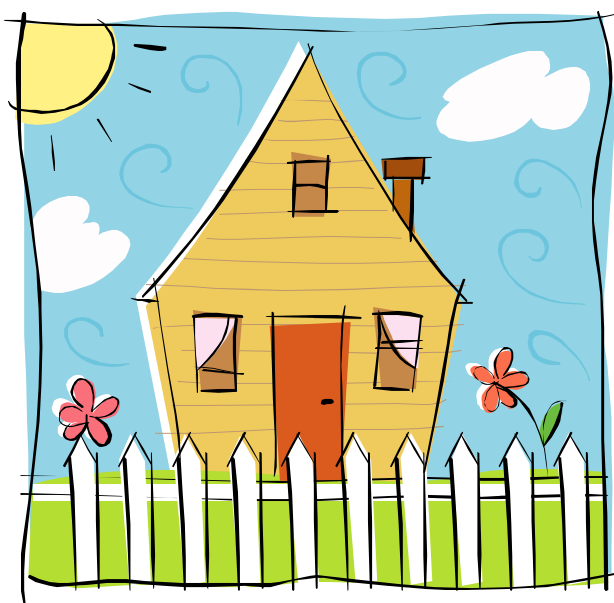


Children and Young People Service

**Education Otherwise Than At
School**

E.O.T.A.S.

Guidance for Parents



Introduction

So you have decided on, or are considering, educating your child outside the school system? These notes of guidance have been put together to be helpful to those families who are thinking about educating their child or children at home. The information which follows should clarify your and Wrexham Education Authority's responsibility to ensure that your child has a suitable education.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Senior School Improvement Officer with responsibility for education other than at school:

Address: Children and Young People Service
16 Lord Street
Wrexham
LL11 1LG

There are several common questions which families ask when they are considering home education. The following examples are meant to help you come to an informed decision as to whether home education is an appropriate alternative to school for your child.

Do children have to go to school?

It is statutory for children to attend Primary School from the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday. Parents would not however be able to defer entry beyond this point, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted. It should also be noted that the statutory Foundation Phase 'Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7 year olds in Wales' is a continuous teaching and learning framework which commences the term following a child's third birthday. Deferment would lead to a gap in this provision causing a lack of continuity in a child's early education.

The Education Act 1996 (Section 7), previously the Education Act 1944 Section 36 states that it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate education for their children. This can be done either by regular attendance at school, or 'otherwise'. For most children in Wrexham County Borough this means that they will attend the school which serves their local community, but for a wide variety of reasons a small minority of parents decide to take on the 'duty to educate' their children themselves.

The Local Authority also has other statutory responsibilities to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.

Recommendation 24 of the Climbié report states that where, during the course of an assessment, social services establish that a child of school age is not attending school, they must alert the education authorities and satisfy themselves that, in the interim, the child is subject to adequate day care arrangements (paragraph 4.143).

What is a parent's actual duty?

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Act it is the parent's duty:

"To cause (the child) 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".

What is "efficient" and "suitable" education?

The courts have defined a 'suitable education' as one which prepares a child for life in modern civilised society and enables him or her to achieve his or her potential. They have also ruled that education is suitable if it equips a child for life within the community to which he or she belongs, as long as this does not reduce the child's chance to adopt some other form of life in later years, should he or she wish to do so. This is important where the family have particular religious or cultural beliefs

What is the National Curriculum and does it apply to me?

A non-statutory *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* has been developed in order to provide guidance about continuity and progression in developing thinking, communication, ICT and number for learners from 3–19. At Key Stages 2 and 3, learners should be given opportunities to build on skills they have started to acquire and develop at Foundation Phase. Learners should continue to acquire, develop, practise, apply and refine these skills through group and individual tasks in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. Progress can be seen in terms of the refinement of these skills and by their application to tasks that move from: concrete to abstract; simple to complex; personal to the 'big picture'; familiar to unfamiliar; and supported to independent and interdependent.

For 14–19 learners, the framework should provide the basis for making effective progress in these skills, which can be assessed through a range of qualifications, including Key Skills. The Cross cutting skills are developing Thinking, Communication, ICT, Number. The curriculum should give pupils the opportunity to learn within the context of a Curriculum Cymreig, Personal & Social Education, Careers and the World of Work.

