

**DIRECTORATE of  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

**GUIDANCE NOTES FOR  
PARENTS/CARERS**

opportunities you will be giving your child(ren.) You may wish to consider them joining a variety of clubs or special interest groups.

If the decision to home educate has arisen because of a disagreement with a teacher or school, and the issue has not been resolved following discussion with the Headteacher or Governors, then the Local Authority (LA) may be able to help. Home Education is not a way of solving your child's non-attendance at school unless you and your child are committed and enthusiastic about it.

### **What should I do before I decide to home educate?**

Before making the decision to home educate, you may wish to speak to an education officer at the LA for advice (contact details – Page 15). The Officer will make arrangements to visit you to discuss home education procedures. A questionnaire will be left for you to complete and send back (only if you decide to opt for home education).

### **Checklist – what do I need to check before making a decision?**

- your child is positive about the suggestion
- you are convinced it is the best course of action for your child
- you have the time to devote to your child's education on a regular basis.
- you have the necessary expertise to teach your child effectively
- you are prepared to buy the necessary resources or have access to them
- you have some support available
- you have the space available for a quiet working area
- there are opportunities for physical exercise
- social experiences with other children are available.

### **De-registration from school**

When a parent decides to withdraw their child from school to home educate, it is important that they notify the school where the child is registered. The school will then remove the child from their register and inform the Local Authority (LA). A Unique Pupil Number (UPN) will have been allocated for the child and it is important therefore for the school and LA to be aware of any changes in case the child returns to schooling in future. Although parents are not legally required to inform their LA, we suggest that they do so to ensure that the LA is aware of the change.

Failure to notify the school in writing of your intentions to educate at home could result in prosecution for failing to ensure their attendance.

If the child has never attended school they will not have been allocated a UPN and although there is no statutory requirement for home-educating parents to register their child with LA's, they are

strongly encouraged to do so where possible as this will enable the LA to carry out their duties and responsibilities in a straightforward and helpful way.

### **Local Authority's responsibilities**

The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to ensure that you are providing efficient and suitable education for your child. Many parents whose children have never been to school or have moved home since leaving school are unknown to their LA and therefore have no monitoring. However, Dudley MBC believes that positive relationships and mutual respect between local authorities and parents is the best way of ensuring that the best interests of the child are safeguarded.

The LA representative for elective home education will probably ask to meet with the family in order to talk to the parent and to look at examples of work and learning. LA's have no automatic right of access to a parent's home. However, parents may, if they wish to, permit access to their home, or offer an alternative venue for a meeting. At the initial meeting, the nature and frequency of future contact should be agreed.

Where it appears to an LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving efficient or suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the LA is under a duty to serve a notice on the parent requiring them to satisfy the authority that their child is receiving suitable education "otherwise than at school". If the parent's reply is unsatisfactory, or if they fail to reply, the LA may issue a School Attendance Order (under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996). LA's may also apply to the Court for a child assessment under the Children Act 1989, if they have reasonable cause to do so.

### **Practical / Financial support**

The LA receives no funds from central government to support elective home education. You should note that the education officer will not be able to direct the learning which takes place nor can he accept any responsibility to plan your child's education and to carry it out. The LA cannot provide books or other equipment. We have provided a list of support agencies and information that you may find useful (attached to the list document).

Parents are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and think carefully about the costs associated with educating children at home (especially in the longer term when they may wish to take public examinations).

### **At what age is it compulsory for children to have to receive full time education?**

Home educated children must receive full time education from the start date of what would be the school term following their 5th birthday, if they were in school. Compulsory education continues until the last Friday in June, of Year 11, i.e. any child, who is aged 16 between September and 31st August, is of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in that year.

### **What coaching or teaching methods do I need to consider?**

A variety of approaches, are encouraged and learning can be achieved in many different ways; such as subject study, integrated or topic methods, following unspecified interests. The goal should be for a child to encounter a deeper knowledge base which is an essential part of the older child's educational programme. When a child is educated at home it is the decision of the parent as to what to teach (or leave out) and how their child learns. The National Curriculum does not have to apply when educating a child at home. However, it is worthwhile to consider and remember that in the event of a future decision to enter or re-enter a child to the formal education system, this step will be made easier if some of the requirements of the National Curriculum have been taken into account.

