



Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

A Guide for Parents and Carers regarding Elective Home Education

July 2012

Elective Home Education

Introduction

This guide provides information and advice to parents on elective home education. The education of a child is a huge responsibility and a decision not to be taken lightly.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “*the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age shall cause her/ him to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*”. Most parents discharge this responsibility by sending their children to mainstream school.

However, some parents decide that Elective Home Education (EHE) is a more suitable option for their child. Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority (LA) supports the right of parents to educate their child at home.

The information in this guide is aimed at providing detailed information regarding responsibilities of parents, schools and the Local Authority to help parents/carers to make an informed choice.

Parental responsibility:

If you elect to home educate your son/daughter you will be required:

- To submit written confirmation of your intention to home educate advising the headteacher of the school which your child attends the date from which the changes will take place and the reason for your decision.

- If your child has never attended a school parents should inform the Authority of their decision to home educate
- To recognise any special needs your child may have
- Obtain the written consent of the headteacher and Local Authority if your child is on the register of a special school
- To provide a suitable education

There is no definition of “suitable education” however as a guide it should be an education that prepares your child for life in a modern society and allows them to reach their potential. As a good practice guide it should include:

- A broad and balanced curriculum
- English, mathematics and ICT (information and communications technology)
- Opportunities for social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cultural development
- Relevant information to enable the child/young person to make suitable choices about their life and future.

Parent/Carers should also consider the **Children and Young People’s Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2011-14**, which highlights eight core aims that are deemed important to children and young people:

- Have best start in life
- Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
- Enjoy the best possible health, are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
- Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
- Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised
- Have a safe home and community, which supports physical and emotional well-being

- Are not disadvantaged by poverty
- Receive services from skilled and competent staff

Schools responsibility:

If you elect to home educate your child the school is required to:

- Advise the Local Authority of your intention to provide home education for your child and the proposed educational input
- Remove your child's name from the school register on the date given by you
- Update the school 2 school website with their CTF (common transfer file)
- Inform the Local Authority of parents decision within 10 working days of receipt of the written confirmation

Local Authority responsibility:

If you elect to home educate Rhondda Cynon Taf will:

- Acknowledge in writing your intention to home educate your child within 10 school days of receipt of the letter
- Consider and review the implications of your request to home educate if your child has a statement or is registered with a special school
- Liaise with colleagues in Children Services if your child is on the child protection register or is a Child in Need and seek their opinion on your request.
- Invite parents to meet with a member of the Access and Inclusion team shortly after the start of EHE (this is not a compulsory meeting)

- Request as a minimum to meet annually with you either at your home or elsewhere, with or without your child, to offer support and discuss your child's progress
- Request on a regular basis a written report or sample of work to assess and evaluate the work completed. This material is especially important if you choose not to meet directly with a LA representative to discuss your child's EHE status
- In accordance with Sections 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 intervene if it appears that your child is not receiving an "*efficient, suitable full-time education*"
- Request to share personal data of your child (ie name, date of birth and contact details) with relevant organisations to ensure they receive the support, advice and services they are entitled to. This will include Careers Wales and Health Service (in particular school nurse), Youth Services and other services.
- Provide information regarding the support available from the Services for Young People in your area, your child is still entitled to access the help, support, activities and qualifications undertaken by the youth team, including E3 activities, youth centres and detached youth team.
- The LA will aim to support parents in other aspects of education such as giving advice about examination arrangements or access to central services such as Educational Psychology

Frequently Asked Question and Answers:

- *Is it legal?*

Yes it is legal to elect to home educate your child. Parents do not need to be a qualified teacher to home educate.

- *Will I receive any financial help?*

There are no funds available from the Local Authority to assist with books, resources or equipment.

- *Do I need to teach the National Curriculum?*

The National Curriculum only applies to state schools. As a home educator it is up to you what areas of work are completed. However, the National Curriculum can provide a good basis on which to base your EHE programme. There is no requirement to observe the school hours, days or terms or to follow a fixed timetable. There is no requirement for parents to assess their children although the LA can assist with sitting public examinations if this is required.

