

Elective home education

Information for parents and carers

01/2019

CHILDREN'S & ADULTS' SERVICES



This information is to help parents/carers [parents] who are considering educating their child/children [child] at home. Further information can be sought from the organisations listed at the end of this leaflet.

Deciding to educate your child at home

Ealing Local Authority [LA] believes in the value of school-based education, such an education provides a broad and balanced curriculum and encourages social development. We do however also respect the right of parents to choose to educate their child at home.

Elective home education is a major undertaking and may take up a considerable amount of your time, energy and money. It is hoped that the information in this leaflet will help you to decide whether you can provide the best education for your child or whether your child would benefit from receiving their education at school, in partnership with you.

The LA recommends that you do not choose to educate your child at home just because:

- You are disappointed at not having gained a place at a particular school.
- You are having difficulty ensuring your child attends school.
- You have had a disagreement with the school or a teacher over your child.

The law

In England, education is compulsory but school is not, the law allows you to educate your child at home instead of sending them to school. The responsibility of parents in elective home education is established in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996:

“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 by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

A child is of compulsory school age when they reach the age of 5 and ceases to be so on the school leaving date in the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Although not defined in the Education Act, in case law the term ‘efficient and suitable education’ have been broadly described as follows:

- ‘efficient’ - ‘achieving that which it sets out to achieve’.
- ‘suitable’ - ‘primarily equipping a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child’s options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so’.

How much will it cost?

You should think carefully before deciding to educate your child at home and plan ahead for the costs involved, especially in the longer term when your child may wish to take public examinations. A variety of educational information is however freely available and accessible via the Internet or the library.

If you choose to educate your child at home, you assume financial responsibility for their education, Ealing LA does not provide any financial support to home educators.

What should I do next if I decide to educate my child at home?

If your child has never been to school you do not have to do anything before starting home education. If your child is currently registered at a school you will need to notify the school in writing. The school will then remove your child from their register and inform the LA.

If your child attends a particular school because of a ‘school attendance order’, you must get the order revoked by the LA on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive a suitable education otherwise than at school before your child can be deleted from the school’s register and educated at home.

If you decide to educate your child at home, whether they have been registered at a school or not it would be useful if you could let us know so that we are aware of the situation and can support you in a straightforward and helpful way (see contact details at the end of this leaflet). Once the LA has been made aware that you are educating at home, we will contact you to confirm your details and your child’s name will be added to our database of children educated at home.

What happens when I withdraw my child from school?

The local authority makes informal enquiries of all parents who are known to be educating their children at home to establish that a suitable education is being provided.

Feedback indicates that most families welcome the opportunity to discuss and review the education provision they are making and our Education Adviser can visit you and your child either at home or at a venue of your choice and offer advice and support. Alternatively, you could choose to send us your educational philosophy (see below) including samples of work, again, the Educational Adviser will review the document and offer advice and support.

If you choose to prepare an educational philosophy, you may find the following information and link helpful: <https://www.educationotherwise.org/images/downloads/infosheets/Educational-Philosophies-England-and-Wales.pdf>

Your educational philosophy, in the form of a belief statement, resources and report, should give all the information needed in order to see whether it appears that your children are receiving efficient full time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability:

- It sets out the beliefs by which you live, thereby asserting your right to educate your children in accordance with your religious or philosophical convictions.
- It says what you want for your children, which means that your educational provision can be judged efficient because it is achieving what it sets out to achieve.
- It gives further information about what you are providing for your children's education, and gives a picture of how your home education works in practice.

Although the LA does not have a statutory duty to routinely monitor the quality of home education, we do have the right to intervene if it appears that a child might not be receiving an efficient and suitable education.

If, based on the information we have, there is nothing to suggest that the education provision is unsuitable, the Education Adviser will contact you simply to offer the support outlined above. If however, based on the information we have, it appears that the education provision is not suitable, we will contact you and it would be sensible for you to provide us with information that would, on the balance of probabilities, convince a reasonable person that an efficient and suitable education is being provided.

What happens next?

