

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

CHOOSING TO EDUCATE YOUR CHILD AT HOME

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

**Produced by Cambridgeshire Elective Home Education Office
Children & Young People's Services
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1. INTRODUCTION

The legal responsibility for a child's education rests with his/her parents. While most parents choose to educate their children by sending them to school, other parents choose to home educate their children. Cambridgeshire County Council aims to work in partnership with home educating parents. This booklet is designed to offer information to any parent considering home education.

The decision to educate your child at home is an important one as you alone will be responsible for ensuring that your child receives a proper and suitable education. Home education can potentially take up a great deal of parents' time, energy and money, so you are advised to think very carefully before you make any decision and to talk to other home educating parents.

You may wish to consider the following:

- the likely costs involved - books, equipment, tutors, loss of parental income.
- how to provide the social interaction that your child would normally receive at school, such as meeting and mixing with new friends.
- how to provide activities such as group work, access to special facilities and equipment e.g. for science or sport, trips and visits.

Many parents choose to home educate for positive educational reasons. However, if you are considering opting for home education as a result of a disagreement with the school which your child attends, it would be advisable to try and resolve the problems with the school before deciding on home education.

The contact details for some of the national and local organisations which support home educators can be found at the back of this booklet.

Choosing to educate your child at home is not a once and for all decision, and neither is sending your child to school. You can always change your mind. The important thing is to think carefully before making any decision.

Abbreviations used in this booklet:

- EHE - Elective Home Education
- LA - Local Authority
- SEN - Special Educational Needs

2. ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Child

European Convention on human rights states:
“No person shall be denied the right to education”

Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
“Governments agree that the aim of education is to help the fullest possible growth of the child's or young person's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities”.

Parents

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children receive a suitable education.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:
“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 to his age, ability and aptitude, and
b) to any special educational needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Most parents choose to educate their children by sending them to school. Others choose to home educate their children. Parents who choose to home educate are not required to register or seek the approval or agreement of the Local Authority.

The Local Authority

The Education Act 1996 also places legal duties upon the Local Authority. Section 437 states:

“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.”

“If – a) a parent on whom a notice has been served....fails to satisfy the local education authority, within the period specified in the notice, that the child is receiving suitable education, and b) in the opinion of the authority it is expedient that the child should attend school, the authority shall serve on the parent...a school attendance order... requiring him to cause the child to become a registered pupil at a school named in the order.”

Section 443 then states:

“If a parent on whom a school attendance order is served fails to comply with the requirements of the order, he is guilty of an offence, unless he proves that he is causing the child to receive suitable education otherwise than at school.”

The LA will only consider serving a School Attendance Order if it has information which makes it appear that a child is not receiving a suitable education. Prior to this it will try to work with the parents in order to address the situation informally.

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to working with home educating parents in a spirit of partnership and cooperation in order that both parties – parents and the Council – can effectively meet their respective duties under existing legislation.

Safeguarding

The welfare and protection of all children are of paramount concern and the responsibility of the whole community. As with school educated children, child welfare issues may arise in relation to home educated children. If any child welfare concerns come to light these concerns will immediately be referred to the appropriate authorities.

Local authorities also have a duty under Section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This section states:

“A local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred upon them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.”

Parents may choose to employ other people, such as private tutors to educate their child, though they themselves will continue to be responsible for the education provided. They will be responsible for ensuring that those whom they engage are suitable persons to have access to children. Parents will therefore wish to satisfy themselves by taking up appropriate references or undertaking Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

In ensuring an appropriate balance between the rights of parents and the responsibilities of local authorities the LA will always endeavour to build open, fair, consistent and non-intrusive relationships with home educating parents.

3. A SUITABLE, EFFICIENT, FULL-TIME EDUCATION

The terms “suitable”, “efficient” and “full-time” are not defined in the legislation but case law in the Courts have indicated that education is deemed to be;

- “efficient” if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and
- “suitable” if it “equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life of the country as a whole, so 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.”
- There is currently no legal definition of “full-time”. Children who attend school normally do so for between 22 and 25 hours a week, for 38 weeks a year, but this measurement of “contact time” may not be relevant to home education when education may take place outside of normal “school hours” or be made up of periods of 1 to 1 tuition.
- Currently children must continue to receive suitable education until the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach the age of 16. However there are proposals to change this in the future.

Approaches to Home Education

The LA recognises that there are many diverse and varied, but equally valid, approaches to home education and that education takes place in a variety of environments, not just the child’s home.

The LA also recognises that children learn in different ways and at different speeds.

Home education will reflect a diversity of approaches and philosophies, ranging from a formal structured, time-tabled programme to a more informal, experiential approach to learning.

The LA will aim to understand and respect home educating parents’ individual educational preferences and philosophies and to promote mutual understanding and trust.

What does and does not need to be included

Children educated at home are not required to follow the National Curriculum but should receive an effective education appropriate to their individual needs and aspirations.

It would be expected that there would be:

- Access to appropriate resources
- The opportunity to interact with other children and adults.

Below are offered some general observations, ideas and approaches which home educating parents may wish to consider:

- An effective education ensures that a child acquires attitudes, skills and knowledge to prepare him/her for the challenges and demands of a rapidly changing world.

