

Elective Home Education



Guide for Parents

January 2018

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Section 1: What is elective home education?

- 1.1. Whilst education is compulsory, school is not.
- 1.2. We recognise that there are many approaches to providing home education and that this does not have to follow a 'school at home' model.
- 1.3. Elective home education can be delivered in a variety of ways and locations, with learning taking place not just in the family home but in other venues such as libraries, museums, parks or community centres.
- 1.4. Elective home education is not the same as home tuition which is provided by local authorities for children with diagnosed medical needs that prevent them from attending school.
- 1.5. Choosing to electively home educate is a big decision and you may find it helpful to talk to other families that have decided to go down this route. It is worth considering the following before taking the step to educate at home:
 - Educating your child outside the school system requires a major commitment of your time.
 - There is no financial assistance for home educators.
 - Attendance at school is about more than just schoolwork; many lessons learned are about how to get on with other people.
 - It may be difficult for one person to provide a broad education across a range of subjects.
- 1.6. If you do decide to go ahead and home educate your child, you may choose to engage private tutors, other adults or to enrol your child at a tuition centre to assist you in providing a suitable education, but there is no requirement for you to do so. [You can find out more about how to safely choose a Home Tutor through the Islington Safeguarding Children Board leaflet 'Choosing a Home Tutor', which you can find at www.islingtonscb.org.uk/Pages/Parent-and-Carer-Information.aspx - see Related Documents].
- 1.7. By home educating your child, you will assume full responsibility for their education. This includes all aspects of education in the broadest sense, including your child's social and emotional development, as well as taking on full financial responsibility for their learning. This means that you will have to pay for any books, equipment, stationery, trips or tutors you choose to use and if you want your child to sit public examinations, you will need to bear the cost of entering them as private candidates.

Section 2: What is suitable education?

2.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

'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 aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

2.2 Although 'efficient' and 'suitable' are not defined in the Education Act 1996, case law¹ has broadly established an 'efficient' education to be one that 'achieves that which it sets out to achieve' and a 'suitable' education to be one that 'primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as 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'.² In other words, the education provided should prepare a child for life in the modern society and enable them to make progress towards their potential.

2.3 The education you provide will need to be full-time, although there is no current legal definition of what 'full-time' means.

2.4 Children who attend school are usually timetabled to receive 25 hours education a week for 38 weeks of the year. Children who are being educated at home have greater flexibility around this amount of the contact time and do not need to follow a set timetable or have fixed times during the day or year when education will take place.

2.5 In coming to a decision on the amount of education that will be provided, you will want to ensure there is sufficient time and opportunity for your child to assimilate what they have learnt, and to apply the skills and knowledge they have gained to other areas of their learning

2.6 Additional flexibilities available to you as a home educator include the option to choose:

- whether to formally assess and mark work;
- whether to follow the National Curriculum;
- whether to enter your child for examinations;
- how your child will engage with peers in either social or learning activities.

2.7 In coming to a view, you may wish to consider the impact of your choices should your child return to formal schooling later on or when they move on to further

¹ Mr Justice Woolf in the case of R v Secretary of State for Education and Science, ex parte Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School Trust (12 April 1985)

² Elective Home Education, Guidelines for Local Authorities (DCSF) - <http://www.home-education.biz/EHE%202007.pdf>

education, training or employment.

2.8 By choosing to home educate your child it is your responsibility to ensure that the education provided meets the statutory requirements outlined above.

2.9 As a guide, a suitable education programme should include the following components:

- The consistent involvement of parents (or other significant carers). This provides positive reinforcement and enhances the learning experience;
- A programme that reflects your child's individual needs, attitudes and aspirations;
- Opportunities for your child to experience learning that is stimulating;
- Access to appropriate resources and materials (e.g. paper, pens, books, arts and crafts materials, visits to libraries, ICT equipment)
- Opportunities for appropriate interaction with other children and adults (e.g. social or sporting activities).

You should also consider how the education programme you provide will also help your child develop a range of life skills, for example:

- Communication skills
- Observation and awareness skills
- Problem solving skills
- Creative and imaginative skills
- Numerical skills
- Physical skills
- Personal and Social skills

2.10 If at any point you would like to discuss your options in greater detail, please feel free to contact us on 020 7527 3747 / PupilServices@islington.gov.uk, where your enquiry will be passed on to the appropriate person.

Section 3: What are the duties of parents?