The National Curriculum does not apply to children educated at home but you may wish your child to enter or re-enter state education at some point in the future. Reintegration will be easier if you take the requirements of the National Curriculum into account. The 1988 Education Reform Act states that every maintained school will, in future, be obliged by law to provide a basic curriculum consisting of religious education and, for pupils of compulsory school age, the National Curriculum.

The curriculum in all of Wrexham's County Borough schools must:

- Be broad and balanced;
- Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and in society;
- Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The following subjects are compulsory in Wrexham County Borough schools:-

- Religious education (unless parents exercise their right to withdraw their child)
- English/Welsh
- Mathematics
- Science
- Welsh 2nd language
- Technology
- Information technology
- History
- Geography
- Art
- Music
- Physical education
- A modern foreign language (between the ages of 11-14)
- Personal Social Education (PSE)
- Careers – work related education

It is clear that young children acquire their learning in many different ways; in the primary school the curriculum will possibly not be taught as separate subjects but will be delivered through integrated and whole-curriculum activities. In secondary schools it is most likely that the subjects will be taught separately.

There is no single form of education; children learn in many different ways, at different times and speeds and from different people. Education does not always need to follow a set plan of "lessons" or even a "timetable", but it is a good idea to have a longer term plan and consider the ways in which you will deliver your curriculum. But what you teach (or leave out) and how your child learns is up to you, as long as you can demonstrate that you are providing an efficient and suitable education.

How do I go about it?

If your child is of pre-school age then you need not do anything - though it would help us considerably in keeping track of those who are being educated at home if you were to write to the Chief Learning & Achievement Officer stating that you intend educating your child (name, date of birth, address and

telephone number), at home from a particular date.

If you are withdrawing your child from a school and he/she is between the ages of 3 and 16 simply write to the Headteacher of your school stating that you intend to educate your child at home.

Once you have informed the Headteacher of your intention to educate your child at home they will inform the Chief Learning & Achievement Officer. We would ask that you make an appointment to speak to your schools Educational Social Worker who will provide you with an information pack and various forms for you to complete in order to secure support from Local Authority Officers. Support request forms should be completed and returned to Children & Young People Service within three weeks for the attention of the Senior School Improvement Officer (Home Education), Children & Young Peoples Service, 16 Lord Street, Wrexham, LL11 1LG.

What support will be offered by Children & Young People Services?

Wrexham County Borough Council is committed to supporting all of its learners whatever the setting. We want all of our learners to succeed and be provided with the skills they need for the 21st century. To this end we would like to support and your child. This can include Officer visits however, you would need to complete the consent form prior to these taking place.

Once we have received your completed form you will be contacted in order to arrange a meeting to discuss your plans for your child's education. Although authorities are not legally obliged to provide any resources for young people educated at home, they may choose to do so, particularly where there are minimal resource implications. In all cases Officers will contact you to arrange an initial meeting where we will offer advice and support and determine the pattern of future support. They will check that you have all the information from the Local Authority and that you understand the monitoring procedure for home education.

The purpose of this meeting is to monitor the quality and range of the curriculum being offered by you. The focus of the meeting will be issues arising from the questionnaire, which you will have completed. Frequently the following questions are used as part of the meeting:

How is your child going to study?

It is important to consider not only what your child will learn but how they learn and what approaches suit them best. Not all learning comes from books or printed sources and where appropriate children should make use of a variety of media, the Internet and educational visits.

Children also need to acquire skills as well as knowledge. For example they need to be encouraged to develop discussion skills, problem solving skills and social skills. Children ought to take part in physical education, games and practical work so that they can develop a range of physical skills.

Often learning involves children taking an active role in their own work. They carry out experiments, conduct surveys, draw pictures from real life, interview members of the public and make studies at real locations.

Remember that good teaching includes regular feedback. Your child needs to know when something has been done well and, if it has not, how it could be improved. Successes and failures form the framework of the learning process and an effective programme recognises this fact.

Some other points to consider:



Where will your child work?

