitable friends or pay for specialist teaching. However it is your responsibility to ensure that any tutors/teachers are suitable to teach your child(ren). This may be by ensuring they have a current CRB check. You are also advised to remain at home when a tutor is teaching your child.

### **Will the Local Education Authority give me any support?**

An Elective Home Education Advisor will offer to visit to discuss provision and offer advice if required. The Local Authority seeks to work co-operatively with parents to develop mutual understanding and trust that will safeguard children's educational outcomes.

### **Can I educate my child part-time at home and in school?**

If you choose elective home education your child will be removed from the school register. For 15/16 years olds, some Colleges of Further Education will support 'Elective Home Education' by allowing access to courses, but the financial responsibility for these courses remains with the parents.

### **Can I change my mind?**

Yes. You can seek a place in a school at any time and inform the Education Services of your intention to enrol your child at a school. Normal Local Authority Admissions procedures will apply. These can be found in the School Information document published annually by the County Council.

### **Will the Local Education Authority want to check that the provision is satisfactory?**

The Elective Home Education Advisor would like to visit/meet you annually and will always provide a report, which will be sent to you following his/her visit. Some parents prefer to write a report or provide work samples. If the Advisor feels there are any areas of the educational provision that need attention he/she will discuss this with you and may offer advice and suggestions. He/She would offer to re-visit with a view to helping improve your child's provision.

### **What if the Local Education Authority has concerns about the provision?**

Every effort will be made to resolve issues about provision through discussion before any formal proceedings are initiated. If there are doubts as to whether provision is adequate the Authority may choose to investigate further. If discussion fails you will receive a report from the LA outlining the concerns and reasons for concluding that the provision is unsuitable. It may be necessary for the Authority to serve you with a School Attendance Order, which allows you 15 days to provide the Authority with evidence of suitable education. If at any time, concerns are raised regarding the safety or welfare of the child/ren, a referral may be considered under the All Wales Child Protection procedures

### **What would be wise to consider before making a decision?**

- ◆ You have the time to devote to your child's education
- ◆ You are convinced it is the best course of action for your child
- ◆ There are opportunities for independent study and possible quiet study areas
- ◆ There are opportunities for physical exercise

- ◆ You are prepared to buy the necessary resources or have access to them
- ◆ Your child is positive about the suggestion
- ◆ You feel confident to teach your child effectively
- ◆ You have some support available
- ◆ Social experiences with other children are available

**For more information and sources of help and advice:**

Cheryl Loughlin  
Professional Officer-Pupil Support Service  
Pembrokeshire Education Service  
County Hall  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 1TP

Telephone no: 01437 776549

**Other Contacts:**

**Home Education Advisory Service**

Box 98  
Welwyn Garden City,  
Herts  
AL8 6AN  
[www.heas.org.uk](http://www.heas.org.uk)

**Education Otherwise**

Education Otherwise  
PO Box 325  
Kings Lynn  
PE34 3XW

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