

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Guidance for Parents/Carers



This information has been written to help parents/carers who are considering (or are already) educating their children outside of the mainstream school system.

Before deciding?

The decision to educate your child at home is a big step, it will take a considerable amount of your **time, energy and money**. Once you have chosen to home educate the local authority can offer you **no funding, tutors, curriculum guidance or resources**. You can understand that you need to be prepared and committed to make this work.

Plan a week's lessons before making the decision. Estimate the costs of buying books, access to the internet, specialist equipment, visits, access to sporting activities and specialist tutoring.

What if we are unhappy with our school?

If you have had a disagreement or argument with your school or are dissatisfied in some way, try to settle the matter diplomatically or seek advice from pastoral support workers or in school Education Welfare Officers.

The harsh reality is that if you decide to remove your child from a school register you will not receive any support. If you then decide you wish to return your child to school, there may not be any places available in the school of your choice, schools and academies will not reserve or 'hold' places.

What if I don't get a place at the school that I want?

The Student Services team works hard to place students in preferred places, however this is not always possible. A place at another school can be as good for a young person as it will bring them continuity in their education and into contact with a whole variety of people, allow them to learn through team games, performances and school trips.

Do children have to go to school?

No, there is however a legal duty for parents/carers to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age as defined in the Education Act 1996. This can be done either by regular attendance at school or “otherwise”. Parents/carers can decide to take on the responsibility of educating their own children themselves, this is known as Elective Home Education (EHE).

What is the parents’ duty?

In law it is the duty of the parents of every child of compulsory school age “to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have.” (Education Act 1996 Section 7)

What does “efficient” and “suitable” mean?

Education can be regarded as efficient if it achieves what it sets out to do and “suitable” if it prepares the child for life in modern society and enables the young person to achieve their full potential.

What about “full-time”?

Although there is no formal government definition, as a guide for you children attend school for between 22 – 25 hours, over 38 weeks of the year.

What do I need to do if I decide to go ahead?

If your child does not currently attend mainstream school or has never been to school, we would appreciate it if you contacted Student Services (address below) to let us know.

If your child currently attends mainstream school, you should inform the Headteacher of your intentions in writing. You need to sign and date this, it is an official document.

We would also appreciate it if you could send or email a copy of this letter and a copy of the Voluntary Registration Form (this is available online) to:

pupil.services@torbay.gov.uk or by posting these documents to:

***Student Services
Room SF338, Electric House
c/o Town Hall, Castle Circus
Torquay TQ1 3DR***

If your child currently attends a special school then you will need to get permission from the Local Authority, this is to make sure you are able to address your child’s special educational needs.

What if I just keep my child out of school?

The Local Authority must satisfy itself that parents/carers are fulfilling their duties. If you don't provide evidence that your child is being educated efficiently and suitably, then we are entitled to conclude that your child is not being effectively educated. We would then take steps to ensure the child returns to school to receive their education.

What will the Local Authority do to help me?

The Local Authority does not offer support or funding, resources, exam fees, testing for special needs, curriculum guidance of any nature to parents/carers who make the decision to educate their children outside the school system. It is the Local Authority's responsibility to look at the quality of your provision of home education.

You will receive a letter with an appointment for a home visit, so that the EHE home visitor can meet with you and your child and discuss the provision you have put in place. Our intention is to establish and promote a positive working relationship with home educating families in order to ensure that every young person receives an education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

The visitor will talk with you about the work you are doing and may ask:

What are your long term goals?

How do you provide for your child's physical development?

How do you arrange for your child to mix socially with others?

How will you show evidence of your child's progress?

How will you overcome difficulties?

What kind of evidence can I provide?

We expect evidence of serious intent by you to educate your child. The EHE Quality Assurance visitor will bring a checklist to discuss with you. If you cannot provide significant evidence of these you will be advised what you need to do to improve your provision and a timetable to achieve this. If you do not improve in the designated timescale, you will be advised to apply for a mainstream school place. We will also expect evidence that you value your child's education.

Examples of evidence can be provided through diaries, reports written about activities or experiences, photographs, film, samples of work, books, art work, project work, amongst others will help evidence what you have been doing.

What do most successful home educators provide?

- They make the learning process active, practical and participatory.
- They take full advantage of available resources.
- They encourage their children to read widely.
- They have fun with the learning experience.
- They provide opportunities for physical development.
- They encourage their children to develop socially by possibly attending classes or clubs.
- They make sure they provide a suitable area for study.
- They ensure that the EVERY CHILD MATTERS outcomes are met:

Stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, achieve economic well-being and make a positive contribution.

Final Checklist:

- ***Have you the necessary expertise to teach your child effectively?***
- ***Can you provide a suitable working environment for your child?***
- ***Do you have the time and energy to devote to your child's education on a regular basis?***
- ***Are there opportunities for physical exercise?***
- ***Are you prepared to purchase the necessary resources, or gain access to them?***
- ***Do you have the support available?***
- ***Is your child positive about the suggestion?***
- ***Will your child have opportunities to mix socially with other children and adults?***