- 3.1 It is the duty of each parent to:
- Ensure that your school-age child is educated
 - Delegate that duty to a school, or carry it out yourself
 - Ensure the education provided is efficient and full-time
 - Ensure the education is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude
 - If you child has special educational needs, the education must meet their needs
- 3.2 Parents should not be encouraged to home educate in order to prevent action regarding poor school attendance or the risk of exclusion. These matters should be resolved with usual appropriate procedures. If this has happened to you, then please contact the Access and Engagement Service on 0207 527 3747 / PupilServices@islington.gov.uk.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

- 3.3 If you decide to employ other people to educate your child (voluntary or paid), you will continue to be responsible for the education provided. You will also be responsible for ensuring anyone you do engage is suitable to work with children.
- 3.4 If you chose to employ others, you are responsible for ensuring that those you engage are suitable to have access to children. It is strongly recommended that parents arrange for a Disclosure and Barring (previously known as Criminal Records Bureau) check (DBS) before employment, and that arrangements are made for on-going supervision.
- 3.5 The Local Authority also has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, including those who are home educated. In a small number of cases, the Local Authority may insist on seeing a child to enquire about their welfare where they may have grounds for concern e.g. if there were evidence of harm or neglect.

Section 4: If I decide to educate my child at home, what do I need to do?

- 4.1 If you chose to home educate your child, we want this to be a positive experience for both you and your child. We believe this is best achieved by working together in your child's best interests, recognising and respecting each other's rights and responsibilities.
- 4.2 You may decide to home educate your child from a very early age. If your child has never been registered at a state school there is no obligation to inform the local authority, but you are welcome to do so. In fact, we would encourage you to make contact with us so that we can signpost you to sources of support and offer practical assistance.
- 4.3 You can choose to home educate your child at any stage, bearing in mind that they must remain in some form of full-time education or training until the age of 18.
- 4.4 If your child is registered at a primary or secondary mainstream school, then you **must** inform the Headteacher in writing of your intention to home educate. Your child's name can only be removed from the register of a school after you have given written notification. The school will then send the local authority a copy of your letter and delete your child's name from the school's register. Once we receive the letter, we will place your child's name on the local authority's Elective Home Education register and make contact with you. Don't take your child out of school just because you have had a disagreement. Do talk to the Headteacher or the Local Authority.
- 4.5 It is different for children who are pupils at special schools, as to withdraw your child, consent of the Local Authority is needed. If your child is registered at a special school and you wish to home educate, you **must** inform the Headteacher in writing of your intention to do so. The school will then send us a copy of your letter. Your child's name will not be removed from the school's register until the local authority confirms that your child's Special Educational Needs &/ Disability are being met. You have a right to make representations to the Secretary of State where the Local Authority does not agree to home education in these circumstances.

What happens next?

- 4.6 We will send you this leaflet, and an Elective Home Education Adviser will contact you requesting to visit you. After the visit, you will receive a written report of your discussion.
- 4.7 We will keep your child's education under review by invitation to a mutually convenient time and place and ask you to provide us with further/updated information within an agreed timescale. You do not have to provide this

information but we would encourage you to do so³ to facilitate opportunities and preventing your child missing out on their entitlement to a good education in whichever context it is delivered.

How can I show evidence of suitable education?

- 4.8 We will ask for evidence that your child is receiving an efficient and suitable education. You can show this in a number of ways:
- Meet the LA representative at home to discuss work and progress.
 - Meet the LA representative elsewhere to discuss work and progress.
 - Write a report, with examples of dated work.
 - Have the work endorsed by a third party.
 - Evidence in another form.

What if it appears to the LA that a suitable education is not being provided?

- 4.9 Where it becomes evident that a child continues to receive unsuitable education, after reasonable amount of time and with several communication attempts of support and advice, the local authority has a duty to act under s437 (1) of the Education Act 1996. This often takes the form of issuing a School Attendance Order (SAO).
- 4.10 However, before coming to such a decision, we will always seek to address the matter with you face to face and resolve the situation informally therefore, the intention to serve a SAO, will be a last resort in most circumstances. At any stage parents may provide evidence that they are now providing suitable education.

What should I do if I want my child to return to school?

- 4.11 Your child's needs may change at different ages and stages so do keep your options open. You can make an application to any appropriate school at any time. You can find details of Islington Schools and admissions procedures on the Islington Council website
<https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/schools/apply-for-a-school-place>

The website also has a 'Find my nearest school' facility.

