Elective Home Education

A Guide for Parents/Carers
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2 Introduction

This booklet has been written to help you understand what may be involved if you are thinking of educating your child away from the school system.

It outlines the procedure to be followed by parents or carers who decide to educate their child or children at home. It also covers the systems put in place by Oldham Local Authority to fulfil their responsibilities in this situation.

We recognise that there are a variety of ways in which education can be provided but we would like you to consider the issues before coming to a decision. Deciding to educate at home is a major step that will require a great deal of commitment from you as far as time and energy are concerned. Depending on the age of your child, it may be useful to discuss your plans and listen to their point of view. Consider any costs that may be involved – equipment, books, tutors, exams etc. Give consideration to the social side of education; contact with other young people, joint activities and the stimulus of seeing the work of other children are the benefits of school life which help the overall development of individual children.

A decision to educate at home should not be made solely to resolve a particular problem in school. Discuss the problem with the Head teacher in the first instance, or write to the Governors, or speak to someone at the Local Authority (LA) at the Civic Centre.

Useful contacts are:

Inclusion and Post 16
Level 8
Civic Centre,
West Street,
Oldham
OL1 1XJ
Tel: 0161 770 6620/6621
Email: ehe@oldham.gov.uk

ELECTING TO EDUCATE YOUR CHILD AT HOME CAN BE A CHALLENGE. HOWEVER, HAVING CONSIDERED THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, IF YOU CHOOSE THIS OPTION WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN TO TRY TO ENSURE YOU ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE A GOOD EDUCATION. WE ARE KEEN TO MAINTAIN A GOOD WORKING PARTNERSHIP AS WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT ALL OLDHAM’S CHILDREN HAVE THE SKILLS NEEDED TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE.
3 Legal requirements for parents

Does my child/children have to go to school?

The 1996 Education Act states that it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate education for their children.

A parent may provide this education;

- by ensuring the child’s regular attendance at school; or
- otherwise

For most children in Oldham this means that they will attend a local school but, for various reasons, a small number of parents decide to undertake the responsibility of educating their children outside the school system.

How many parents in Oldham educate their children at home?

There are approximately 160 children being educated by their parents in Oldham; this figure can fluctuate on a weekly basis.

- some parents take on this responsibility themselves
- some parents work with other parents/neighbours and/or private tutors
- some parents use materials and ideas from outside agencies such as Education Otherwise

What is a parent’s duty?

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 every parent of a child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her 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 attendance at school or otherwise.

What do the words ‘efficient’ and ‘suitable’ education mean?

This is not defined in the Act and each case has to be judged according to the child’s needs and the educational provision made. Parents will have to show that the programme of education is helping that child to develop according to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs he(she) may have. A home education programme does not need to be the same as ‘lessons’ which are provided in school i.e. the National Curriculum does not have to be followed.

Education is likely to be considered:

- ‘efficient’ - if it enables a child to achieve his/her full potential; and
- ‘suitable’ - if it prepares a child for a full and active life in society

What is ‘full-time education’?

There is no definition of full time education within the Act. It is difficult to compare the hours of teaching delivered within a school setting with the time spent on home education, which is often on a one-to-one basis.
4 Planning a home education programme

What is a home education programme?

A home education programme is everything that a parent does to educate their child. It should cater for a child’s all round development, and should be:

Broad: it should introduce the pupil to a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills

Balanced: each part should be allotted sufficient time to make its special contribution but not so much that it squeezes out other essential parts of the learning

Relevant: subjects should be taught so as to bring out their applications to the pupil’s own experience and to adult life and to give due emphasis to practical aspects

Differentiated: what is taught and how it is taught need to be matched to the pupil’s ability and aptitude. It should also be suitably challenging so that a child can show that some progress is being made.

A successful home education programme may offer a suitable education where parents:

- ensure that their child develops reading and other basic skills appropriate to his/her age
- are involved in planning and providing the programme
- include different subject areas – each of which is allocated time in the programme
- take advantage of the resources which are available, for example, museums, T.V., sports centres, youth organisations
- provide opportunities for independent study and provide a quiet area for study work
- provide opportunities which encourage physical activity (for example, swimming) and allow a child to mix with other children and adults.
- cover key skills

What if my child has an Education, Health and Care Plan?

Parents wishing to begin home education with a child registered at any school or academy must seek the consent of the LA in order to withdraw the child from school.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and a parent begins home education, the LA’s statutory duty to undertake an annual review still continues. Parents will have to show they can provide for the special needs and the LA has a legal duty to ensure that.

Must a home education programme follow the National Curriculum?

The National Curriculum only applies in schools.

