



[Home](#) » Suitable Education in New Guidance

# Suitable Education in New Guidance

THIS WAS WRITTEN IN 2023. THE PAGE WAS ARCHIVED AT THE END OF MARCH 2026 [LINK]

**Non-statutory guidance on home education has been in place since 2007.** The current guidance for England was introduced in 2019 and the Department for Education is considering making some changes. The introduction to **the new draft guidance** says *“This guidance represents the Department’s interpretation of how the current legal framework affects the provision of home education. The guidance is not intended to provide legal advice. It does not create new powers or duties”*

**The new guidance is not ready to be used. It is still at the draft stage.** The consultation closed 18.1.24. The current guidance remains in force until such time as a final new version is published. The current guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

**The current legal framework is the 1996 Education Act** which sets out the elements of a suitable education when a child is educated otherwise than at school. Where parents take responsibility for their child’s education themselves – rather than sending them to school – this is commonly known as elective home education although the phrase does not appear in law.

**There is no need for the Department to “interpret” suitable education** since the law is already abundantly clear and specific; education is to be suitable to the child’s age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.

## Suitable Education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 explains what is meant by suitable education for a child educated “otherwise” than in school. “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either ...

[Continue reading](#)



Ed Yourself

The consultation document accompanying **the new draft guidance** confirms that *“A suitable education is one that is suitable to a child’s age, ability, aptitude and SEN”* but goes on to say *“we have made several edits to the guidance to aid in the understanding of suitable education and how to ensure its provision.”*

**The key issue is therefore to decide whether the edits help** and I would argue that they do **NOT**. The problems start right at the beginning where **the draft guidance** says *“suitable education” will be used as shorthand to include all element of section 7 of the Education Act 1996: suitable, efficient, and full-time”*

**Clearly, shorthand does NOT aid understanding** because by **shortening it** to *“suitable education”* the Department then feels the need to EXPAND and SUGGEST and RECOMMEND, all of which makes **the new draft guidance** much longer and more contentious and unclear than it need be, needing more and more unpacking such as the introduction of Case Studies.

The unhelpful shorthand phrase “suitable education” appears 36 times in [the draft guidance](#), often with wordy thoughts on how it might be interpreted. The word **suitability** crops up 27 times in [the new draft guidance](#), in relation to “*assessing suitability*” or concerns as to suitability.

## Current Guidance

### Guidance

The current version of home education guidance for local authorities in England was published in April 2019. The emphasis is on ensuring LAs are fully aware of existing powers and duties. The Home Education Guidance does not introduce any new powers or duties for local authorities to monitor the suitability of home education nor any ...

[Continue reading](#)



**Ed Yourself**