

Educating your child at home

What should you do if you are considering educating your son or daughter at home?

Parents making this decision should inform the headteacher of the school attended by their child and the school should then inform the Local Authority (LA). If the child has never attended school, parents are asked to inform the LA of their decision to educate at home.

What are parents' responsibilities?

The responsibility of the parent is clearly set out in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- to his age, ability and aptitude
- to any special educational needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

There is no rule about what a suitable education might be but it should prepare a child for life in a modern society and allow the child to reach his or her full potential. It should offer:

- a broad and balanced curriculum
- English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT)
- opportunities for physical, social, spiritual and cultural development.

The phrase "full time" can be interpreted differently, since a child's education at home is often on an individual basis. A suggestion of a minimum of three hours per day has been offered.

Parents should consider the need for any young person to have formal qualifications for any future role in life.

What should this Council, as the Local Authority, do?

The LA only has a duty to intervene if there is evidence that the education offered is not suitable. In order to make a decision on this basis, a Home Education Officer will make a request to visit the family on a regular basis, if possible, to view the education being offered. Following the visit, a report will be written, stating whether the provision is suitable.

What if the child has special educational needs?

For a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs whose Statement names a special school, the situation is different and the LA must be consulted and must give its permission for education at home. The LA must also take responsibility for ensuring that the Statement is reviewed once a year.