HOME EDUCATION

This information sheet relates to England only

As parents, you - not the state - are responsible for ensuring that your child, if he or she is of compulsory school age, is properly educated. Despite the term 'compulsory school age', education does not have to be undertaken through attendance at school. Educating children at home can be a suitable solution and can work well when it is carried out with a proper regard for the needs of the child. You can teach your child at home, either full or part-time. This is called home education (sometimes 'elective home education' or 'home schooling').

If your child is currently at school, you should tell the school if you plan to educate them at home. The school must accept this decision if you're taking your child out completely and they must remove their name from the admission register. They can refuse if you want to send your child to school some of the time. Schools are not required to provide any support to parents that have withdrawn their child for elective home education. Where a pupil is withdrawn from school to be educated at home, there is no obligation for the school to keep that place open in case you want to return in the future. Therefore, if you wish for your child to return to that school, this might not be possible.

Once a child is educated at home, your local authority will begin making enquiries as to how suitable the education being provided is. It doesn't mean that you must deliver the same type of education that would be provided in school, but you must make sure that the education you provide is suitable for your child/ren. The education you provide must be age-appropriate, enable the child to make progress according to his or her level of ability, and should take account of any specific aptitudes or special educational needs.

The Department for Education has published Elective home education: departmental guidance for parents, which you should refer to for additional information. They have also published All you need to know about home-schooling and elective home education (EHE) which you might also find helpful. They strongly recommend you meet with your Local Authority to consider whether home education is appropriate for your family and your child before you decide whether to withdraw them from their school's roll.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The SEND Code of Practice has information about children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, (SEND) who are educated at home. See page 214 onwards. It states:

- **Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to educate children, including children with SEN, at home.**
- **Home education must be suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and SEN.**
- **Local authorities should work in partnership with, and support, parents to ensure that the SEN of these children are met where the local authority already knows the children have SEN or the parents have drawn the children's special needs to the authority's attention.**
- **Local authorities do not have a duty under section 22 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to assess every home educated child to see whether or not they have SEN.**
- **The high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant is intended to fund provision for all relevant children and young people in the authority's area, including home-educated children.**
- **Local authorities should fund the SEN needs of home-educated children where it is appropriate to do so.**
- **In cases where local authorities and parents agree that home education is the right provision for a child or young person with an EHCP, the plan should make clear that the child or young person will be educated at home. If it does then the local authority, under Section 42(2) of the Children and Families Act 2014, must arrange the special educational provision set out in the plan, working with the parents.**
- **Under Section 19 of the Act, a local authority must have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parents, or the young person.**

If your child has Special Educational Needs/Disability and attends a special school, you will need to obtain the local authority's permission to educate them at home. You do not need their permission if your child attends a mainstream school, even if they have an EHCP.

When your child has an EHCP, it is the local authority's duty to ensure that the educational provision specified in the plan in Section F is made available to the child - but only if you as the parents have not arranged for the child to receive a suitable education in some other way. Therefore, if the home education you provide as parents is suitable, the local authority has no duty to arrange any special educational provision for your child.

Their EHCP should therefore set out the type of special educational provision that the local authority has assessed that the child requires and should also state that parents have made their own arrangements under s. 7 of the Education Act 1996. Section I of your child's EHCP will say 'parent has made own arrangements' or 'elective home education' or words to that effect.

This means the local authority does not have to provide the Special Education Provision set out in the EHCP.

If you feel strongly that their child with SEN (with or without an EHCP) should be educated at home but cannot undertake this yourself, and the local authority agrees that it would be inappropriate for your child to be educated in a school, post-16 institution, or early years setting, then the local authority itself may arrange that the special educational provision that the child needs is made elsewhere. This can - if you agree - mean that it is provided in the home, but not directly by you as parents. If this happens, the EHCP should clearly explain the arrangements. They may arrange tuition directly or give you a personal budget/direct payment to arrange it yourself.

IPSEA provides additional useful information about the legislative framework:

- **Home education and 'education otherwise'**
- **Home education and 'education otherwise' FAQs**

If your child has SEND but does not have an EHCP

You may also home educate children who have SEN but do not have an EHCP. As with children and young people with an EHCP, the local authority should work with you and consider whether to provide support in the home to help you make suitable provision.
If you are already home educating, you also have the right to ask for an EHCP needs assessment. There is no requirement for your child to be in school to be assessed. Information about the right to request an EHCP needs assessment and the right to appeal should be available to all parents including those who are considering home education because they feel that the special educational support being provided in the school is insufficient to meet the child or young person's needs.

Curriculum

Although you must make sure your child receives a full-time education from the age of 5, you do not have to follow the national curriculum, nor do you have to follow standard school hours. As a parent you can choose to engage private tutors or other adults, or online tuition, to assist in providing a suitable education, but there is no requirement to do so.

Although children being home educated are not normally registered at any school or college, you may choose to arrange for a child to receive part of his or her total education at a school ('flexi-schooling') or at an FE college or other 16-19 provider if the child is aged 14 or above. The purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home. Schools and colleges are under no obligation to agree to such arrangements, but some are happy to do so.

It can be helpful to make links with other home educating families to prevent your child becoming socially isolated.

We have compiled some free teaching resources and Speech & Language therapy videos which you might find useful.

Scope also provides a range of online resources and activities.

Potential benefits of home education

- **Flexibility re the timetable, allowing you to include breaks when needed or repeating lessons/content as required**
- **You can adapt the teaching to your child's interests, pace of learning and preferred learning approaches**
- **You can provide one-to-one teaching**
- **Siblings and other home-schooled children can provide peer support**
- **You may feel it is a safer and more welcoming environment for your child**
- **You can instil your values, beliefs and ethics into the teaching**
- **It might help you achieve a better home/work balance**
- **Therapies can be provided in the home**
- **There may be fewer distractions in the family home**
- **You can incorporate life skills into your teaching**
- **You will get to see what your child can achieve, and also what they are still struggling with to allow a more personalised approach**
- **It can boost a child's confidence when the focus is on what they can do and achieve**

Important considerations relating to home education

- **It will require significant commitment from you as parents and it can be physically and emotionally demanding**
- **It may result in a loss of income for the family if you have to give up your job or work part time**
- **You will need to provide opportunities for socialising and making friends**
- **You might also feel isolated**
- **Lack of professional support and input**
- **It can be expensive, especially if specialist resources are needed. You are also responsible for any exam fees**
- **It can be hard for some children to distinguish between home and school time when both are in the same setting**
- **You might feel you do not possess expertise or knowledge in all of the topics**

For further information

If you would like to receive further information about elective home education please contact the Down's Syndrome Association Helpline on 0333 121 2300 (10am-4pm) or email info@downs-syndrome.org.uk and we would be delighted to provide further information.

DOWN'S SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
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