### **Do I need to construct a special timetable for our Education at Home programme?**

There is no one form of education; children learn in many different ways, at different times and speed, and from different people. Your home education will not necessarily follow a set timetable, but it is expected that some records of children's progress are retained. Records can take any form; however try to remember that they provide a record of your child's education, either kept for you or your child.

### **What constitutes an effective plan of work ... a curriculum?**

In educational terms a plan of work is referred to as the curriculum whether provided in school, or at home, the curriculum consists of everything that happens in order to educate the child. It should cater for the child's physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development. A good educational programme also includes elements such as:

- personal, social and health education
- outdoor and environmental education
- citizenship, including careers education
- home economics living skills
- Key skills numeracy; literacy; ICT; problem solving

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

There is not one approach or style that can be recommended, but it should be as active, practical and participative as possible. Opportunities to take advantage of the resources available would be sensible.

Variety in style, content and the processes involved will make the education more enjoyable. Opportunities also need to be given for independent study and research and a quiet area (which can offer opportunities for sustained study/work) should be provided.

## **How will the LA decide if the education I am planning is suitable?**

When the information requested about your educational arrangements (questionnaire) has been received by the LA, the education officer responsible for home education will be informed. If you are new to home education an education officer will contact your family and a convenient time will be arranged for a home visit, in order for you to provide information concerning your educational arrangements. We acknowledge that at this early stage you may not have work to be seen and your plans may not be fully developed.

The purpose of the visit by the education officer is to assess the education that you provide to ensure that it meets your child's needs. The focus of the visit will be to jointly discuss issues arising from your completed questionnaire. Other possible areas for discussion are:

- Your planning
- Resources
- Record keeping
- Arrangements for public examinations

If you would like the meeting to take place somewhere other than in your home this can be arranged.

It would also be helpful for us to meet your child so that we are assured of their well being. If the education officer feels the arrangements are suitable, a follow up visit will be made once a year to monitor your child's progress and the arrangements. These visits will be at a mutually convenient time.

The education officer will then write a **record of the visit** and a copy will be sent to you.

## **What if the education officer is not satisfied?**

In our experience the vast majority of initial home education visits result in the LA finding the parents arrangements to be appropriate.

If the education officer is not satisfied with the provision, they will tell you and explain the reasons why. If you wish, they will make some practical suggestions as to how you might improve the provision.

If they have some concerns about the arrangements they will arrange another visit in half a term to give you time to develop the provision.

If, after a number of discussions, the education officer is still not satisfied with the provision (after six months in total) we will advise you to register your child at school. If you do not comply with this the LA could then apply for a **school attendance order** which may result in prosecution.

If, following the visit, the education officer has educational, health, welfare or social concerns about your child, they may refer them to the appropriate education / social services / health department as the welfare of your child is our priority concern.

### **What kind of evidence will be helpful?**

A written programme of work will be a good starting point for discussion. Samples of children's work also give a good indication of progress over time as well as current abilities.

The sort of questions that the Adviser is likely to ask will include the following:

- How are you planning to ensure your child receives a broad and balanced curriculum?
- Have you made long term plans for the whole year and how do these plans relate to what you have planned for the next few weeks?
- Have you thought how subjects or topics will link together?
- How are you going to organise the work?
- Have you planned a mixture of work so that your child does practical as well as written tasks?
- What or who will you use to help you?
- In what ways will you record your child's progress or difficulties?
- How will you decide if you are being successful?

Advisers may listen to children read and examine written work.

### **What are the differences between home education and home tuition?**

- Will the LA provide a tutor? **No**. Home Visitors are not home tutors. They normally visit families once a year to look at the child's work, discuss progress and to offer advice when this is appropriate.
- Will the LA provide work? **No**. But if parents ask for specific advice we offer guidance.
- Will school provide work? **No**. The child who is educated at home is not registered with a school.