If a meeting takes place, or you send the Education Adviser your educational philosophy and there is nothing to suggest that the education provision is unsuitable, we will contact you again a year later in order to offer guidance and provide advice and support if required. However, we would ask you to let us know in the meantime of any significant changes in your circumstances relevant to the education of your child i.e. change of address / return to school.

If despite the information you may have provided, it appears that the education provision is not suitable, for example the Educational Adviser has concerns about the level, depth or breadth of the educational provision, these will be raised with you and included in any meeting summary or educational philosophy review, with clarifications as to areas needing attention. Allowing you time to implement any changes, we will arrange further contact to see whether improvements have been made.

If the situation does not improve the LA may serve notice under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996: *"If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education."*

Failure to comply with this notice may result in the LA serving a School Attendance Order and you will be required to return your child to school.

What do I have to teach?

If you decide to educate your child at home it is up to you and your child what, how and when you study. Education should impart knowledge but should also help children develop a range of life skills. You do not need to follow the National Curriculum but it is a useful guide and will make reintegration into mainstream schooling easier if your child returns to school at a later date. Copies of the National Curriculum are available from National Curriculum Online via the Curriculum Online website. SATs are only a requirement at state schools and are therefore not relevant to home education; the LA will therefore not test your child.

When planning your child's education, you may find it useful to know that pupils are required to attend school for 190 days each year and that the DfE recommends the following weekly teaching hours:

Pupils aged 5 to 7 years (Key Stage 1) - 21 hours

Pupils aged 8 to 11 years (Key Stage 2) - 23.5 hours

Pupils aged 12 to 13 years (Key Stage 3) - 24 hours

Pupils aged 14 to 16 years (Key Stage 4) – 25 hours

Whilst the LA can offer advice and support in these areas, you do not have to:

- Have any specific qualifications.
- Provide a broad and balanced education.
- Give formal lessons.
- Have premises equipped to a particular standard.
- Follow a timetable.
- Match school-based, age-specific standards.
- Mark your child's work.
- Formally assess progress or set development objectives.
- Reproduce school type peer group socialisation.
- Make detailed plans in advance.

Some parents may wish to provide education in a formal and structured manner, with a traditional curriculum and timetable. Other parents may decide on a more informal approach to respond to the developing needs of their child. The LA recognises that there are a variety of equally valid approaches to educational provision and therefore considers a wide range of information from home educating parents in different formats e.g. pictures/paintings/models, diaries of educational activity, projects, assessments, samples of work, books, educational visits etc. It is advisable for items to be dated wherever possible to demonstrate activity over a period of time.

We would strongly recommend that the provision include the following characteristics:

- Consistent involvement of parents or other significant carers (playing a substantial role but not necessarily constantly or actively involved in providing education).
- Recognition of the child's needs, attitudes or aspirations.
- Opportunities for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences.
- Access to resources, materials required to provide home education such as paper, pens, books and libraries, arts and crafts materials, physical activity, ICT and the opportunity for appropriate interaction with other children and other adults.
- Keeping a record of the child's work, dating it to show when it was prepared.

Attending Other Settings

Some groups of parents who home educate their children come together to support each other and teach their children on a communal basis. There is no reason why this should not take place, but such groups should be aware that if their provision amounts to full-time education of five or more children of compulsory school age (or just one if that child has an EHC Plan/statement of SEN, or is 'looked after'), then it may require registration as an independent school. Enquiries on this point may be made directly to the Department for Education email address given at the end of this document.

A small minority of parents send their children to establishments which are in fact operating as unregistered independent schools, providing a full-time education. The proprietors of these settings may be committing an offence, and the settings may be inspected by Ofsted and closed down. If you suspect that a setting you are considering for your child falls into this category you should ask the local authority if it has any relevant information.

Can my child still take exams?

If you wish to enter your child for public examinations, you will need to contact an Examination Board direct. The coursework component of many standard qualification courses can restrict the choice available to home educated students. Edexcel can facilitate entry for GCSEs as a private candidate and has made their International GCSEs (with coursework free option) available to home-educated children. Exams Together in association with Edexcel can also facilitate exam entry for private candidates and you may find other options available through the local Connexions service or local colleges.

What should I do if I decide to stop educating my child at home?