- A broad education introduces a child to a range of material, which will stimulate the child and help develop an open rather than a closed mind.
- A balanced education ensures that no one single subject area takes up so much time that there is insufficient room for others, or for the creative use of leisure.

Home education does not have to be delivered by 'subjects' but would be expected to develop knowledge and skills in the three core areas of:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science

Other areas which would be part of a child's education in school and therefore should be considered are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and Technology, • History, • Geography, • Art, • Music, • Drama, • Physical Education, including Dance, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and Communications Technology • Religious Education (as appropriate), • Foreign languages, • Cross-curricular themes - such as Health Education, Environmental Education, Citizenship, |
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Key aspects of learning to be developed would include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning • Evaluation • Creativity • Enquiry • Problem-solving • Information processing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Empathy • Motivation • Managing feelings • Social skills |
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Many of these aspects and topics will be present in the everyday activities which home educating parents do with their child.

4. THE PROCESS

The LA recognises that home educating parents are under no legal duty to register or respond to enquiries about the provision they are making. However registration assists the LA in knowing that all the children in Cambridgeshire are receiving the education that they are entitled to and that the education being provided is suitable.

If it appears that a suitable education is not being provided, the authority has a duty to investigate further.

Registration

- If your child is below statutory school-age or has never been registered at a school in Cambridgeshire and you intend to home educate him/her, you are asked to contact the Home Education Office either by letter or telephone,

CYPS, Box No: CC1103,
Room A110,
Castle Court, Shire Hall,
Castle Hill,
Cambridge CB3 0AP
Telephone: 01223-703542

- If your child is on roll at a school you are obliged to inform the school in writing that you intend to home educate him/her. The school may only remove his/her name from its roll once it has received written confirmation from you.

(Parents should note that the name of a child attending a special school may not be removed from the school roll without the prior agreement of the LA).

- When you have written to the school, you are then asked to contact the Home Education Office (address and telephone number above) advising them of this.
- On receiving information that a child is being home educated or removed from a school roll, the EHE Office will send out this Information Booklet and an EHE Information Sheet.

The information Sheet

- The Elective Home Education information sheet will ask you to provide basic information about your child, such as his/her age, details of any special needs etc, and some initial details about the education and learning experiences you intend to provide.

The EHE Adviser

- In order to satisfy itself that a suitable education is being provided the Local Authority asks parents to accept a home visit by an EHE Adviser who will not only assess the provision which is being made but be able to offer support and advice.
- If you do not wish to meet the Adviser in your home, a mutually acceptable location can be arranged
- If you do not wish for a meeting you are requested to suggest an alternative way of demonstrating that you are providing a suitable education.
- If you need a period of time to adjust to home education the EHE Adviser would be willing to defer a home visit until you feel ready.

The LA considers the education you are providing is suitable.

- Following a home visit or receipt of information, if EHE Adviser is satisfied that you have demonstrated that your child is receiving a suitable education he/she will write to you notifying you of this together with a copy of the EHE Adviser's Report.
- Should your child be registered at a special school, the school will be advised to remove your child's name from the school roll.
- A review visit will be offered, initially on an annual basis

The LA does not consider the education you are providing is suitable.

- If, following the home visit or receipt of information, the EHE Adviser has concerns regarding some aspects of the provision you are making for your child, he/she will discuss these concerns with you. You will also be notified in writing together with a copy of the EHE Adviser's Report.
- A reasonable period of time – to be agreed between the EHE Adviser and yourself - will then be given for you to address these concerns.
- If, after this period, the EHE Adviser is still not be satisfied that the education you are providing is suitable then you will be advised to register your child at a school.
- Should your child have been on roll at a special school you will be advised to return him/her to that school.
- Should you fail to register/return your child to a school and continue to be unable to provide your child with an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs, the LA may consider it necessary to serve a School Attendance Order.
- Failure to comply with such an Order would be an offence.

Data Protection

Any information collected by the LA is never shared with any outside agencies without your written permission.

5. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- If your child has special educational needs you have an equal right to home educate.
- However, if your child currently attends a special school his/her name cannot be removed from the roll of that school without the agreement of the LA.
- If a child who is home educated has a statement of special educational needs, the LA remains responsible for ensuring that the child's needs are met and are under a duty to maintain the child's statement and to review it annually.
- It may be appropriate, once it is established that a child's special educational needs are being met without any additional support from the County Council, to consider ceasing to maintain the statement.
- If the home education which the parents are providing falls short of meeting the child's needs, as identified in the statement, then this education would not be deemed "suitable".
- If, after a period given to address the concerns, the education is still considered not suitable, you will be asked to send/return your child to school.

- If you fail to do so a School Attendance Order may be served.
- If you are educating your child at home and feel he/she has special educational needs you may ask the County Council to carry out a statutory assessment (or reassessment).

What can a parent do if they are dissatisfied with the LA's assessment.

- Firstly, you should discuss your concerns with the EHE Adviser.
- Should you remain dissatisfied you may write to the Director of Learning at Castle Court, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP.

