



ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PARENTS

Introduction

These notes of guidance are intended to help those families who are considering educating their child at home. The education of a child at home is a great responsibility for a family and it demands a serious commitment of time, patience and energy. The information in this leaflet should make clear the current legislation together with North Somerset Council's policies and ways of working. There follows a series of questions and answers which will hopefully clarify the situation and help the family in making their decision.

We aim to create positive working relationships with home educators and will offer as much support and advice as possible.

Do children have to go to school?

The 1996 Education Act states that ***“it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate full-time education for their children”***. Most parents carry out this duty by ensuring their child attends the school which serves their local community. However, for a wide variety of reasons some parents decide to take on the duty to educate their children themselves: that is to opt for ***“Elective Home Education” (EHE)***.

What is the parents' actual duty?

Under section 7 of the 1996 Act it is the parents' duty: ***'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'***.

The law requires a child to be educated from the start of the term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year they reach 16.

What is the Local Education Authority's duty under the 1986 Education Act?

The Act places the obligation on Local Authority to ensure that each child receives such an education. It is also the duty of North Somerset Council to ensure the safety and well being of the child.

What is meant by efficient and suitable education?

Education is considered to be **efficient** and **suitable** if it enables children to achieve their full potential and it prepares the child for adult life in their community, as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he/she wishes to do so.

What does education at home really mean?

This is when a family makes the decision to take on the duty to educate their child themselves as opposed to sending them to a school in order to receive their education.

Some parents may decide to teach their child themselves, or to make arrangements to plan and teach in small groups with other local families who are involved in education at home. Alternatively the family may elect to pay for the services of a private tutor.

Irrespective of **who** actually teaches the child, it will be up to the parent/s or carers/s to demonstrate to North Somerset Council that the programme of work is helping the child to learn and that the child is developing according to her/his age, ability and aptitude and any Special Educational Needs she/he may have.

Local Authorities have no legal duty to provide financial support to parents who choose to home educate their children.

What constitutes an effective plan of work or 'curriculum'?

In educational terms a plan of work is referred to as the **curriculum**. Whether provided in school or at home, the curriculum consists of everything that happens in order to educate the child. In determining what your child will learn, you should consider The **Every Child Matters** (ECM) Green Paper which identifies the five outcomes that are most important to children and young people:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

To learn more about ECM go to: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

A good educational programme also includes elements such as:

- personal, social and health education
- outdoor and environmental education
- citizenship, including careers education
- home economics and living skills
- Key skills numeracy; literacy; ICT; problem solving

What coaching or teaching methods do I need to consider?

A variety of approaches are encouraged and learning can be achieved in many different ways such as subject study, integrated or topic methods. Progress must be made in literacy and numeracy.

When a child is educated at home it is the decision of the parent as to what to teach (or leave out) and how their child learns. The National Curriculum does not have to apply when educating a child at home.

However, it is worthwhile to consider and remember that in the event of a future decision to enter or re-enter a child to the formal education system, this step will be made easier if some of the requirements of the National Curriculum have been taken into account. Using National Curriculum levels and assessments are an efficient way to ensure your child is progressing in line with children of a similar age.