If at any time you decide that you would prefer your child to return to a school you should contact the local authority's In-year admissions department and they will advise you on the admission process. Please tell us when your child has been offered a school place (see contact details at the end of this leaflet) so that we can remove their name from our list of pupils educated at home.

What if my child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan)?

From September 2014 Statements of Special Educational Needs are being replaced by 0-25 Education, Health and Care plans (EHC). If your child has an EHC plan you can still choose to educate them at home but the education you provide must be suitable to your child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs he or she has. The LA's EHC Service will decide whether the provision you are making is suitable. If your child currently attends a special school, the LA must give consent for the child's name to be removed from the school roll.

If your child has an EHC plan, the LA must review it annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that your child's special education needs continue to be met. If your child does not have an EHC plan when you choose to educate at home, you do still have the right to ask the LA to conduct an Education, Health and Care needs assessment for your child and the LA must respond to your request within six weeks.

Safeguarding/Data Protection

Ealing Local Authority (LA) is committed to the welfare and protection of all children, both those educated at school and those who are educated at home. In accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Children Act 2004, the council will use information held by it in relation to you and your child to administer its departmental functions and to meet its statutory obligations. The council may share your information (but only the minimum necessary to do the above and only where it is lawful to do so) with other departments (including elected members), central government departments, law enforcement agencies, statutory and judicial bodies and community service providers. You have a right to a) make a formal request in writing for a copy of personal data held about you or your child and b) to require us to correct any inaccuracies in your information. If concerns arise about the welfare of a child they will be reviewed and may be referred to social care for further consideration.

If you choose to employ independent home tutors to educate your child/ren, you are responsible for ensuring that the tutor is suitable. We would encourage you to:

- take up appropriate references;
- ensure that the tutor has undertaken the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Oyster card for 11-15 year olds

If your child is over 10 years and 11 months and under 16 on 31 August before the start of the academic year, they can get free travel at any time on buses and trams and child fares on Tube, DLR, London Overground and some National Rail services. Your child needs a valid Oyster photo-card which you can apply for online or at a Post Office. You will need proof of your child's age to complete the application. Contact Transport for London (TFL). Link: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14310.aspx>

Any other questions?

If you have any further queries please feel free to contact the LA Officer with responsibility for Education at Home or contact the organisations detailed below. The list is not exhaustive but is intended as a guide to possible sources of information.

Useful Contacts

The Local Authority

Debby Legg & Ben Lundy
Elective Home Education
Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, W5 2HL.

☎ 020 8825 5070

Email: blundy@ealing.gov.uk

Website: http://www.ealing.gov.uk/downloads/download/104/guidance_notes_on_home_education

Connexions

Westside Young People's Centre,
Churchfield Road, Ealing, W13 9NF

☎ 020 8825 8573
Monday – Friday 1-5pm

Website: <http://www.younealing.co.uk/connexions/>

Email: connexionsinfo@ealing.gov.uk

Whats App: 07903161690

Keep up to date with the latest news on events, opportunities and more by Connecting with us on Facebook and Twitter:

What service does Connexions provide?

Connexions is a service for all children and young people aged 13-19 living in England and covers those being educated at home. The service offers help with information about apprenticeships, training and going to college and university.

The Department for Education [DfE] provides information on home education on their website.

☎ 0370 000 2288

Website: www.education.gov.uk

Enquiries: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

The Home Education Advisory Service is a national home education charity.

Home Education Advisory Service

PO Box 98, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AN

☎ 01707 371854

Website: www.heas.org.uk

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation providing support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school.

Education Otherwise

PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, PE34 3XW

☎ 0845 478 6345

Website: <http://www.education-otherwise.net/>

Edyourself is a website which can provide you with information on elective home education practice and policy in England and Wales.

Website: <http://edyourself.org/>

AQA can facilitate entry for GCSEs as a private candidate.

Exams Office Support

☎ 0844 209 6614

Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/>

Edexcel can facilitate entry for GCSEs as a private candidate.

Edexcel Customer Service

☎ 0845 618 0440

Website: <http://www.edexcel.com/>

BBC, various links are available on BBC websites, such as:

www.bbc.co.uk/learning/index.shtml