

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

A Parent's Guide to Home Education

Attendance Team

Education Improvement Service

Children, Education & Social Care

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FOREWORD

The information provided in this booklet is aimed at parents/carers who are considering removing their child from a school within Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council and educating them at home.

This booklet updates previous information but may be subject to change when the Department of Education introduces any amendments to legislation.

If you have any comments regarding the information contained within this booklet please do not hesitate to contact the attendance team.

INTRODUCTION

Your decision to educate your child / children at home should never be taken lightly nor in haste. In most cases parents/carers and children are happy with the education being provided by schools which are generally very successful in supporting the academic and personal development of children.

Some factors you may wish to consider are:-

- the reasons why you are considering educating your child / children at home;
- the time and energy you will need to invest to ensure your child gets a full and balanced educational experience;
- the costs which may be involved in ensuring your child / children receive(s) a broad range of educational experience;
- the resources required to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, e.g. Science and design and technology equipment, books, ICT equipment; access to formal qualification systems;
- access to resources;
- socialisation opportunities, in the community and/or with other children;
- the demand and challenge of a rapidly changing world.

It is important to talk to your child / children and take into account their views when making decisions about their educational provision. This is equally valid whether you are considering home education or changing school.

Children who are capable of forming views have the right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account on any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child.

Articles 12 and 13, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Whatever your decision, remember that you can reconsider at any time and that the Local Authority will be happy to talk to you about your child's / children's re-admission to school, should you choose for your child to re-enter the system at any time.

GUIDANCE ON THE LAW

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age *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 or she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*. The “or otherwise” includes Elective Home Education.

Although the law does not define “efficient” or “full-time”, a ruling in 1981 defined a suitable education as one which *‘prepares children for life in a modern civilised society’* and an efficient education as one which *‘achieves what it sets out to achieve’*. (The case of Harrison & Harrison v Stephenson, Worcester Crown Court 1981). As a guide, children spend between 21 and 25 hours per week in school for 38 weeks of the year.

The Local Authority also has duties under sections 437-443 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 notice in writing on the parent requiring him/her to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education’*.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, allows for children with Special Educational Needs to be home educated.

If the child is currently registered at a Special School, then consent must be obtained from the Local Authority for the child’s name to be removed from the school register.

In this instance you will need to contact the attendance team contact details on the back of this booklet for advice.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the Local Authority is required to review a child’s EHCP each year. Parents and the child concerned are invited to this review. Although parents are under no obligation to attend, we believe that it is in the child’s best interest to work in partnership.

PRACTICAL STEPS

If you live in Stockton-On-Tees and your child is of statutory school age, you need to write to the Head Teacher of the school your child is attending and inform them of your intention to educate your child at home and request your child's name is removed from school roll from the date of your letter.

The Head teacher will then remove your child's / children's name from the school's admission register and within ten school days inform the Local Authority of your decision. If your child attends a special school then you will need to write to the Local Authority SEN Manager first to seek consent to de-register.

If you do not write to the Head Teacher (or Local Authority for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan) your child will continue to be a registered pupil at school and you may become liable to prosecution for failure to secure your child's school attendance (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act).

The Elective Home Education Officer, following receipt of the information from school, will make arrangements to visit you and your child at home or at an alternative venue if you prefer. The Elective Home Education Officer will offer you advice on your rights and responsibilities and will provide you with further guidance, should you require it.

If your child has not received education via school, and you would like advice and guidance you need to inform the Local Authority of this.

EDUCATION PROVISION

An education is deemed suitable if it equips a child for life within their community, and as long as it does not prevent the child from adopting some other way of life later on.

A good education will ensure your child develops the knowledge, skills, concepts and understanding which will equip them to live in, and enjoy, the challenges and demands of a rapidly changing world.

You do not have to follow a curriculum, although you may create your own or make use of some of the prepared curricula available. Most libraries hold information about the National Curriculum.

Parents who elect to home educate may wish their child /children to benefit from a broad education similar to that experienced by other children.

The basic curriculum for all children, up to the age of 16, attending mainstream school includes:-

Three core subjects, English, Maths and Science.

The foundation subjects of history, geography, information and communication technology, music, art and design, physical education, design and technology, modern foreign language(s) and religious education.

Any parent who elects to home educate, wishing their child / children to undertake public examinations must make their own arrangements to do so, the Local Authority does not provide any funding for children not on a school roll.

Transport to any venue you have selected to provide some or all of the education for your child are the responsibility of the parent/carer as the local authority do not provide any funding for transport costs for children who are electively home educated.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

When the Local Authority have been notified that you plan to educate your child at home the Elective Home Education Officer will arrange to meet with you to discuss your plans.

Additionally, once you have been educating your child at home for a period of time, the Elective Home Education Officer will arrange to meet with you and discuss the provision for your child / children.

During the first visit the Elective Home Education Officer will:

- establish the role of the Local Authority;
- ask about your child's / children's education to date;
- seek the views of your child / children;
- ask what educational provision is being offered in respect to:
 - numeracy;
 - literacy;
 - aesthetics;
 - personal and social development.
- discuss with you the use of resources and the support available to your child and family from other agencies such as Early Help Support, School Health and Youth Direction.

During the follow-up visits the Elective Home Education Officer will:

- discuss with you and your child / children the provision you are making for his/her education;
- seek the views of your child / children;
- ensure that you are meeting the requirements of the Education Act 1996 for Education Otherwise.

This may be achieved through either a home visit, report or other agreed evidence.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address of Local Authority contact:

Elective Home Education Officer
EDC@SSFC
Stockton Sixth Form College
Bishopton Road West
Stockton-on-Tees
TS19 0QD

Tel: 01642 527155

Email: attendance.team@stockton.gcsx.gov.uk

Local Authority contact for pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan attending Special School

SEN Team
Queensway House
West Precinct
TS23 2NX

Tel: 01642 527145

Email: SEN.section@stockton.gov.uk

Education Otherwise - <http://www.education-otherwise.org>

PO Box 325
Kings Lynn
PE34 3XW
Tel: 0891 518303

Home Education in the UK - <http://www.home-education.org.uk>

Tees Valley Home Education Group - <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/tvhe>