Please note that if you decide to return your child to a mainstream school, you should continue with existing education arrangements until a place becomes available at one of your preferred schools. Please be aware that your child's admission application will be considered in line with the school's admission arrangements, and not prioritised above those on the waiting list.

³ Phillips v Brown (1980)

Section 5: Local authority duties and responsibilities

Education Provision Responsibilities

- 5.1 Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, places a specific duty on local authorities to establish (as far as it is possible) the identities of children who are *neither* registered at a school *nor* in receipt of suitable full-time education.
- 5.2 As part of our duty to identify children not receiving a suitable education, we are expected to have effective monitoring and tracking procedures in place to ensure children can be swiftly returned to appropriate provision. We are therefore expected to work, and share information, with each other and partner agencies.
- 5.3 Although local authorities do not have a statutory duty to monitor the quality of home education on a routine basis, we are happy to offer advice and support as often as needed. In most circumstances we would recommend an annual review, although this is not a legal requirement of the local authority.
- 5.4 If you are struggling to provide a suitable education (for example due to a change of home circumstances), contact us and we will work with you to improve the education being provided by offering advice and guidance and signposting you to resources, organisations and information to support the delivery of suitable education.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

- 5.5 The welfare and protection of all children, including those who attend school or are educated otherwise, are of paramount importance and the responsibility of the whole community⁴.
- 5.6 All agencies and individuals should aim to work together proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. For further details, please see *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2015:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- 5.6 Local authorities have general duties to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Education Act 2002 s175 and Children Act 2004 s10 and s11).
- 5.7 These powers allow local authorities to insist on seeing children in order to enquire about their welfare where there are grounds for concern (Children Act

⁴ Elective Home Education, Guidelines for Local Authorities (DCSF) - <http://www.home-education.biz/EHE%202007.pdf>

1989 s17 and s47).

- 5.8 However, these powers cannot be used to see and question children who are being home educated for the sole purpose of establishing whether the education being provided is suitable.
- 5.9 There may be safeguarding and child protection issues that arise in relation to any child whether school or home educated.
- 5.10 If any safeguarding or child protection concerns come to light in the course of your child being registered as home educated, these concerns will be referred immediately to the appropriate agency.
- 5.11 Education services have a duty to share information with other agencies from Children's Social Care, when there is a safeguarding concern about a child.

Section 6: Children with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)

- 6.1 If your child has a Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), you also have the right to home educate. This right applies irrespective of whether or not your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 6.2 If your child does have a Statement of SEN or an EHCP and is being home educated, it remains the LA's duty to ensure that your child's needs are met through working in partnership with professionals, parents and the child.
- 6.3 Home educating parents can, at any time, ask the LA to carry out a statutory assessment (or re-assessment) of their child's needs. The LA will consider parental requests within the same timescales used for schools.
- 6.4 Where a Statement of SEN or an EHCP is agreed, the LA will review the provision outlined in the Statement or Plan at least once a year, and ensure the parent and child are invited to the Annual Review meeting.
- 6.5 Parents can, at any time, ask the LA to cease maintaining the Statement of SEN or EHCP and the LA will give the request due consideration.
- 6.6 In the same way as children who attend school, professionals named in the Statement of SEN or an EHCP may be consulted where necessary.

Section 7: Gifted and Talented Children

- 7.1 There are a number of organisations that offer parents support and advice on how to nurture and strengthen their child's potential.
- 7.2 Please note that in providing the information below we are not recommending these organisations to you, merely signposting you to sources of advice and support that may be of interest.
- 7.3 Website links and contact numbers are provided in Section 10.
- 7.4 **Potential Plus UK** is an independent charity that works with the whole family to support children with high learning potential (gifted and talented). Their aim is to work with parents and carers so that they can:
- **DISCOVER** their child's potential;
 - **NURTURE** their gifts and talents;
 - Work with parents and also with professionals to help their child **SUCCEED**.
- 7.5 **National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE)**, is a not for profit organisation, specialising in supporting teachers to provide excellent teaching and learning for able, gifted and talented pupils. They may also be able to provide parents with additional support/information.
- 7.6 **London Gifted and Talented** offers continuing professional development, resources and consultancy to improve the quality of gifted and talented teaching and learning. They work with students, teachers, schools, local authorities and organisations across the country and internationally. Their areas of expertise include creating classroom challenge, critical thinking, personalisation, quality first teaching, independent learning, assessment for learning, urban education, disadvantaged learners and collaborative e-learning. Their aim is to inspire teachers and raise the achievement of all learners through an inclusive approach. They believe that all learners are entitled to be stretched and challenged and may be able to provide home educators with advice/guidance.

