



Bedfordshire
county council

ELECTIVE

HOME EDUCATION

**Guidance Notes for
Parents/Guardians**

Elective Home Education

Guidance Notes for Parents/Guardians

These notes are for parents/guardians who are thinking of educating their child outside the school system. There are a number of issues to think about. This is not an easy option because the parent/guardian has to meet a number of requirements.

If your child is at school

If you are thinking about home education your first contact should be with the Headteacher of your child's current school.

If your child is not at school

Alternatively, you can contact Angus McCormick, Adviser, Elective Home Education on 01234 228996/01462 712336

Bedfordshire Local Authority is committed to the provision of compulsory education within the maintained school sector. We view 'Education otherwise known as Elective Home Education' as an option to be pursued after careful consideration of the implications for the child and also for the parents/guardians. However, Bedfordshire County Council offers support and advice for those who choose this option.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Do children have to go to school?

The 1996 Education Act imposes a duty on parents or those responsible for the child, to secure the education of their children of 'compulsory school age' (5-16), but this can be done either by regular attendance at school, or 'otherwise'. For most children this means they will attend the school, which serves their locality.

Some parents may consider taking on the responsibility of educating their own children outside the state system. Some may send their children to private or independent schools, others will want to take on the 'duty to educate' their children themselves.

What is the parent's duty?

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age (5-16 years) including any person who has care of that child, 'to cause (the child) to receive efficient full time education suitable to his (or her) age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he (or she) may have, either by regular attendance at school or 'otherwise'.

What is 'efficient' and 'suitable' education?

These words are not defined in the Act. However, education has been held to be 'efficient' if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and 'suitable' only if it prepares the child for life in modern civilised society and enables the child to achieve his/her full potential. (See 1981 *Harrison v Stevenson*, also 1985 *R v Secretary of State for Elective Service*.)

It will be up to you to show that the programme of work you arrange is helping your child to learn and that the child is developing according to age, ability and aptitude. The style and approach to learning need not be the same as that provided by a school, but it should clearly enable the child to make progress. Availability of resources should be considered carefully. (See 1997 *R v East Sussex County Council, P Tandy*)

If my child is attending a school, what do I do?

If your child is of statutory school age and is attending school, we suggest that first of all you seek a meeting with the Headteacher (or a senior member of the school staff) to discuss your plans. Another suggestion is to contact the Adviser for Elective Home Education to discuss any issues. If you have made up your mind to educate your child at home, you should write to the Head of the school telling him/her of your decision. The Headteacher will inform the Local Authority (LA), Bedfordshire County Council. Your child's name will be recorded on the register of children who are being home educated.

A guide for writing the letter:

Dear Chair of Governors/Headteacher

I am writing to tell you that I intend to withdraw my son/daughter (give name) from (name of school). I am planning to provide education for my child at home in accordance with my legal right under the Education Act 1996, Section 7.

Please will you remove my child's name from your admissions register.

Yours Faithfully

Parent

The next thing that will happen is an inspector of the Local Authority will contact you and make an arrangement to 'monitor' the plans you are making for educating your child. Please do not expect the person to tell you how to educate your child but if the inspector approves your plans he/she will let you know at the time of the contact.

It is your responsibility to support your child's education and to carry it out. The Local Authority Inspector's job is to check if you are doing this effectively.

After any contact a report will be written, a copy of which will be sent to you. If approval is given to your provision you can continue to educate your child at home.

The inspector would find it helpful to speak with you and your child(ren) about the education, which they are receiving. Additionally, he or she may ask a series of questions. (See below for examples)

How are you planning to ensure that your child is offered an appropriate curriculum?

What are your short and long term plans?

Have you considered how you might link together different subjects or topics?

How do you provide for your child's physical development?

How do you arrange for your child to interact socially with other children?

How is the education organised?

How do you plan a mixture of work including practical activities as well as other tasks?

Are you likely to enlist the support of a tutor?

How will you measure your child's progress/difficulties?

Will your provision allow your child to progress to further/higher education if appropriate?

CURRICULUM PROVISION

What do I need to do?

Your curriculum programme 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 own responsibility to plan and carry out your arrangements. This will involve providing appropriate learning resources.

In their consideration of parents' provision of education at home, local authorities may reasonably expect the provision to include the following characteristics:

- consistent involvement of parents or other significant carers – it is expected that or significant carers would play a substantial role, although not necessarily constantly actively involved in providing education
- recognition of the child's needs, attitudes and aspirations
- opportunities for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences
- access to resources/materials required to provide home education for the child paper and pens, books and libraries, arts and crafts materials, physical activity, ICT opportunity for appropriate interaction with other children and other adults.

