

## EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

### Guidance for Parents Elective Home Education

Every parent of a compulsory school age child has a duty to ensure their child receives a suitable and efficient education. This can be either by enrolling them in a school and ensuring they attend or by taking responsibility for their child's education. Parents can teach their own children or be responsible for employing teachers/tutors.

Taking control of your child's education is a big responsibility; these notes of guidance have been put together to help you. Please do not underestimate the amount of work this will mean for you as the primary educator.

Once you have decided this is the right course of action for you and your child:

- If your child attends a mainstream school, we would encourage you to discuss your intention to electively home educate with the school. The school will de-register your child from the school roll from the date that they were made aware that you were electively home educating your child. The school will then inform the education welfare service who will then make contact with you.
- If your child attends a special school (named in their Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan), you must contact the Education Welfare Service who will discuss your proposal to electively home educate with you. Once the service is satisfied with your proposal they will instruct the Head Teacher of the school to de register your child. The legal responsibility for education then passes to you as the parent.

### DfE Guidance on Elective Home Education

**3.12 Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, they must follow the statutory guidance. If the pupil has a poor attendance record, the school and local authority must address the issues behind the absenteeism and use the other remedies available to them.**

Once the education welfare service is aware that you are educating your child at home you will be sent an initial introductory pack containing lots of useful information. You will also be offered an initial visit for support and guidance by our Access to Education Officer which can either be at your home or at a neutral location. These visits are not compulsory but are a good way of sharing education ideas and information centrally which can be passed on to other Home Educating Families.

### DfE Guidance for parents on Elective Home Education

**2.2 There is no legislation that deals with home education as a specific approach. However, Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that:**

**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.**

At this point if you are not sure you will be able to fulfil your duty to provide your child with a suitable education the Access to Education Officer can support you to place your child back into school to minimise them falling behind.

We contact all our known Home Educating families on an annual basis in writing, suggesting ways in which you may want to update us on how your provision has been going. This may be in the form of:

- Specific detailed examples of learning e.g. pictures/ paintings/models, diaries of work, projects, assessments, samples of work, books, educational visits etc.
- Written report stating:
  - Opportunities for your child to be stimulated by their learning experiences
  - Involvement in activities - showing a broad spectrum of activities to cater for wide varieties of interests appropriate to your child's stage of development
  - Access to resources/materials required to meet the objectives as parents; such as resources, books and libraries, arts and crafts materials, physical activity, ICT and
  - Opportunities for appropriate interaction with other children and other adults.

Alternatively, if you are happy for us to visit again this can be arranged with one of our Education Welfare Officers. Paperwork can be posted or emailed to The Education Welfare Service.

The purpose of the annual contact is to discuss your opinions on the progress made by your child and support you with the next stages, should you so wish.

*“The local authority does not have a statutory duty to monitor the quality of home education, but under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 local authorities shall intervene if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education. It is the intention of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council to support parents to fulfil their duty.”*

**DfE Guidance on Elective Home Education if it is not clear that home education is suitable.**

**6.5 The most obvious course of action is to ask parents for detailed information about the education they are providing. Parents are under no duty to respond to such enquiries, but if a parent does not respond, or responds without providing any information about the child's education, then it will normally be justifiable for the authority to conclude that the child does not appear to be receiving suitable education and it should not hesitate to do so and take the necessary consequent steps. This is confirmed by relevant case law.**

**In many cases, making such informal enquiries will allow the situation to be resolved, either by evidence being provided that the home education is suitable or by agreement on alternative approaches to educating the child based on the local authority's initial assessment (for example, by catering for special needs in a different way).**

## **Some Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Does my child need to go to school?**

No, it is the duty of parents 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/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”

*(Education Act 1996 Section 7).*

For most children this will be through attendance at school, but for various reasons a small number of parents will take on the responsibility of educating their children themselves. This means they educate their child at home or another location where their learning is directed by the parent or other appropriate adults.

### **What is compulsory school age?**

Compulsory school age is from the beginning of the school term after the fifth birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year in which the sixteenth birthday falls.

### **What is “efficient” and “suitable” education?**

Education can be regarded as “efficient” if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and “suitable” if it prepares the child for life in modern society and enables the child to achieve his/her full potential. It is not necessary to provide the same kind of lessons as school but it is up to parents/carers to show that the programme of work is helping their child to learn and there is evidence that your child is developing according to his/her age, ability and aptitude.

### **What if my child has Special Educational Needs?**

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the local authority has to ensure the child's needs are being met by reviewing the situation annually; the same review that would have been held in school.

If your child attends mainstream school you can inform the head teacher of your intentions to electively home educate and your child's name will be removed from the school roll. However if your child attends a special school you must speak to the education welfare service and discuss with them how you will meet your child's needs first.

### **Do I have to inform the local authority?**

Not if your child has not been on a school roll however, if you are withdrawing your child from a school you must follow the advice in this guidance.

Even if you do not have duty to inform anyone (because your child has not been on a school roll before), you may wish to do so, we can offer useful advice and support throughout your child's learning.