### **Can I change my mind about home education?**

If at any time you wish your child to return to school full time then you can seek a place in a school and let the LA know. Parents / carers need to be aware that the normal admissions procedures will apply and will be subject to a place being available in the appropriate year group at any particular school.

### **If I seek re-entry, have I the right to go either to my child's previous school or a school of my choice?**

- There may not be a place available in the previous school
- Your child's place may have been given to another

- Check with the school or the LA website, or contact LA admissions or suitable alternatives.

## Further Questions & Answers

### Can you clarify what this means?

#### (1) 'Efficient Education'

This is not defined in the Act and each case has to be judged according to the child's needs and the educational provision made. However, this phrase does not mean that school subjects have to be provided i.e., the National Curriculum does not have to be followed. Parents will have to show that the opportunities being provided are helping the child to learn and that development is taking place appropriate to 'age, ability and aptitude'.

#### (2) 'Full-time'

The length of time is not specified. As a guide, to help you to decide, children in school spend about 25 hours on work each week plus homework (according to their age). Children at State schools attend for 38 weeks a year.

#### (3) 'Or otherwise'

This phrase is again not defined in the law but would include being taught at home by parents including the use of correspondence courses or private tutors.

### What if I don't notify the Local Authority, but just keep my child at home?

This will mean that you will not be complying with the requirements of the legislation as previously outlined. As a result you will be visited by an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain why your child is either:

- (a) not attending the school at which s(he) is a registered pupil or
- (b) why (s)he is not a registered pupil at a school

Therefore, if you have not given the Local Authority the opportunity to satisfy itself that your child is receiving an efficient education, as it is required to by the legislation, you may be committing an offence.

Please note that:

- (a) a parent who fails to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered is guilty of an offence.  
(Education Act 1996 Sec 443)

Likewise -

- (b) a parent who fails to register their child at a school and makes no other arrangement for their education will have a School Attendance Order served upon them. A parent who fails to comply with such an order is guilty of an offence.

(Education Act 1996 Sec 443)

- (c) a person guilty of an offence under section 444 or 443 of the Education Act 1996 is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale (currently £2,500 per child per parent).

### **What will happen if we decide to move?**

Please let the Education Investigation Service know your new address. If you are moving out of the county and still intend to educate your child at home the Education Investigation Service will put you in touch with the Education Department in your new county.

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

Not normally. Occasionally a school may make special arrangements with parents / carers but this is at the discretion of the headteacher and governors and the responsibility for the coverage and assessment of the National Curriculum will be theirs.

### **Do I have to teach the National Curriculum?**

The National Curriculum only applies to state schools. It is up to you and your child what, how and when you study providing it is appropriate for their age, ability and aptitude.

#### **What could be seen as a good curriculum?**

The 1996 Education Act requires that all children of statutory school age receive an efficient education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any relevant special educational needs. The government's definition of the curriculum (the sum total of educational experiences) is that it should be broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated. In other words:

**Broad:** It should introduce the pupil to a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills.

**Balanced:** Each part should be allotted sufficient time to make its special contribution but not so much that it squeezes out other essential parts.

**Relevant:** Subjects should be taught so as to bring out their applications to the pupil's own experience and to adult life and to give due emphasis to practical aspects.

**Differentiated:** What is taught and how it is taught need to be matched to pupils' ability and aptitudes.

It is not possible to provide details within a short document of all that is entailed in a good curriculum. Whether provided in a school or at home the curriculum consists of everything, which is done in order to educate the child. It should cater for the child's physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development.

A good curriculum would also include other elements at an appropriate level such as personal and social education, health education, outdoor and environmental education, economic and industrial

understanding, citizenship, careers education, home economics and a considerable acquaintance with information technology.

Children educated in state schools follow nationally defined curricula. For 3 to 5 year olds this is defined by Desirable Learning Outcomes and for 5 to 16 year olds it is defined by the National Curriculum. These set out the provision for pupils educated in state schools and the expectations of standards reached at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16.