- *At what age is schooling compulsory?*

The law requires a child to be educated from the start of the term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year they reach 16 years old.

- *Can my child still take exams?*

Yes you can arrange for them to be taken as an external candidate at various examination centres, for example your local school or college. Help regarding approved centres can be obtained from Home Education Link Officer. However, the costs must be met by the parents.

- *Can you home educate a child with a statement of educational needs?*

Yes parents can elect to home educate their child providing they do not attend a special school, however you will be asked by the Local Authority how you intend to meet their special needs as outlined in their statement.

- *What if my child attends a special school?*

If your child is registered with a special school you will need to obtain permission from the Headteacher and Director of Education and Lifelong Learning before de-registration, checks will be completed to ensure you can cater for all his/her special needs.

- *As a home educator, will I be monitored?*

Yes the Local Authority has a responsibility to ensure that parents are providing an efficient, suitable full-time education. There is no legal requirement for parents to engage with the Local Authority, however it would be in the best interest of your son/daughter to keep communication links open. The Authority will request samples of work or a written report and will offer to meet with parents to discuss progress as a minimum on an annual basis. The LA will communicate with you to explain how it would like to keep in touch with you.

- *What happens if the Authority is not happy with my provision?*

In accordance with Sections 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 Rhondda Cynon Taf can intervene if it appears that your child is not receiving an efficient, suitable full-time education. A School Attendance Order can be served. This allows parents 15 days to provide information as requested to evidence the work completed to ensure the suitability of the education they are providing. If parents fail to satisfy the Authority that suitable education is being provided, parents can by law be required to register their child at a mainstream school.

- *What if parents change their minds?*

Should you decide you wish your child to return to mainstream education please contact the Admissions Officer for Rhondda Cynon Taf . In the event that your child re-enters the school system, Officers will endeavour to register them to their original school (if requested) or at the closest local school however there are no guarantees that a place will be available.

- *Is flexi schooling an option?*

The Authority will consider parental requests to flexi school their child. Flexi school enables your child to attend school for certain days or lessons on a part-time basis.

- *Do you complete CRB police checks for potential home educators?*

No. if a parent elects to employ a tutor to provide home education then they are responsible for ensuring that the person is a suitable candidate to have access to their child. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure appropriate references and criminal record bureau CRB checks are completed.

- *Can my son/daughter access extra curricular activities?*

Yes, the child/young person and parents will receive information regarding the Services for Young People available within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Home educated learners are entitled to access support including E3+ activities, youth centre, accredited learning and the detached youth centre.

Finally:

- Please consider carefully before electing to home educate your child. It is a great responsibility and takes a considerable amount of time, commitment and energy.
- Plan how and what you are going to teach your child
- Consider the cost implications required to purchase books, resources and equipment
- Ensure your child has the opportunity to meet and mix with other children, attending school has an important social aspect additional to the learning element
- Keep your options open and liaise with the Local Authority to ensure your child accesses the extra curricular services and support to which they are entitled.

Contact information

You may find the following contacts useful:

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Mountain Ash

CF45 4UQ

Telephone: 01443 744357

Services for Young People

Youth Information Team

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

Mountain Ash

CF454UQ

Telephone: 01443 744101

Website: www.WICID.tv www.finditrct@rctcbc.gov.uk

South Wales Home Educators Network (SWHEN)

SWHEN

31, Coed yr Esgob,

Llantrisant,

Rhondda Cynon Taff

CF72 8EL

E-mail: ContactSWHEN@aol.com

Website: www.swhen.netfirms.com

Education Otherwise Advisory Service

Home Education Advisory Service

PO Box 98

Welwyn Garden City

Hertfordshire

AL8 6AN

Website: www.heas.org.uk

Education Otherwise

PO Box 7420

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N9 9SG

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