The provision should cater for the child's physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development.

A good curriculum also includes other elements, dealt with 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 an acquaintance with information technology. Opportunity to mix with and relate to other boys, girls and adults in work/play away from the home is also important.

There are suggestions for home educators in various publications and websites.

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

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. Re-integration will be easier if you take the requirements of the National Curriculum into account. The 1996 Education Act states that every maintained school must provide a basic curriculum, which, for pupils of compulsory school age, includes the National Curriculum. (S351 EA96)

The National Curriculum comprises of the following subjects:

- Maths, English and Science
- Technology and Physical Education
- History, Geography, Art and Music (for ages 5-14)
- A modern foreign language (for ages 11-16)

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

What if I don't tell you about the education I am providing?

If you do not give us sufficient information about your arrangements when we ask for it, we are entitled to conclude that your child is not receiving suitable education. The primary interest of the Local Authority is to be sure that your child's educational needs are met. If it appears that a parent does not provide a suitable education for a child at home, the Local Authority has the duty to take action in order to get your child to school and this may result in a prosecution for your child's non-attendance at school. (S437 EA1996) and (S443 EA1996)

What happens if the inspector is not satisfied?

The inspector will tell you if he/she is not satisfied with the education you are providing for your child and will explain his or her reasons. A letter will then be sent to you by the Local Authority, which will inform you:

- Either that you have a specified period of time in which to improve the education your child is receiving.
- Or inform you that the Education Welfare Service has been contacted to become involved. They may decide to proceed with an Attendance Order.

The Education Welfare Service will be informed of the decision.

If I do educate my child at home, how often will the Education Authority check?

Normally, if the Education Authority is fully satisfied with the information on the provision you are making and the satisfactory progress of your child, the frequency of contact will be about once per year. However, if doubts are expressed, contact will be more frequent.

(See Appendix 1 attached to this handout as an example of a contact)

Special Educational Needs and Elective Home Education:

These issues can be discussed with the advisor.

S7 EA1996 allows for home education to be named in part 4 of a statement. If a Special School is named in the statement the the Local Authority's consent is required. An Appeal can be made (Education (Pupils Registration) Regulations 1995.Regin. 9 (2))

Useful contacts can be found in the booklet 'Useful Information' from the Advisor for Elective Home Education or on the Bedfordshire County Council's website:

www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/education/elective_home_education

FINALLY

DO:

Think long and hard about it before making a decision. It is a great responsibility and a considerable commitment of time and energy.

Plan what you intend to do with your child before making a decision.

Look at costs involved: including visits, equipment, books and tutors.

Provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social activities, contact with other children, and joint 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. Your child's needs will, change at different ages. We will always be willing to find a place for your child at a school which can best provide for his/her needs.

Seek an opportunity in cases where opinions differ, to talk to the Headteacher or to consult the Education Welfare Officer. Further advice can be obtained from:

**The Adviser
Elective Home Education
County Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP**

TEL: 01462 712336/01234 228996

E-mail: angus.mccormick@bedscc.gov.uk

Fax: 01462 712336

<p>Data Protection Act 1998: Assurance of Fair Processing – Unless you advise us otherwise, details on your child will be held in a pupil file and/or computerised by Bedfordshire County Council. Records will normally be kept until the child's 25th birthday.</p>

Appendix 1

Elective Home Education

Day by Day

Local Authority Contacts

- Advisory**
- Discuss reasons for Elective Home Education and aims/goals.
 - Explain role and duty of the Local Authority
 - Insure any deregistration letter is written if appropriate.
 - Obtain learner's details and any special needs or other agency involvement.
 - Issue a Local Authority letter to confirm Elective Home Education in case of truancy patrols or other needs.
 - Offer guidance and support.
 - Agree when to undertake monitoring and how it will be done.

- Monitoring**
- Review evidence offered to see if the provision is fulltime, suitable and efficient.
 - Discuss any further guidance from the DfES in regards to Elective Home Education.
 - Send a report on the Local Authority view of the provision with any comments from parent/carer requested.
 - Hold review of any statement of Special Needs.

- Annual**
- Review evidence of the year's progress and continuation of Elective Home Education.
 - Review plans for the next year
 - Support and advice with reference to the age of the learner.
 - If necessary any further work on the Statement of Special Needs.

Note: Any other arrangements for Local Authority monitoring will be discussed as necessary e.g where the provision is not suitable and agreed forward plan will be set in place unless referrals to any other service such as Education Welfare Service with the Local Authority Officer. Reasons for an inappropriate provision will be discussed with the provider. Complaints should be made to the Local Authority Officer responsible in the first instance and if not resolved then the Bedfordshire County Council policy and process followed which exists at that time.