For children educated at home there is no requirement to follow this national guidance. Parents or carers are free to develop a programme, which meets the needs of their individual child. The Desirable Learning Outcomes and the National Curriculum can be useful to inform these decisions. If you are educating your child at home for a short period, if they are likely to return to school or you want them to take national tests or examinations, then it is important to take account of the national guidance in your planning.

The Desirable Learning Outcomes and the National Curriculum are being reviewed with the changes coming into effect from September 2000. The new documents will be available for planning purposes from September 1999. The current documents are available from HMSO bookshops.

Further guidance on the nature and scope of the curriculum will be developed with the National Curriculum review is completed. In the meantime, we attach the current guidance, which was prepared in 1994.

### **Further Curriculum considerations**

If you wish your child to have access to further or higher education and to a wider range of career opportunities you should consider whether you wish to make arrangements for taking examinations. The Local Authority will notify the Sheffield Careers Service when your child enters his/her final year of compulsory education and a careers advisor will contact you to offer advice.

### **Will I have to arrange for SATS testing?**

No. It is only state schools that are required to carry out SATS tests. The LA will not test your child.

### **Can my child still take GCSEs?**

It is possible for young people to take exams as external candidates at various exam centres. As the parent / carer you will need to find a registered centre to take the exams. It would be advisable for you to also contact individual examination boards to discuss the arrangements for private candidates. You will have to pay for any exam registration fees and assessment of coursework, by an accredited person.

Universities do not necessarily expect GCSEs, A level grades are more important. Once a pupil is 16 years of age they can enrol in a wide range of adult courses including A / AS level exams.

### **Will my child still be entitled to careers advice?**

Yes, careers advice is now offered through the Connexions service for all 13 – 19 year olds. If your child is over 13 years old, you can contact [www.connexionsdudley.org](http://www.connexionsdudley.org) who will explain how they can help.

### **What if my child has special needs?**

Children and young people with statements of special educational needs can be home educated. When a child has a statement of special educational needs which names a special school, the child's name may **not** be removed from the register of that school without the consent of the education authority.

### **Do you still offer teaching support as my child is statemented?**

- No, We maintain and review the statement but offer support only in a school

### **Can I home educate a child with a Special Needs Statement?**

Yes. There is no law prohibiting the home education of statemented children provided they are not attending a special school, in which case you will need the consent of the LA. However, you need to be able to show that you can provide for these special needs should the LA enquire. Under defined circumstances, the LA has a duty to make an assessment of a child's needs and, where appropriate, prepare a statement setting out how these needs will be met. (Education Act 1996 Sect. 323). Where an LA maintains a statement it must ensure that the special education provision in the statement is made for the child unless the child's parents have made suitable arrangements (Education Act 1996, Sect 325).

### **What if my child is in a special school?**

If your child has special needs and attends a special school, you need permission from the Local Authority to de-register them. They must first ensure that you can otherwise cater for his or her special needs.

### **Dudley Parent Partnership**

This is a service that supports parents and carers whose children have special needs. Their role is to provide parents/carers with sufficient information for them to make appropriate and informed decisions. For further guidance and support contact 01384 485450.

### **AND FINALLY**

Some (but not all) parents who decide to home educate find it a happy and constructive experience. It is, as you have read, an enormous challenge to undertake. If you so decide then Dudley MBC wishes you well and will do what it can to try to ensure that you are able to provide a

good education. Please help us to maintain a good working partnership.

Do remember that if at any time you wish your child to enter the School system our Pupil Admissions Service will be happy to help you with this.

