



Information for Parents and Carers

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Frequently Asked Questions

Is it legal to educate my child at home?

Yes. Parents may educate their children at home.

Parents' legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 as follows:

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

1. To his age, ability and aptitude
2. To any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

'Full time' does not mean home educators are bound by school hours and terms, and 'efficient' was once defined by a judge to mean 'achieving that which it sets out to achieve'.

It is also important to know that parents have a right to educate their children from their own philosophical, spiritual or religious standpoint.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of protocol No 1 states:

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and 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.

Do I need to be a teacher?

No. You need no formal qualifications whatsoever.

Do I need anyone's permission to educate my child from home?

If your child has never attended school, no permission or notification is required.

If your child already attends school you must inform the head teacher of your decision in writing to take your child off the school register in order to home educate them. The school will inform the LEA of your decision. Non-attendance at school without permission while still registered at the school may result in a school attendance order being made as this is truancy.

Only if your child already attends a Special School or is subject to a School Attendance Order is LEA permission required. This may not be unreasonably withheld.



At what age is it compulsory for children to have to receive full-time education?

The Law requires that Home educated children must receive full-time education from the start date of the school term following their 5th birthday. Compulsory education continues until the last

Friday in June of Year 11 in schools; i.e. any child who is 16 between September and 31st August is of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June that year.

Why Home Education?

Home education is an option that families from any background may consider to meet the needs of their children. The reasons for deciding on this approach are many as are the styles of education undertaken. For some families it is a decision based on their philosophical, spiritual or religious outlook, for others it is to meet the specific needs of a child or children. Basically there is a vast variety and potential within home education.

Some children have never been sent to school whilst others come out for a time or permanently.

Whatever your own circumstances the LEA and MK Home Educators Network will support you in your choice to the best of their ability. Under S437 Education Act 1996, the LEA has a duty to act if it appears that any child of compulsory school age in its area is not receiving a suitable education.

We have tried to include some of the most frequently asked questions by families considering this option, but please contact us for further information.

Where do I start?

Perhaps by asking yourself, “Why do I want to home educate?”; “What do my child and I want to achieve?”

By asking these questions it will become clearer what style of education will best suit you and your child. This will indicate what resources you require. The law does not define education, so long as the education can be said to be efficient, full time and suitable to age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. This is all that the law (S7 The

Education Act 1996) requires an education to be, and nowhere is this further defined. This endorses the potential for individual circumstances and interpretation to endlessly create new ways of achieving this goal. One of the most valuable resources for home educators is the experience of others doing the same. Each family will find out for themselves what works for them. Probably a good starting point is to make contact with other home educators in your area. It may also be useful to look at some of the resources suggested below.

Where can I get information/support?

You can contact the LEA and the MK group of Home educators. Both will give advice on the processes followed by the LEA. Home Educators can also discuss resources, discounts available to Home educators, examinations, group educational and social activities and other sources of support with you.

The Libraries and local bookshops are full of useful material. The internet (free 30 minute sessions available in libraries) is also a great source of information and support. It also provides opportunities for online tuition and downloadable lesson plans for those seeking a formal approach.

Some useful starting places are listed at the end.

Do I have to follow the National Curriculum and sit SATs?

Your child does not have to follow the National Curriculum and sit SATs. Should you wish to follow the National Curriculum, information can be found online at www.nc.uk.net.

How much does education at home cost?

Families successfully home educate on any budget; inevitably parents and carers will incur some expense.

Can I re-register my child at school at a later date?

If you wish to register your child at school you will need to contact the school and request a place.

To re-register the same process applies but it cannot be guaranteed that there will still be a place at the school previously attended.

Can I educate my child part-time at home and part-time at school?

This is often called flexi-schooling. Permission for this style of education is at the discretion of the head teacher and governors. The child would be registered at the school with authorised absences and still subject to the National Curriculum.

What if my child has Special Educational Needs?

A statement of SEN does not affect the right to home education (see S7 Education Act 1996). No permission is required. Suitable arrangements for meeting the child's special needs must be made. This can include alternative provision to that specified in a Statement, provided the child's special needs are adequately catered for. For the duration of the statement, the LEA needs to continue to hold an Annual Review and this includes considering whether the wording of the Statement is still appropriate, and whether the Statement needs to remain in place. Rights of appeal to the SEN Tribunal still apply.

Children's frequently asked questions answered by home-educated children

How will I make friends?

You can join activities and clubs just as school children do.

You can choose who you want to spend your days with.

You can meet other young people of all ages within a home education group.

You can keep up with friendships you already have.

Do I have to follow a school timetable?

This is optional, you still have to learn but you and your parents can choose how and when you do it.

There is no fixed way.

You have as many opportunities for the future as children who do go to school?

You may have more. For GCSEs there won't be timetable clashes but you will need to find out which exams are available for private candidates. Also just as in school it's up to you to make the most of what is available.

Can I go to school if I change my mind?

Yes, but you may find it takes time to adjust to it. Give anything you do a fair test.

Additional useful information

www.home-education.org.uk

A huge site with many useful pages and links. Also home of the home education web ring and UK-Home-Ed mailing list.

www.education-otherwise.org

Helpline no: 0870 7300074

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation which provides support and information both locally and nationally for families with children who are being educated outside school.

www.free-range-education.co.uk

Resources, links, information, legal help, and an e-mail support service called Ask Fred.

'Free Range Education—How Home Education works', edited by Terri Dowty. (ISBN 1 903458 07 2. Hawthorn Press, 2000). A collection of first hand accounts of different families' practice, plus many resources and a legal section. A copy is available at the central library.

www.aqa.org.uk

The GCSE exam board with most opportunities for private candidates.

MK Home Educators Network

Milton Keynes Home Educators Network (MK HEN) is a Group of Home Educators who offer support and a warm welcome to anyone who is thinking of home educating in the area. There is a wealth of experience available for sharing and regular get-togethers and activities. Please contact us even if you are only just exploring the idea of home education.....

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Telephone 01908 662256

Email: geo8@powernet.co.uk

Website: www.mkhen.co.uk

Milton Keynes Council Home Education Contact

Milton Keynes Council Home Education Contacts can provide information and advice if you are home educating. Please do contact us to find out how we can support you.

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