

# Beginners Guide to Home Educating

This guide has been created to help support families living in the west midlands who are considering home educating. The below information is based on the laws in England only.

## What does the law say?

### Section 7 of the Education Act 1996

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability, aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## When is my child of compulsory education age?

Children are of compulsory education age at the beginning of the first term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday until the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16.

## Do I need permission to Home Educate my child?

You **do not** need permission to home educate in the UK. Consent to remove from the school roll is required if your child attends a Sen School that is arranged by the Local Authority.

## Can my child attend school part-time?

In the UK this is known as Flexi-schooling.

## What is Flexi-schooling?

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement whereby children of compulsory education age receive their education partially at school, and partially elsewhere under the supervision of their parents. Flexi-schooling is a perfectly legal option, but there is no guaranteed right for parents to Flexi-school. Whilst they may request that their child is Flexi-schooled it is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. The education provided at home and at school must together constitute a full-time provision.

## Is Flexi-schooling the same as part-time education?

No, part-time education is only allowed in law as a temporary solution to a specific problem (usually for medical or mental health reasons or for integrating a pupil into a new situation).

Flexi-schooling is different. Flexi-schooling provides children with a full-time education although not all of it will occur in school. It can be a temporary or permanent arrangement and may be requested for a wide variety of reasons.

In December 2014 the Schools Admissions code (England) School Admissions Code (England) was updated. Children under compulsory school age can now attend part-time if the parents so wish. Children are marked absent using code X which means school attendance records are not affected.

For compulsory education age, historically code B has been acceptable but following the issue of The Elective Home Education Departmental Guidance for Local Authorities (April 19), the DfE has made it clear that they want schools to only use code C for Flexi schooling

### **What does a '*Suitable Education*' mean?**

There is no definition of Suitable education in the UK. The education must be;

-full-time; There is no legal definition of what constitutes full-time education, either at home or school

*EHEGP 2.9 In practice, the question of whether education for a specific child is full-time will depend on the facts of each case; but you as parents should at least be able to quantify and demonstrate the amount of time for which your child is being educated. Education which clearly is not occupying a significant proportion of a child's life (making due allowance for holiday periods) will probably not meet the s.7 requirement.*

-efficient– it must achieve what it sets out to achieve;

-suitable – to the child's age, ability, and aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. The education must culminate in enabling the child to function as an independent UK citizen outside the community they grew up in if they choose.

### **What does this mean for me?**

This means that as long as the education you are providing is deemed suitable there is no legal requirement for you to do any of the following things -

- Have any qualifications
- Have any particular place or location to teach in
- Aim for your child to gain any qualifications
- Teach the Curriculum for the country in which you are living
- Provide a 'broad and balanced curriculum
- Make lesson plans
- Deliver formal lessons
- Mark any work done by your child
- Assess progress or set targets
- Reproduce school-type peer group socialisation
- Match age expectations in school

Although of course, you may decide that you would voluntarily like to do some of these things within your Home Educating approach!

## **Will my Home Educating provision be monitored?**

Local Authorities have no formal powers to monitor the provision of education at home but have a statutory duty to establish the identities of any children who may not be receiving a suitable education. As part of this process, if your local authority becomes aware that you are Home Educating, they may ask for an informal meeting with you to establish the suitability of your provision. The time lapse between your decision to deregister and first contact with the Local Authority and the approach they adopt will vary from region to region.

## **Do I need to agree to a meeting with the Local Authority?**

As parents, you are under no legal obligation to meet with a representative of the local authority but you must respond to their inquiries which can be in the form of a written report (recommended). If you do choose to meet them, there is no requirement that the meeting should take place at your home. However, if your Local authority feels that your child may not be receiving a suitable education, they could start the legal process to get your child back to school.

## **Do I get any financial support from the local authority to Home Educate?**

The short answer to this is no! Once you take the decision to Home Educate you become solely responsible for all the costs associated with providing a 'suitable' education including stationery, any online resources, activities, and clubs, and the costs of public exams, though there are some local authorities in England that will pay for some exams & there are also some colleges that offer courses for free to 14-16s that are home educated even though there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

## **First Steps in Home Educating.**

Once you understand the legal aspects of Home Educating and you are ready to begin your journey – what next? Here are some possible first steps...

### **Removing name from the school roll**

#### **Mainstream**

If your child is of compulsory education age & attends a mainstream state school then a simple deregistration letter can be sent to the head teacher to request your child's name be removed from the school roll. Under 8(1)(d) of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006, this must take place with immediate effect from the date on the deregistration letter.

If your child is under compulsory education age you can write to the school stating the child's place is no longer required. The child's name must be removed with immediate effect from the date on the letter in accordance with regulation 8(3)(a) of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006.

## **Sen School**

If your child attends a sen school organised by the Local Authority named on an EHCP you are required to seek consent to remove their name from the school roll from the Local Authority under Section 8(2) of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006. The sen code of practice 2015 guidelines state 'If the school is a special school, the local authority must give consent for the child's name to be removed, but this should not be a lengthy or complex process.'

It's important to know the Elective home education guidance for Parents and Local Authority which can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

Also joining your local Facebook groups will help direct to local activities and events for home-educated families.