Section 8: Our pledge to you and your child

'No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.'

European Convention on Human Rights, 1950: Article 2, Protocol 1⁵

- 8.1 As highlighted above, we believe the best way of securing good outcomes for your child is for us to work together cooperatively in your child's best interests, recognising and respecting each other's rights and responsibilities.
- 8.2 Our pledge to you and your child can be summarised as follows:
 - We will treat you and your child with the same respect and fairness as shown to parents educating their children at school;
 - We will aim to be clear, consistent, timely and non-intrusive in our communications with you and ensure information relating to your rights and responsibilities is easily accessible and transparent;
 - We will remain on hand to support you throughout the period you choose to home educate;
 - We will offer you support as and when you need it, and remain quietly in the background when you do not.
- 8.3 We recognise that there are many approaches to providing home education, and that this does not have to follow a '*school at home*' model. You understand your child's needs and how best to engage them in the learning process.
- 8.4 We will respect the diversity of approaches to providing an efficient and suitable education otherwise than at school.
- 8.5 We recognise the need for an adjustment period while you find an approach to learning that best suit your child's needs.
- 8.6 We will listen to you and your child's views.
- 8.7 We will operate within Islington Council's Dignity for All, local Safeguarding and Child Protection and Customer Care Standards.
- 8.8 We will review policies and procedures regularly.
- 8.9 We aim to develop a positive and trusting relationship with you and your child.

⁵ European Convention on Human Rights, 1950: Article 2, Protocol 1 - <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/treaties/html/009.htm>

Section 9: Useful Contacts

Islington Access and Engagement Service (AES)

Municipal Offices
222 Upper Street
Islington
London
N1 1XR

T 020 7527 3747

E PupilServices@islington.gov.uk

Islington Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) Service

Municipal Offices
222 Upper Street
Islington
London
N1 1XR

T 020 7527 5640

E sen@islington.gov.uk

Lift & Pulse

An outstanding venue for young people aged 13-19. Facilities include 30 station gym, huge dance studio and professional kitchen. Advice and guidance are on hand for job applications, apprenticeships, CVs, volunteering and lifestyle issues. PULSE can help with health queries in fully equipped clinical facilities.

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

Platform

An amazing youth arts venue offering young people aged 13-19 opportunities to take part in creative activities. The venue includes a theatre, performance space, media suites, a recording studio, dance studio and a café. Young people can attend for personal help with apprenticeships, college applications, volunteering or developing their own projects.

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

Islington Family Information Service

Islington Family Information Service (FIS) gives free, impartial information, advice and guidance about services for children, young people and families. The helpline is open from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Outside those times you can leave a message and someone will get back to you.

T 020 7527 5959

E fis@islington.gov.uk

Islington Complaints Procedure

The procedure for complaints about children's services is different from the council's general complaints procedure. If you have a complaint, you should first try to resolve it with the line manager providing the service. If you cannot resolve it locally, please write to the relevant complaints officer at the offices below.

Children's Customer Care and Complaints Manager
3 Elwood Street
Islington
London
N5 1EB

T 020 7527 8048

F 020 7354 9742

E childrensocialcare.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Section 10: Useful Websites and Resources

The Reading Agency - <http://readingagency.org.uk/>

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority - <http://www.qca.org.uk/>

Potential Plus UK - <http://www.potentialplusuk.org>

National Association for Able Children in Education - <http://www.nace.co.uk>

London Gifted and Talented - <http://www.londongt.org>

Islington's Elective Home Education webpage –
<https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/schools/elective-home-education>

Islington Family Directory – Places to go, things to do
<http://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/family.page?familycategory=9>

Islington Library services -
<https://www.islington.gov.uk/libraries-arts-and-heritage/libraries>

Islington youth website -
<https://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/youth.page?youthchannelnew=0>

Islington Youth Council -
<https://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/youth.page?youthchannelnew=5>

Careers Advice -
<https://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/youth.page?youthchannelnew=2>

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) information -
<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/disclosureinformation/index.htm>
<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/disclosureinformation/basicdisclosure.htm>

Islington Safeguarding children's board – Choosing a Tutor -
<http://www.islingtonscb.org.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/12.05%20Home%20Tutor%20a5%20lr.pdf>

Department for Education (DfE) – Government department responsible for education and children's services. This is a useful site for GCSE information -
<http://www.education.gov.uk>

Home Education Advisory Service – offers information for home educators -
<http://www.heas.org.uk>

CGP Books – from primary to A Level; revision and practice material -
<http://www.cpgbooks.co.uk>

Inclusion of links to any website should not be seen as an endorsement of that website; any views expressed within external websites are those of the sites owners.