- Is there a good flat surface to work at?
- Is there somewhere to store books and work?
- Is the working area free from noise and other distractions?
- Is the space available for your child to work at when it is needed?
- Is it warm, light and tidy? How well organised will you be?
- Is there a clear written timetable/programme of study and if there is, do you keep to it?
- Do you keep a record of work that has been covered and do you have plans for future work?
- Is each piece of work dated and clearly laid out?
- Is the relationship between different tasks established?
- Are folders and books well maintained so that work is valued and preserved?
- What resources will you use?
- Do you have a good supply of stationery such as exercise books, paper, pens, pencils and rubbers?
- Does your child have access to basic equipment and other learning tools such as paints, brushes, a pair of compasses, a calculator and a dictionary?
- Do you have appropriate textbooks for the subjects being studied?
- Have you checked that the books and other materials are well matched to your child's age and ability?
- Do you have access to a computer, printer, digital camera (if appropriate)?
- Do you make use of TV and radio schools' broadcasts, including means of recording (if appropriate)?
- Do you make use of your local library?
- Have you used the local area as a starting point for learning (buildings for history, country walks for geography, etc.)?
- Do you take your child to museums and art galleries? The LA consultant will ask about the resources you are providing and be able to give some limited advice if required.
- Will your programme allow later access to further/higher education if appropriate?
- Will a wide range of career opportunities be available?
- How do you provide for your child's physical development?

- How do you arrange for your child to meet and socialise with others?

Does your child have Special Educational Needs?

If so you will need to take special care in planning the work programme so that his/her special educational needs are met. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, the Statement will continue and the special educational needs described in it will have to be met. The LA has to monitor the programme carefully and there will be an annual review. Other agencies such as the Health Authority and the Social Care Directorate may be involved if appropriate to the support of your child.

During the meeting your plans for your child's education will be discussed with you in full. If the Officers feels you are not providing a suitable and appropriate education for your child you will be told the reasons and given the opportunity to put things right, within a mutually agreed timescale between yourself and the Officer.

Visits by Local Authority Officers

What kind of evidence will satisfy the Local Authority?

It would be helpful if you could provide details of your education arrangements on the accompanying questionnaire using extra sheets if necessary. Any further discussion will be based on the information. After visiting you at home, the Inspector-Advisor will write a short report and send you a copy.

Your timetable does not have to be rigid or detailed, but you should be able to show that you are serious and systematic about what you are doing. It is your responsibility to plan and carry out your arrangements. You should be aware that Wrexham Local Authority cannot undertake either to direct your child's learning or to provide books or other equipment.

It can be, as noted above, a written programme of work. It might be an interview with a parent or parents. The best evidence, of course, is a combination of the above plus a discussion with the child. The evidence is that which would persuade a reasonable person. It needs to indicate that the child is receiving full time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude. 'Full time' education is 25 hours of teaching per week.

For example, this includes:

- A statement from the parents describing their educational philosophy and the practical arrangements for implementing it.
- Evidence of the qualifications or experience that parents have to educate their children at home.
- Reports by educational professionals who have visited the home and formed the opinion that the child is being suitably educated there.
- Reports by tutors, family members, friends or others that have been or will be involved in the child's education - describing their role.

- Samples of work produced by the child while being educated at home.

We have a statutory responsibility for the welfare of your children. This means that during our visit we will be completing a comprehensive assessment taking into account your child's holistic needs. This will include their overall welfare and social needs.

If I choose to educate my child at home, how often will the Local Authority check?

Normally, if the Local Authority is fully satisfied with the first evidence, the frequency of the visit will be on the basis of one authority support visit each year to discuss your child's progress. However, if any doubts are expressed or other factors are determined then the programme of review will be more frequent.

As your child will no longer be attending school for their education can end social opportunities, inoculations, careers advice, one of our Officers who visits will be able to provide you with this information.

What happens if the Chief Learning & Achievement Officer is not satisfied?

Then we will tell you that we are not satisfied and we will say what it is that does not satisfy us. This will be by letter and will give you a reasonable period of time to improve the situation.

And then?

If we are still not satisfied, the Local Authority will require you to register your child at school or return your child to school if he/she is already registered. But, we would stress that this will only happen if we are convinced that you are not educating your child according to his/her age, ability and aptitude - and we hope by detailed discussion that we will be able to show you exactly why this is so.

Child Welfare

As is the case with children in schools, if any child welfare concerns come to light in the course of engagement with children and families, these concerns should immediately be referred to the appropriate statutory authorities/agencies.

F.A.Q.'s

“What if my child is registered at a special school?”

Here the situation is rather different.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 ensures that it is possible for a child with a formal statement of special educational need to be home educated.

This would still involve LBWF in an annual review of a child's educational progress and needs. You are advised to discuss your case with either the SEN Manager or SEN Inclusion Officer.

“Can my child return to school?”

Parents are able to decide with their child that there should be a return to school. The normal process of approaching a school in the locality would apply. It would also be important to inform our Admissions Department of your intention, especially if a school place has been found.