## **Dudley Libraries**

### **Main Libraries**

Brierley Hill	01384 812874
Dudley	01384 815560
Halesowen	01384 812982
Sedgley	01384 812790
Stourbridge	01384 812945

### **Branch Libraries**

Coseley	01384 812775
Cradley	01384 812885
Gornal	01384 812755
Kingswinford	01384 812740
Long Lane	01384 812880
Lye	01384 812835
Netherton	01384 812845
Wordsley	01384 812765

### **Library Links**

Dudley Wood Library Link  
Pensnett Library Link  
Woodside Library Link  
Quarry Bank Library Link

### **Services**

Archives & Local History	01384 812770
Home Library Service	01384 812870
Community Information	01384 812965
Schools Library & Information	01384 812850

## **Further Information**

National Curriculum Website: [www.curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages](http://www.curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages)

Parents with younger children may also find it helpful to access a website about “Digger and the Gang” [www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools/digger](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools/digger).

Parents can also find other links on the BBC website: [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/index.shtml)

## **Educational Websites**

BBC Education: a wide range of useful information websites:

[www.bbc.co.uk/learning](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning)

[www.bbc.co.uk/education](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education)

[www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone)

[www.bbc.co.uk/revision](http://www.bbc.co.uk/revision)

## **Examination Boards**

**OCR National Offices**    [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

OCR Head Office - Cambridge, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU. Tel: 01223 553998

OCR Coventry Office – Progress House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JQ

- AQA Exam Board    [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)
- London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Exam Board (LCCI)    <http://www.lccieb.com>
- Associated Board of the Royal School of Music    <http://www.abrsm.org>
- City and Guilds    <http://www.city-and-guilds.co.uk>
- Independent Schools Examination Board    <http://www.iseb.co.uk>
- GCSE revision guides.    [www.gcse.com](http://www.gcse.com)
- Institution of Civil Engineers    [www.ice.org.uk](http://www.ice.org.uk)
- The Guardian's Educational site, catering for all ages and stages.    [www.learn.co.uk](http://www.learn.co.uk)
- EDEXCEL    [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk)

You may also be interested in looking at:

**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/index.htm)**

This site provides information about qualifications for schools and colleges.

**[www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)**

Hundreds of online correspondence courses with advice on many others.

**[www.planet-science.com](http://www.planet-science.com)**

Science website

**[www.primaryresources.co.uk](http://www.primaryresources.co.uk)**

Lots of ideas on every National Curriculum subject

**[www.schoolzone.co.uk](http://www.schoolzone.co.uk)**

Described as the UK's top educational site.

**[www.student-support.co.uk](http://www.student-support.co.uk)**

Student Support Centre offers personalised learning programmes for pupils aged 4-17 in English and Maths.

**[www.teachingideas.co.uk](http://www.teachingideas.co.uk)**

Primary phase activities, plus book reviews.

**[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)**

Parent's advisory centre

**[www.scholastic.co.uk](http://www.scholastic.co.uk)**

A range of educational magazines, providing information, ideas, & advice across the curriculum for teaching 3-11 years.

**[www.filmeducation.org](http://www.filmeducation.org)**

Primary and Secondary resources.

**[www.schoolhistory.co.uk](http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk)**

Resources, information, and quizzes for primary to A-level.

**[www.schoolsnet.com](http://www.schoolsnet.com)**

Resources and lesson plans for all key stages.

**[www.schoolscience.co.uk](http://www.schoolscience.co.uk)**

Resources, information, and quizzes for 11-18 yrs.

**[HE-Special-UK](#)**

**[www.he-special.org.uk](http://www.he-special.org.uk)**

Resources and information for families with children who have special educational needs.

## **Independent organisations that deal with issues surrounding Home Education**

### **Education Otherwise**

Helpline & General Enquires Tel: 0845 478 6345

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

### **Home Education Advisory Service**

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

Tel: 01707 371 854

Website: [www.heas.org.uk](http://www.heas.org.uk)

**Christian Home School** (*A Christian based site.*) Website : [www.homeschool.co.uk](http://www.homeschool.co.uk)

**Home education resources** Website: [www.home-education-resources.co.uk](http://www.home-education-resources.co.uk)

Home Education Organisation

**Freedom in Education** Website: [www.freedom-in-education.co.uk](http://www.freedom-in-education.co.uk)

**Education Investigation Service  
Westox House  
1 Trinity Road, Dudley,  
West Midlands, DY1 1JQ  
01384 814314**

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