6. SUPPORT FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- EHE Adviser offers support and advice on curriculum, how to evidence progress, teaching aids and materials, educational and local resources etc
- The LA sends out information on free or special events designed to include home educated families
- Connexions information is sent out to your child during the last 2 years of compulsory education
- If asked, the LA will write an official letter that families can use to access local amenities or secure discounts on resources
- The EHE Manager and the Advisor hold twice yearly meetings with 'CHEF' – Cambridge group of home educating families (this includes both registered and unregistered families)
- The Student Assessment Service remain involved if your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs
- The LA can put you in touch with other Children's Support Services e.g. Admissions, Parent Partnership, the Traveller Service, Connexions.

Work Experience

Should you wish your child to undertake a work experience placement, this can be organised by the Connexions Service. This service will be able to advise you and your child as to the procedure to be followed. A charge is made for this assistance. Connexions may be contacted through your local Children's Locality Team.

Child Employment

Regulations regarding Child Employment apply to all children of compulsory school age whether they attend a school or are home educated. Children may not work until they attain the age of 13 years and then not work during normal school hours. Before a child is able to commence any form of employment he/she must be in possession of a Work Permit.

An explanatory leaflet and an application form for a Work Permit may be obtained by contacting the Child Employment Office on 01354 661736.

Children in Entertainment

Regulations regarding children in entertainment apply to all children of compulsory school age whether they attend a school or are home educated. A Performance Licence is required if a child is engaged in paid work in the

theatre, in a film or television performance, in modelling or sport or if the engagement is during normal school hours. Further information may be obtained from the Children in Entertainment Office on 01354 661736

Flexi-schooling

“Flexi-schooling” is an arrangement between parents and the school at which their child is registered whereby the child attends school for part of the time and is educated at home the rest of the time.

Flexi-schooling is different from elective home education in that the child remains on the school roll and the school retains the responsibility for ensuring that the child receives a suitable education. Flexi-schooling is at the discretion of the headteacher of the child’s school.

Should you wish to consider flexi-schooling, rather than elective home education, you are advised to contact the school concerned directly.

Further Education

Websites with information on post 16 options and dates of open days and application deadlines

<https://www.cambscoursefinder.com/CAP/Home.aspx>

<http://www.youthoria.org/>

7. SITTING EXAMINATIONS

Once you have decided to home educate your child, you should be aware that you assume sole financial responsibility including the cost of any public examinations.

The internal assessment component of many standard qualifications and courses, such as National Vocational Qualifications and GCSEs, can make it difficult for home educated children to access some qualifications.

There are a number of different examination boards that offer GCSE qualification with different syllabuses. It is crucial that before starting on a particular GCSE course, you ensure that you first identify a centre, such as a school or college, which will accept his/her examination entry. You may find it helpful to consider the following:

- If you have an existing and positive relationship with a school or college you may wish to enquire as to whether your child could be entered there for the exams and that the school or college will be willing to undertake to assess any coursework.
- If you do not have any relationship or contact with a school or college you will need to contact an examinations board, which should be able to arrange a local centre on your behalf. If you do this you should also ensure that the board can arrange for any coursework to be assessed.

Examinations boards can supply syllabuses and copies of previous exam papers at nominal cost or they can be downloaded from the board’s website.

GCSE courses are usually studied over two years but can be completed in a single year. Examination entries need to be finalised in the January prior to the exam (in June).

If a child has been withdrawn from school in order to be home educated part way through Key Stage 4 there may be a need to liaise with the school in order to ensure continuity of learning.

GCSE Examination Boards

Oxford Cambridge & RSA (OCR)

Website: www.ocr.org.uk

Email: helpdesk@ocr.org.uk

Tel: 01223 553998

OCR Information Bureau, Vocational Qualifications:

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

Email: cib@ocr.org.uk

Tel: 024 7647 0033

Edexcel

Website: www.edexcel.org.uk

Email: enquiries@edexcel.org.uk

Tel 0870 240 9800

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Email: mailbox@aqa.org.uk

Telephone: 0161 953 1180

University of Cambridge International Qualifications

Website: www.cie.org.uk

Yahoo

This group is for home educating families who have children who wish to take GCSEs. The intention is to share information, resources and experience

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-Exams-GCSE-A_AS_Levels-OU-Others/

8. RESOURCES

There are many websites offering advice and resources on home education. They can be accessed following the links in the websites listed below

Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS)

Tel 01707 371854

E-mail Admin@heas.org.uk

Website www.heas.org.uk

Education Otherwise Association Limited

Helpline: 0870 7300 074

E-mail enquiries@education-otherwise.org.uk

Website www.education-otherwise.org.uk

HE Special UK

<http://www.he-special.org.uk/>

Provides information, articles, resources and mailing list for parents of children with special needs who would like to educate at home.

Choosing Education Options In Cambridge

www.educationchoice.org.uk

Cambridge Home Educating Families Group

<http://www.cambridgehomeeducators.org.uk/>

The Open and Distance Learning Quality Council (for information on correspondence courses)

Tel 020 7612 7090

The Gypsy – Traveller Pupils website

www.gypsy-traveller.org/education/