The Admissions Department will transfer your child's name from the Home Education Register to a school register when the Headteacher and Governors have agreed a place.

“Can my child sit external examinations?”

Public examinations and regular testing are available to children in our schools and colleges. In our view, children educated at home should not be deprived of these opportunities of assessing their progress. However, as you have chosen to educate your child at home the examination fees would be your responsibility. Although the Local Authority is happy to advise you it would still be your responsibility to secure an examination centre.

“What if I don't inform anybody in authority, but just keep the child out of school?”

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, the Authority must satisfy itself that parents are fulfilling their duties. If you do not provide any evidence of this either in written form or by discussions with the Authority's Officers, the Authority may conclude that your child is not being effectively educated and we would then take steps to get the child back to school.

“Where can I obtain further advice?”

Parents can get together with others in the locality to share ideas and teaching and learning materials.

Other **possible** contacts include:

Careers Wales Egerton House Rhosddu Rd Wrexham LL11 1EQ Tel: 01978 317015 E-mail: new.careerswales.com	AVOW Ty AVOW 21 Egerton Street Wrexham LL11 1ND Tel: 01978 312556 E-mail: info@avow.org
Children & Young People Service School Admissions 16 Lord Street Wrexham LL11 1LG Tel: 01978 298812	Wrexham Family Information Service (WFIS) Wrexham Library Rhosddu Road Wrexham LL11 1AU Tel: 01978 292094

In Summary

The Authority wants to provide high quality support for all children receiving home education. In Wrexham we would hope to work in partnership with you in achieving the best support for you and your child. We will provide advice on appropriate resources, aid with information sharing, support in producing a suitable programme, information about extra curricular activities and the use of ICT.

We would also hope that you would engage with our support services (such as our Education Social Work Team please see below information regarding this) who can signpost you towards additional support and information.

Do think long and hard about your decision:

It is a great responsibility and a considerable commitment of time and energy.

DO:

- Plan what you intend to do with your child before making a decision.
- Look at the costs involved - Books? Equipment? Visits? Your time?
- Plan how you will provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social activities with other children and groups. The impetus which comes from such activities may provide a useful social setting and improve your child's motivation to succeed with his or her learning.
- Keep your options open as your child's needs may change at different ages and stages. We will always be willing to offer a place for your child at a school that can provide for his/her needs.

- Remember that it may be very difficult to secure a school place the older your child gets, for example as they approach the time for their GCSE's.
- Take note that neither the LA or reimburses parents who secure places at a further education college, so if it your intention to pursue this course of action, do make financial provision for it.
- Remember that your child has a voice and their wishes and feelings about their education should be given due regard.

DON'T decide to educate your child outside of the system because of the some of the following situations:

- As a way of getting out of short-term quarrels with a Headteacher or a school. A parent should speak with the Headteacher where there are issues. However, if this does not result in a satisfactory solution all schools in Wrexham will have a complaints procedure to follow.
- Simply as a means of waiting until a preferred choice of school becomes available. There can be no guarantee of a place at a preferred school becoming available, irrespective of where you live.
- As a means of avoiding an on-going assessment for special educational needs. This is likely to disadvantage your child and could result in delay in their receiving appropriate support to meet their educational needs.
- As an excuse when a child has not been attending school regularly. If a child experiences trouble attending school, home education will not necessarily help to increase their interest in learning.
- As a final and once and for all decision. Parents might manage quite well while their children are younger but subject expertise needed for older children and GCSE subjects can be more problematic.

Achieving Quality Learning for Children and Young People in Wrexham
Cyflawni Dysgu o Ansawdd ar gyfer Plant a Phobl Ifanc un Wrecsam

Proposal by Parents to Educate their Child at Home



Form G

Please complete this questionnaire as fully as possible:

1. Name of Pupil: _____ Date of Birth: _____

2. Name of School (if applicable) _____

3. Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) proposing to educate the child at home: _____

4. Address at which education will take place: _____

5. Home address (if different from above): _____

_____ Tel No: _____

6. Please give a brief outline of the educational provision for your child at home. This will give the LA Officer(s) common ground for discussions with you and your child when they meet.

Signed:
(Parent/Guardian) _____ **Date:** _____

Please return completed form to Mr Dafydd Ifans,
Children & Young People Service, 3rd Floor Offices, Lambpit Street, Wrexham. LL11 1AR