



Elective Home Education Guidance for Parents and Carers



The intention of this booklet is to offer support and guidance to parents considering or choosing to educate their child themselves. Information can also be found on the Bury Council website at www.bury.gov.uk or by contacting the Education Welfare Team on 0161 253 5699.
Email: ehe@bury.gov.uk

Common Questions about Elective Home Education

Do children have to go to school?

No. Parents have the right to educate their child at home if they wish to do so.

The law requires a child to be educated from the age of five to the age of sixteen and the parents are responsible to see that this happens either in school 'or otherwise'. So, parents must ensure children have an education.

Educating at home is a weighty responsibility, but many parents do a great job and enjoy the challenge and opportunities it can provide. It also needs careful consideration and planning, and can take a great deal of your time and energy. The cost of books, materials, resources, examinations (if required) and educational trips all need to be considered. It is also important to maintain social networks for your child.

Do I have to tell the local authority that I am home educating?

If your child is registered at a school, you should write to the Head Teacher informing them of your decision to home educate your child. They will then notify the local authority who can offer advice on education and provide regular contact.

You do not have to seek approval from school or the local authority to remove your child from a school roll unless your child attends a school for those with additional needs.

If your child has never registered at a school, you can inform the local authority of your intention to home educate by emailing ehe@bury.gov.uk

Do I have to operate like a 'real' school?

Parents do not need a timetable or have to follow the National Curriculum, although some parents do prefer to do this. Education can take part at all times of the day, evening included and can be as formal or as informal as you choose.

The education received should be suitable to your child's aptitude and needs; and should not jeopardise their returning to school/higher education or entering the work force should they wish to at a later date.

Do I have to be inspected or monitored annually?

Local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis, but we wish to support parents in meeting their duty to provide sufficient education.

We offer an initial visit within 12 weeks of being informed that a child is possibly being home educated and a follow up appointment is offered after the first six months. Future visits are usually offered on an annual basis.

Some parents prefer to provide evidence of their child's education rather than meeting with someone from the local authority and we are happy to accept various formats of evidence. Samples of your child's work; writing, pictures, artefacts, photographs or videos of learning activities; or a report from an independent tutor, are all welcomed.

A written report will be sent to you after such contact, stating whether the authority has any concerns about the education provision and specifying what these are, to give the child's parents an opportunity to address them.

What happens if the local authority are not satisfied with the education I am providing?

Where concerns about the suitability of the education being provided for the child have been identified, more frequent contact may be required while those concerns are being addressed. Where concerns merit more regular contact, the authority should discuss the concerns with the child's parents with a view to helping them provide a suitable education, that takes in to account the child's needs.

What happens if I would prefer not to provide evidence to the local authority?

If a local authority is concerned that a child is not receiving a suitable education, it may contact the parents to discuss their ongoing home education provision. We will write to you asking that you provide further information.

If a local authority asks for information, parents are under no duty to comply, although it would be sensible to do so. (See the DFE recommendations, pages 8&9)

What about my child's social life?

Home educated children are just as likely to be a part of the social and cultural life of their area as their school-going peers. There are many home educator groups available to join on line and regular meets and outings that you are able to join in with, though this is not a necessary requirement.

Does Bury Local Authority provide any funding for exams?

Parents who choose to educate their children at home must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility, including the cost of any public examinations.

Children are not legally obliged to take any exams.

Is there any local community support?

Bury has approximately 120 children who are home educated and there are various home education groups that offer educational activities and support for home educators.

I am not sure that home educating my child is the right decision, who do I speak to?

If at any time you wish to discuss issues affecting your child's education, please speak with your school in the first instance. It is important to note that a school cannot force or request that you remove your child from the school under any circumstances.

If the issues are directly affecting your child's attendance in school, please speak to the Education Welfare Officer attached to your school on 0161 253 5699.

If you would like to discuss electively home educating your child, you may speak to someone on 0161 253 5699, or by email on ehe@bury.gov.uk. If required, we can arrange for our education advisor to come and see you before you make the decision to withdraw your child from school.

What happens next?

Once you are happy with your decision to electively home educate your child, you should inform your school in writing. They will notify us and we will write to you for further information.

An initial home visit will be offered in the first 12 weeks of your child being home educated.

Helpful resources

www.adventuresinhomeschool.com

<https://raring2go.co.uk/>

www.edyourself.org

www.education-otherwise.net

www.home-schooling-uk.com

www.ahomeeducation.co.uk

Special Educational Needs:

www.HE-Special.org.uk

www.IPSEA.org.uk

Department for Education:

www.education.gov.uk

Registered exam centre:

Victoria Hall

37 Knowsley Street

Bolton

BL1 2AS

02476 221008

<https://www.tutorsandexams.uk/opening-doors-bolton-exam-centre/>

DFE recommendations to local authorities

The department recommends that each local authority ordinarily makes contact with home educating parents on at least an annual basis so the authority may reasonably inform itself of the current suitability of the education being provided.

In cases where there were no previous concerns about the education provided, and no reason to think that has changed, such contact would often be very brief.

The DFE's advice is that in all cases where it is not clear as to whether home education is suitable (including those situations where there is no information available at all), the authority should initially attempt to resolve those doubts through informal contact and enquiries.

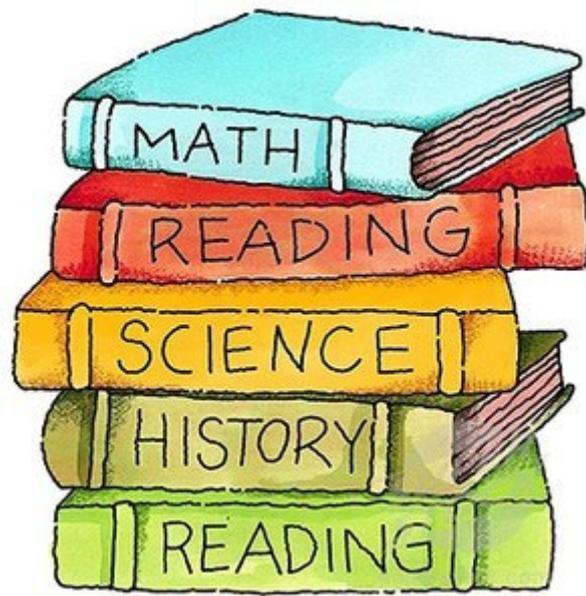
Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 forms sufficient basis for informal enquiries and creates a duty for a local authority to adopt a system for making such enquiries.

If a parent does not respond to such requests for information, or responds without providing any information about the child's education, then it will normally be justifiable for the authority to conclude that the child does not appear to be receiving suitable education and it should not hesitate to do so and take the necessary consequent steps.

If informal contact does not resolve the position, then the 1996 Education Act provides a framework for formal action to ensure a child does receive suitable education.

"If it appears to a local authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education."

Current case law means that a refusal by parents to provide any information in response to informal enquiries, will in most cases mean that the authority has a duty to serve a notice under section 437(1). Where there is no information to suggest that the child is being suitably educated, and where the parents have refused to answer, the only conclusion which an authority can reasonably come to is that the home education does not appear to be suitable.



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