However, if you decide to re-integrate your child into a school in the future this would be more straightforward if your home education programme takes into account the National Curriculum.
The Curriculum in all Oldham schools is:

- broad and balanced
- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and
- intended to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Children educated in state schools follow nationally defined curricula. For children educated at home there is no requirement to follow this guidance, but it can be useful when you are planning your home education programme.

A home education programme does not need to follow a set of ‘lessons’ or ‘timetable’, but parents often find it useful to develop a plan or a framework to structure what they intend to do.

**It is your own responsibility to plan and carry out your arrangements.**

**There is no funding to support you with your home education plans**
5 Monitoring home education in Oldham

What are the Local Authority’s responsibilities?

The LA has a duty to ensure that parents are providing efficient and suitable education for your child. LA’s have no right of access to a parent’s home. However parents may, if they wish, permit access to their home, or offer an alternative venue for a meeting. Alternatively, parents can send details of the educational programme in writing to the LA. The Department for Education (DFE) “believes that positive relationships and mutual respect between local authorities and parents is the best way of ensuring that the best interests of the child are safeguarded”.

How do I go about it?

If your child is below compulsory school age then you do not need to do anything but it would help us to maintain accurate records if you wrote to let us know you intend to educate your child at home when he (she) is of compulsory school age, with details of their name and date of birth.

If your child is already registered with an Oldham school, you should write to the Head teacher informing them of your intention to educate at home. They are required to pass on this information to the LA. The LA will make enquiries, including from Social Care, the Health authorities and any previous school/Early Years provision, to ensure that there are no safeguarding concerns.

If your child is already being educated at home and you move into Oldham, please contact the LA to let us know.

What if I don’t inform the LA, but just keep my child at home?

This will mean that you are not complying with the requirements of the legislation. Oldham LA must satisfy itself that parents are fulfilling their duties. If you do not provide evidence, either in writing or through a visit, the LA may conclude that your child’s education is not effective and we would then take steps to get your child back in school.

How will the LA ensure that the provision is satisfactory?

Once we are informed of your decision to educate at home, we will make initial contact by either by visiting you at home, telephone or by writing to you to ensure you are aware of the implications and find out how you would like us to contact you in future. We will then ask you to provide your educational philosophy and plans to check that your plans are satisfactory. Ideally this would take place during a home visit, but if you prefer it can be arranged at a mutually convenient venue. We will also ask for an education report from time to time and at least annually. Please remember, we have a legal duty to ask for evidence of suitable provision. Alternatively you can send evidence of your educational plans and samples of work.

You should note that any LA Officer will not be acting as a home tutor and it is your responsibility to plan your child’s education and to carry it out. The LA will not be able to provide any resources.
What kind of evidence will be helpful?

- A written programme of work.
- Samples of work also give a good indication of progress over time, as well as current abilities.

How will I know if the LA is satisfied?

We will write to you to give feedback after receiving your evidence.

What happens if the LA is not satisfied?

You will be kept fully in the picture if we have concerns and will be advised by letter what issues need to be addressed. You will be given a reasonable time to improve the situation and a further visit/contact will be arranged.

If we are still not satisfied, and there is no evidence of any progress over a period time, the LA may make an Attendance Order (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996), requiring your child to attend a named school. This would be very much a last resort, the LA wants to be as helpful as possible in enabling you to home educate, but has a duty to ensure a suitable education is being provided.

How often will the LA check?

The first contact with you will be either by visiting you at home, telephone or letter after we have been notified of your decision to educate your child at home. Further contact or visit arrangements will be mutually agreed. If everything is satisfactory the visits/contact will then take place on a flexible basis, at least annually.
6 Before making your final decision

Please:

• think very carefully about the implications of choosing elective home education – it requires great commitment and energy

• plan the home education programme thoroughly before withdrawing your child to make sure that you can fulfil all your responsibilities

• provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social activities, contact with other children, and joint activities with other children and groups

• take account of the fact that your child’s needs are likely to change at different ages and stages in his/her education

• look at the costs involved – for example, visits, books and resources and examination costs

• it would not be in your child’s best interests to decide to home educate because of a disagreement with a teacher or a school. There are various ways of trying to resolve a problem through the Head teacher, the governors or the LA

• home education should not be seen as a solution to the problem of getting a reluctant child to school. The Education Attendance Officer for your school would be very happy to help you with this problem.
7 Contact details

If you have any queries about how to take your child out of school to begin Elective Home Education and the requirements please contact:

ehe@oldham.gov.uk

Inclusion and Post 16
Level 8
Civic Centre
Oldham
OL1 1UT

Tel: 0161 770 6620/3208
8 Useful addresses and websites

Listed below are some of the organisations that support parents who educate their children at home. You will find others on the internet.