### **Do I have to let a local authority officer visit my home?**

No, the Access to Education Officer is there for support and to confirm for you that you are meeting your legal requirement in regards to your child's education. The officer can support you and offer advice and guidance. It may be easier for you to meet at your home as this is usually where you will have the products of your child's education but you can arrange to meet elsewhere, if this is more appropriate.

You can also send your evidence in the post or by e-mail to the education welfare service, using the contact details below. However, if after the annual request the service does not receive an update from you we may

consider intervening under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 (local authorities shall intervene if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education).

### **What is the role of the Access to Education Officer?**

It is up to parents to plan their child's education and to provide books and other materials.

The role of the officer is to support you to provide an 'efficient' and 'suitable' education so you are fulfilling your legal duty to your child. The officer will provide advice and information if you require it for example, where to obtain Youth Support Service advice regarding further education and careers.

The officer would like to talk to you and your child about the work that is being done. Here are some of the questions you may be asked:-

- How are you planning to ensure your child has a broad and balanced education?
- What are your short-term plans?
- What are your long-term plans?
- How do you provide for your child's physical development?
- How do you arrange for your child to mix socially with his/her peers?
- How is the work organised?
- Do you include practical activities as well as written work?
- How will you record your child's progress and difficulties?

For older children

- Will your programme allow them access to further or higher education?
- Will your programme give your child a wide range of career opportunities?

These questions are designed to challenge you and stretch the education you are providing, do not worry if you are struggling, the officer will support you to look at how you can develop your teaching and your child's learning.

### **What do the most successful home educators provide?**

- They make the learning process active, practical, participative and hopefully fun.
- They make systematic plans for their child's learning.
- They take full advantage of all available resources such as, museums, libraries, parks, computer, a range of adults, educational video and audio tapes and clubs.
- They encourage their child to read widely.
- They plan a programme of educational visits and broadcasts.
- They provide opportunities for physical development.
- They encourage their child to develop socially with other children and adults.
- They make learning enjoyable by using a variety of approaches.
- They give their child opportunities for independent learning.
- They make sure their child has a quiet area for studying.

### **Do I have to enter my child for tests and examinations?**

No, there is no requirement for you to enter your child for any tests or examinations.

For an older child you may wish to consider if they need qualifications. If your child does not achieve any qualifications at the end of year 11 it is possible to complete an access course at college, this will help your child access any future education. Your records of the education you have provided and your child's progress will be very valuable to your child when gaining access to post 16 provision. The education welfare service has guidance for parents regarding examinations.

### **What will the local authority do if I am not providing an education?**

If this should be the case the local authority officer will write to inform you of this. The letter will explain that unless there is an immediate improvement East Riding of Yorkshire Council will take steps for your child to return to school. This will be done by serving a School Attendance Order. This Order would inform you which school you should approach to obtain a place for your child. If, after a reasonable period of time, you have not contacted the school and confirmed a start date this will be done for you by the education welfare service. You will then be informed, in writing, of your child's school and expected start date. If your child fails to attend on the date specified the case will be prepared for the Magistrates' Court. Please be assured that the main concern of the officer is your child's educational progress and welfare; action will only be taken if it is evident that education is not taking place or there is a serious concern about your child's welfare.

### **How many other people in the East Riding of Yorkshire home educate their children?**

This number varies, but on average 1 percent of the East Riding of Yorkshire's compulsory school age children are electively home educated.

### **What is Flexi-schooling?**

Flexi-schooling is when a school agrees for your child to go on their school roll to access specific lessons; this is usually to allow children to access equipment that a parent cannot provide. When your child is not in school you would be expected to continue providing the remainder of their education and the local authority would continue to support you with this.

An example would be a child accessing physical education and science at a school and the parent continuing with all other aspects of education.

**Flexi-schooling is at the discretion of a school's head teacher and governing body.** Any school maintained or independent may accommodate flexi-schooling if it so desires but there is no obligation to do so and a reason does not have to be given for refusing this request. Fulltime education is an absolute right but flexi-schooling is not and the school can refuse on arbitrary grounds.

**FINALLY** – Please think long and hard about electively home educating your child. Taking control of your child's education is a huge responsibility and will take a great deal of your time and energy.

The cost of books, materials, resources, examinations (if required) and educational trips are ordinarily the responsibility of the parent as you are educating your child outside of the public education system. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, support can be discussed and a personal budget considered at annual or interim reviews.

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

One of the many benefits of school life is the social interaction between children and young people; therefore, you may have to make a determined effort to maintain social networks for your child to prevent them from becoming isolated from other children.

Try to resolve any problems at school before taking such a big step. The education welfare service may be able to assist you or help you to find another school more suitable to your child's needs. If your concern about

school has a religious basis, remember that you have the right to withdraw your child from religious education and collective worship.

If you do decide to educate your child at home, your decision will be respected.

Further information and guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact:

Education Welfare Service

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

County Hall

Beverley

East Riding of Yorkshire

HU17 9BA

Email : [education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01482 394000