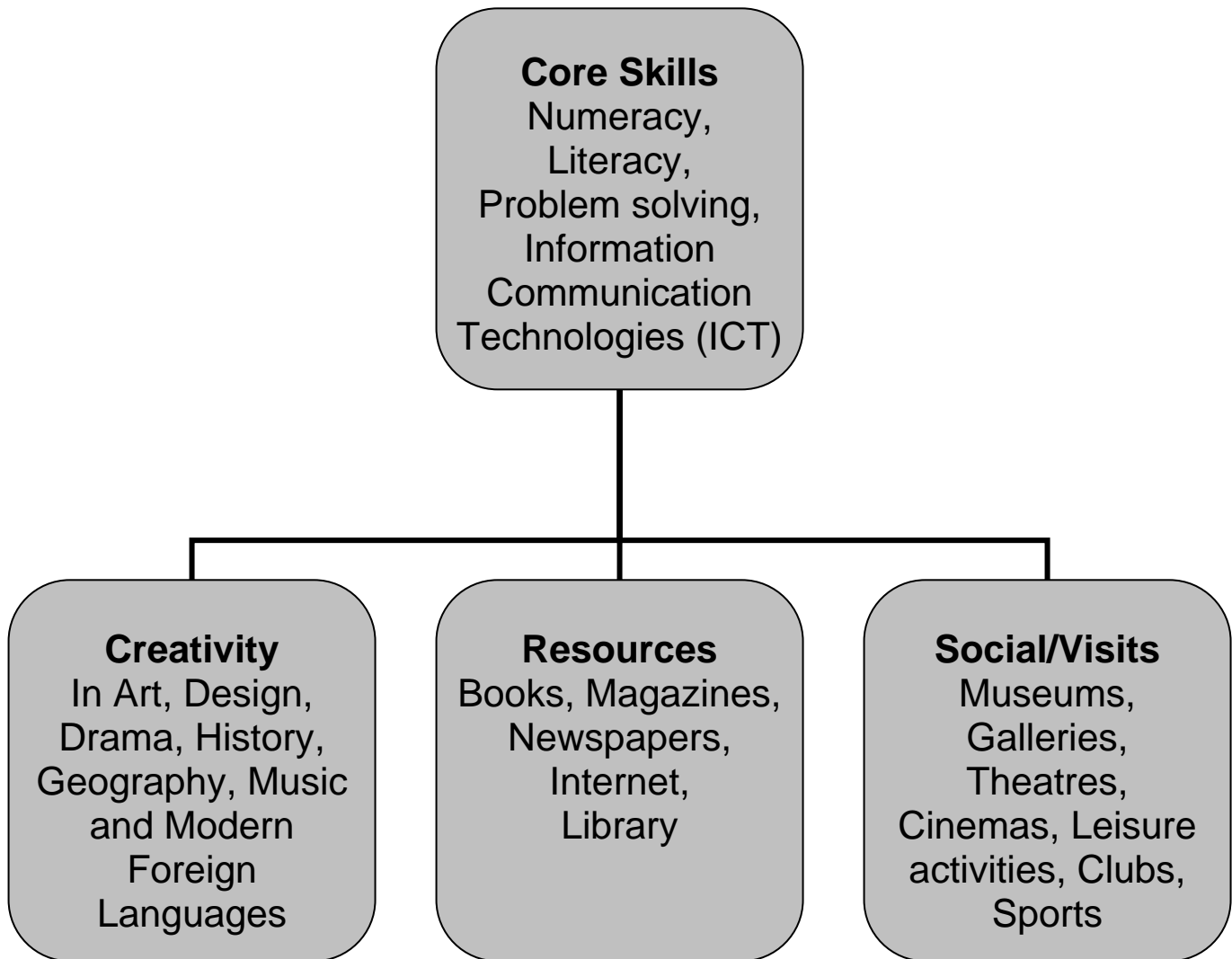
Do I need to construct a special timetable for our Education at Home programme?

There is no one form of education; children learn in many different ways, at different times and speed, and from different people. Your home education will not necessarily follow a set timetable, but it is expected that some records of work of your child's progress are retained.

Records can take any form, however try to remember that they provide a record of your child's education. You may wish to consider:

- What do you hope your child will achieve in one years time?
- How are you going to go about it?
- What are the special qualities that you wish to nurture?

Can you provide these educational opportunities?



In schools, children aged 5 to 11 study art and design, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, music, physical education, science and religious education.

Age 11 to 14 subjects would include art and design, citizenship, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and science. The teaching of careers education, sex education and religious education is also important.

Age 14 to 16 subjects would include citizenship, English, information and communication technology, mathematics, physical education and science. The teaching of careers education, sex education, work-related learning and religious education is also included.

How do I start Elective Home Education?

If your child currently attends school and it is your intention to withdraw him/her, you will need to give written notification to the Head teacher and governors of your child's school that you wish to educate your son/daughter at home.

If possible send a copy to:

Cathy Plummer
Elective Home Education Liaison Officer
Children and Young People Services
EOTAS Service
Ellesmere Road
Uphill
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 4UT

The Head teacher will inform the Children and Young People's Services.

However, if your child attends a special school or is statemented with special educational needs, the parents need to seek permission from the Local Education Authority and ensure that the special education will continue at home.

If your child has not started school and is of statutory school age (five years old) you need to write to the Children and Young People's Services as above, stating that you intend to educate your child at home.

Once you have informed the Head Teacher or Young People's Services of your intention to educate your child at home a liaison teacher with responsibility for Elective Home Education will make an appointment to meet with you, preferably at home with your child.

We hope to establish good working relationships with parents and students.

We will send you a form to complete and return, which we will discuss at the initial meeting.

Can my child sit examinations?

Public examinations at 16+ are available to children in some schools and colleges, parents will need to contact exam centres and exam boards. In our view children educated at home should not be deprived of the opportunity to gain qualifications. Preparation for examinations should be made as early as possible.

What happens if my child has Special Educational Needs?

If your child has a statement of Special Educational Needs, this will continue to be subject to the usual annual review process.

Parents continue to have responsibility for the education they provide, but the Local Authority has a legal duty to ensure that the child's needs are met. This may mean working with other partnership agencies, further advice on SEN can be obtained from:

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team

PO Box 51

Town Hall

Weston-super-Mare

BS23 1ZZ

Telephone: 01275 888 294

How often will North Somerset Children and Young People Services need to review my child's progress and what is likely to happen during the visit?