Section 11: Glossary

Access and Engagement Service (AES)

From September 2015, a new Access & Engagement Service will operate in Islington. The objective of the AES is to support schools, children and families to secure good attendance and engagement, and ensure that all children are properly safeguarded by:

- Advising schools in their delivery of a whole school approach to promoting good attendance and engagement.
- Operating to a code of conduct.
- Empowering parents to meet their legal responsibilities regarding school attendance through statutory action.
- Supporting efficient and effective partnerships in the best interests of the child or young person.

The service will always act in the best interests of the child. Children will be consulted when major decisions are taken about them whenever they are able to understand the implications, and formal action will not be taken in relation to a child unless clearly in his or her best interests.

Aptitude

A natural ability to do something.

Compulsory school age

Compulsory school age starts on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following a child's 5th birthday. Compulsory school age ends on the last Friday of June during the year that a child becomes 16 (provided that the child's birthday is before the beginning of the next school year).

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

From September 2014, children with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) will no longer be issued with statements. All new assessments undertaken may result in being issued with Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP). All existing statements of SEN remain until being reviewed, at which they could be converted into EHCPs.

Local Authority

A Local Authority is an organisation that is officially responsible for public services and facilities in a particular geographical area (e.g. Islington).

Maintained schools

A local education authority (Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland) maintained school is one that is funded by the local education authority and will be one of the following:

- Foundation school.
- Community school.
- Voluntary controlled school.
- Voluntary aided school.

- Nursery school.
- Special school.

Mainstream schools

A Mainstream School is any school that principally meets the needs of pupils who do not have special educational needs.

National Curriculum

The national curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary maintained schools in England so children learn the same things. It covers what subjects are taught and the standards children should reach in each subject.

Non-Maintained schools

There are various sorts of schools that are not maintained by the local education authority (Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland), which include:

- Independent schools.
- City technology colleges.
- Academies.
- Special schools not maintained by the local education authority (Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland).
- Early learning organisations.

Participation age

A child who has reached the end of compulsory school age, but has not yet reached the age of 18 years, must stay in some form of education or training.

Public examinations

An examination that is set by a central examining board, such as a GCSE exam.

Special schools

A Special school is a school catering for students who have been assessed as having special educational needs.

If you need help translating this document, please contact 020 7527 2000.

Greek

Εάν θέλετε αυτές τις πληροφορίες στη δική σας γλώσσα παρακαλώ τηλεφωνήστε στο 020 7527 2000.

Italian

Se desidera queste informazioni nella sua lingua, è pregato di contattare 020 7527 2000

Somali

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd macluumaadkan oo ku qoran luqadaada fadlan la xidhiidh 020 7527 2000

Spanish

Si desea esta información en su idioma, llame al 020 7527 2000.

Turkish

Buradaki bilgilerin Türkçesini istiyorsanız, lütfen 020 7527 2000 numaraya telefon edin.

Albanian

Nëse dëshironi ta keni këtë informacion në gjuhën tuaj, ju lutemi telefononi në numrin 020 7527 2000

French

Si vous voulez recevoir ces informations dans votre langue veuillez appeler le 020 7527 2000.

Chinese (Traditional)

如果你想要這資料的中文本, 請致電 020 7527 2000 聯繫。

Arabic

إذا أردتم الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغتكم الرجاء الاتصال ب 020 7527 2000.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই তথ্য গুলো আপনার নিজ ভাষায় পেতে চান, তা হলে দয়া করে 020 7527 2000 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Persian

در صورتیکه مایل به دریافت این اطلاعات به زبان خود هستید، خواهشمند است با تلفن ۰۲۰ ۷۵۲۷ ۲۰۰۰ تماس حاصل فرمائید.

Kurdish Sorani

بیتو نه م ناگاداریه تان به زبانی خوتان پیویست بیت تکایه پیوه ندی بکه نه نه م ره قه مه: ۰۲۰ ۷۵۲۷ ۲۰۰۰

Urdu

اگر آپ یہ معلومات اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے: 020 7527 2000

Pupil Services
222 Upper Street,
London, N1 1XR

PupilServices@islington.gov.uk
020 7527 3747

www.islington.gov.uk