Home Education Advisory Service
PO Box 98
Welwyn Garden City
Herts.
AL8 6AN

www.heas.org.uk
Tel: 01707 371 854

Education Otherwise
P.O. Box 63
Swaffham
PE37 9AT

www.education-otherwise.org
Tel: 0845 478 6345

http://educationalfreedom.org.uk/

http://edyourself.org

If you have access to the Internet you might find the following sites helpful:

www.parentscentre.gov.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/learning
www.learndirect.co.uk

Resource Information

The following lists are provided to assist parents in planning a suitable education for their child. It is not an endorsement of content or approach.

Web Sites for Home Educators
- Education Otherwise
- EdYourself
- Home Education UK
  - [http://inteleducationresources.intel.co.uk/index.aspx](http://inteleducationresources.intel.co.uk/index.aspx) (free) - devise your own curriculum from national curriculum based activities (mainly Key stages 3 and 4)
  - [www.homeworkelephant.co.uk](http://www.homeworkelephant.co.uk) - a guide to over 5,000 sites to help you with an extensive range of topics. Some curriculum based some life learning. Suitable for Primary and Secondary aged children.
  - [www.show.me.uk](http://www.show.me.uk) – range of materials linked through the best of the UK’s museums and galleries. Variety of approached using games, cartoons and pictorial reproductions. Real
good fun approach using an excellent range of learning styles and approaches. Suitable for Primary aged children

Curriculum, Courses & Related Items

- **Accelerated Christian Education (ACE)** – [www.schooloftomorrow.com](http://www.schooloftomorrow.com)
  American, Christian bought-in curriculum offering individualised learning plans.

- **Ambleside Online** – [www.amblesideonline.org](http://www.amblesideonline.org)
  Free curriculum based on Charlotte Mason’s teaching methods

- **Christopherus** – [www.christopherushomeschool.org](http://www.christopherushomeschool.org)
  Waldorf approach to home schooling. An American site.

- **Gridlink Education System** - [http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/ctrh/homepage.htm](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/ctrh/homepage.htm)
  Offers distance learning for all out of school pupils from KS2 upwards.

- **Inter High School** – [www.interhigh.co.uk](http://www.interhigh.co.uk)
  Virtual secondary school. Pupils log on for 2/3 hours of on-line tuition in the morning where they are part of a virtual classroom. They register at the beginning of the lesson and follow the teacher’s lesson as it is delivered in real time. The lesson will be interactive and pupils will be able to hear and ask questions during the session. After assignments are set, the pupil organises the remainder of the day themselves.

  Independent school for home-educators. Distance learning, limited number of students enrolled. Courses cover National Curriculum Maths, Science and English for 11-14 year olds (Key Stage 3) a range of University of Cambridge International GCSE’s for 14-16 year olds and the school offers exam centre facilities being an approved University of Cambridge International Exam Centre.

- **National Extension College** – [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk)
  Offers home-study courses for older children. Members of Education Otherwise get a discount.

- **Oak Meadow** – [www.oakmeadow.com](http://www.oakmeadow.com)
  American bought-in curriculum. Resources from pre-school through to high-school with differing levels of support..

- **Oxford Open Learning** – [www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)
  Oxford Open Learning has been offering the highest quality course materials since 1985. Offers GCSEs, A Levels, Accounting, Computing, Basic Skills and also Management.

- **Sonlight** – [www.sonlight.com](http://www.sonlight.com)
  American bought-in curriculum. Based on the fundamentals of evangelical Christian thought. Users have commented that it is easy to adapt and use, even if they are not Christian.

- **Study Dog** – [www.studydog.com](http://www.studydog.com)
  StudyDog is a Free Early Reading (pre K thru 2/UK ages 4-8) software program
### 9 Publishers of educational material

Examples of publishers:

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<tr>
<td>Cambridge University Press</td>
<td>UPH Shaftesbury Road Cambridge CB2 2RU</td>
<td>Tel: 01233 358 831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman Educational Schools Division</td>
<td>Marketing Department Freepost ANG2041 Harlow Essex CM20 2YF</td>
<td>Tel: 0845 630 1111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collins Educational HarperCollins Publishers</td>
<td>Freepost RTKB SGZT ZYJL Honley HD9 6QZ</td>
<td>Tel: 0844 576 8126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heinemann Educational</td>
<td>Freepost OF1771 PO Box 381 Oxford OX2 8BR</td>
<td>Tel: 0845 630 1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folens Publishers Limited</td>
<td>Boscombe Road Dunstable Bedfordshire LU5 4RL</td>
<td>Tel: 0870 609 1237</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearson ELT</td>
<td>Edinburgh Gate Harlow Essex CM20 2JE</td>
<td>Tel: 0845 313 66 66</td>
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