The liaison teacher who visits may feel able to offer informal advice from time to time, but she/he cannot undertake either to direct your child's learning or to provide learning resources. Remember, it is your responsibility to plan for your child's learning experience.

The purpose of each visit is to review the quality and range of the education being offered by you for your child. The focus of the visits will arise from the information you have provided, and/or from a previous visit. Normally contact will be made once a year, but more contact may be necessary with some families. The liaison teacher will produce a report and a copy will be sent to you.

If the liaison teacher feels there may be safeguarding concerns then the case will be referred to other agencies. All local authorities have a statutory responsibility to do this.

Is there general guidance available to help in planning our Elective Home Education?

You are more likely to succeed in Elective Home Education if you take note of the following suggestions;

- The learning process is effective when it is active and practical, carefully planned and learning incorporates the use of resources available around you.
- Learning includes the Functioning Skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT and problem solving.
- Learning is enhanced by educational visits and broadcasts.
- There are opportunities for physical development and which allow social interaction to take place in different contexts.
- Learning should be enjoyable.
- There are opportunities for independent study and research, so a quiet area for sustained study/work will be helpful.
- Provide opportunities to sit examinations if appropriate.

What kind of evidence will the Elective Home Education Liaison Officer expect to see?

The Elective Home Education Liaison Officer would expect to see evidence of the progress your child has made. The evidence must be sufficient to show that your child is receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude.

A curriculum plan, timetable, records of progress, workbooks will help to assess if the education is suitable. You may wish to show examples of your child's work.

What happens if the Elective Home Education Liaison Officer has concerns or reservations about our education at home programme?

If the Liaison Officer feels that the education you are providing is not yet offering your child an appropriate education, you will be informed, giving you clear reasons for this view. The liaison teacher will make every effort to recommend ways to help you provide an efficient education, and you

will be given a time scale to improve the education or overcome any difficulties. If, ultimately, the North Somerset Education Service conclude that your child is not being effectively educated, steps may need to be taken to ensure a more adequate provision for your child. This may result in an action to register your child at a school. We would stress that this will only happen if we are convinced that you are not educating your child according to his or her age, ability and aptitude and we hope by detailed discussion, we will be able to show exactly why this is so. It is rare for this to happen.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints on any aspect of the procedures outlined in this document, you should contact:

Nick Donnelly
EOTAS Manager
Children and Young People's Services
Fairways
Ellesmere Road
Uphill
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 4UT

Telephone 01934 622341

FINALLY

Do:

- Think long and hard about educating at home. 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 the costs involved visits, equipment, books.
- Provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social activities, contact with other children, and joint activities with other children and groups.
- Keep your options open as your child's needs may change at different ages and stages.

Do not:

- Take your child out of school simply because you have a disagreement with the school or a teacher. In such circumstances, seek an opportunity to talk to the Head Teacher or consult the Education Welfare Officer attached to your child's school.

What if I decide to educate at home and then change my mind?

If you wish your child to return to school, or if you are currently educating a primary aged child at home but feel you might like her/him to attend a secondary school, please do not hesitate to contact:

North Somerset Council, School Admissions and Transport Team
Town Hall
Weston super Mare
BS23 1UJ
Telephone: 01275 884 078

Or you may approach a local school to see if there are any places available.

Connexions South West

Connexions is an organisation that provides a free service for all 13-19 year olds (and up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) Connexions Personal Advisors offer the information, advice and practical help young people need with any issues that may be affecting their life - from working and learning, to more personal matters such as relationships, health and housing in the county. This help them make a smooth transition to adulthood and working life. For more information regarding support near you contact:

Connexions
45 The Boulevard
Weston Super Mare
BS23 1PG
Telephone: 01934 644 443

Website: www.connexionswest.org.uk

Elective Home Education - Fair Processing Notice

Education Other than at School service will help support your family through the Elective Home Education process. The information collected through this process may also be used for monitoring and statistical research purposes. All information you provide will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Contacts

North Somerset Council Liaison Officer responsible for Elective Home Education:

Cathy Plummer
Children and Young People Services
EOTAS Service
Ellesmere Road
Uphill
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 4UT
Telephone 01934 622 341
Email: cathy.plummer@n-somerset.gov.uk

Education otherwise

A membership organization in the U.K. which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school.

www.education-otherwise.org

Local contact – Viv Woods Telephone 07957 580935

Home Education Centre based in Somerset.

www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk

Home education in the UK

Information for home educators including information on GCSE's for home educated children

www.home.ed.info

Home education advisory service

UK-based organization for home educators and those contemplating home education. Publications, advice, information, support, contacts, helpline.

www.heas.org.uk

Local Support group for home educators

Vicky Preston, Portishead 01275 - 848425

Some education resources web sites:

www.learndirect.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk

www.byteachers.org.uk