



ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

ADVICE FOR PARENTS CONSIDERING HOME

EDUCATING CHILDREN OF STATUTORY

SCHOOL AGE



This booklet is available for parents wishing to access advice on educating their children at home.

It is not intended as a prescription as to how parents should home educate. It is offered to give advice about the law and to inform you about what is available.

Portsmouth City Council Contact Addresses

Personalised Learning Manager
Directorate of Children, Families and Learning
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Portsmouth
PO1 2EA

Tel: 023 9268 8322

Portsmouth Education Welfare Service
Dame Judith Professional Centre
Sundridge Close
Cosham
Portsmouth
PO6 3JL

Tel: 023 9220 1118

Special Educational Needs Services (*for enquiries relating to pupils with statements of SEN only*)
Directorate of Children, Families and Learning
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Portsmouth
PO1 2EA

Tel: 023 9284 1095

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INTRODUCTION

Parents choose to educate their children at home for a variety of reasons. They make the choice because they feel it offers advantages to an education in school. It is a decision not to be taken lightly, as it means parents become responsible for all aspects of their child's education.

Home education is an option that families consider as a way 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, while 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.

A small minority of children has never been sent to school whilst others come out for a time and some stay out of school permanently. Whatever your own circumstances the LA will support you in your choice to the best of their ability.

Parents who choose home education are not entitled to any financial support for things such as books, materials, examination entries, work experience and further education courses taken during the period of statutory education.

Some parents introduce or re-introduce their children to school after a period of home education. If, at the outset, parents feel that this might be a possibility it may be helpful to follow a curriculum broadly similar to the national curriculum followed in schools.

SECTION 1: GUIDANCE ON THE LAW

PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

An 'efficient' and 'suitable' education is not defined in the Education Act 1996. However, in legal terms these words have been explained as follows:

- 'efficient' has been broadly described as an education that "achieves that which it sets out to achieve", and
- a 'suitable' education is one that "primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he/she is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not limit the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so".

It is recognised that there are many approaches to educational provision and what is suitable for one child may not be for another. In addition, 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.

"Suitable education otherwise than at school" is not defined in law, but includes being taught at home by parents and or private tutors, and the use of correspondence courses.

When a parent elects to home educate it is their responsibility to write to the Headteacher of their child's school requesting that their name is removed from the school roll and saying that they are educating their child at home. The Headteacher will inform the Local Authority's Personalised Learning Manager within two school days and remove the child from the roll of the school.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Sections 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 place a duty on Local Authorities to intervene where it appears a suitable education is not being received. Case law has established that a Local Authority may make informal enquiries of parents who are educating their children at home to establish that a suitable education is being provided. Portsmouth City Council will offer a variety of ways in which parents can inform us of their provision.

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

Where it is apparent that a suitable education is not being provided, we will inform parents in writing of the remedies that need to be put in place.

If the Local Authority becomes aware of a child of statutory school age who is not attending school and is not known to us as being electively home educated, we will make enquiries about their education and take appropriate steps.

FLEXI-SCHOOLING

In common with elective home education, flexi-schooling can provide suitable education otherwise than full time at school, if properly implemented. However, it is subject to some major differences. For example, because the child remains registered at a school, there is a requirement to follow the National Curriculum and to be included in the school's arrangements for end of key stage tests. Under a flexi-schooling arrangement a parent / carer makes a decision to home educate the child at home for part of the week and requests the Headteacher for attendance in school to be for the remainder only. There is no obligation on the school to co-operate with a parental request, which must be made in writing and formally agreed by the Headteacher. Schools continue to receive full funding for any pupil who is following this arrangement.

It is recommended that there should be a written agreement about the specific days and times the child will attend school and the respective responsibilities for the elements of the National Curriculum. Headteachers should inform the Local Authority's Head of Personalised Learning of any flexi-schooling placement so that arrangements can be put in place, as described in Section 2. As with any other home-educated child, the Local Authority will seek to ensure that a suitable education is being provided.

SECTION 2: PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL'S PROCEDURES

Where a child has recently been on the roll of a school and a parental letter to the Headteacher indicates that the child is to be educated at home, we will ask for a copy of that letter. We will then write to the family making informal enquiries. We prefer that an Officer from our Education Welfare Service meets you in order to discuss with you your arrangements to home educate but the letter we send will give you alternative choices about how information can be shared. An officer representing the Local Authority can either visit you or meet you at another suitable place, e.g. a local library. Visits to your home will not be made unless you agree to them.

Depending on the information we are able to find out from the first meeting, we may follow up after three months. For example, with your agreement we may arrange for one of the Local Authority's advisers to discuss the learning programme you intend to follow with your child so they make progress. Or, you may prefer to send us your plan (see Appendix One for a suggested format) or samples of your child's work.

Where a home educated child has not been in a Portsmouth school, i.e. you have recently moved to the city, or your child has just become of statutory school age, there is no legal requirement to obtain permission from or notify the Local Authority if you do not intend to enrol your child in a school. Nor are parents required to inform us if the family is moving into the city and plans to home educate. However, we strongly prefer parents to notify us so that we can put our procedures into place and fulfil our responsibilities. We can also provide you with guidance.

Following any review of your home education arrangements you will receive a short report. If the adviser is satisfied that the education is suitable you will be notified and your child's name will be registered as being educated at home. If the adviser is not satisfied, you will be notified and given a further three months to remedy those areas identified as unsatisfactory. At the end of those three months the Local Authority representative will contact you again to request sight of evidence that the education is now suitable. If the Local Authority remains dissatisfied we will issue a School Attendance Order in line with the Education Act 1996.

It is Portsmouth City Council's practice to send our home educators a letter during the summer seeking confirmation that parents are planning to continue for the next academic year. We will also send a blank Learning Programme for completion (see Appendix One), which you can use, if you choose. You may prefer to keep us informed through the annual visit or, of course, you can use another agreed alternative method.

SECTION THREE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need any qualifications to teach my child at home or have any special equipment?

No. Any parent or carer can exercise their right to educate their child at home regardless of what qualifications they may or may not have. The home does not have to be equipped to any particular standard. Nor do you need to replicate peer group socialisation such as would be available in a school. What you must do is provide an education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and so you will need to give careful thought to the educational experiences that are right for your child.

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, although we prefer to know that this is your choice and to put our usual arrangements in place. We see our arrangements as being both supportive of you and your child.

If your child already attends school you must inform the headteacher of your decision in writing to take your child off the school register in order to home educate them. The school will inform the Local Authority of your decision. Non-attendance at school, without permission and while still registered at the school, is regarded as truancy and may result in legal proceedings against you.

Local Authority permission is required only if your child attends a Special School or has been subject to a School Attendance Order. The law states that 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 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. Home educators can interpret "full-time" flexibly and there is no obligation to keep to school hours, days or terms or to have formal lessons.

Would I get any financial help?

No. The Local Authority cannot offer you any financial help towards educating your child at home.

You will need to consider the cost of writing equipment, textbooks, paper, information technology, examination fees, college placements etc. If you wish

to keep costs low, you can make full use of the public library. The Internet also offers good free resources.

Would I have to follow the National Curriculum and make my child sit SATs?

No, the National Curriculum and SATs only apply to state schools. Nor do you have to follow any particular syllabus. Should you wish your child to return to mainstream school at some point it may be helpful to follow the National Curriculum. Information can be found online at www.nc.uk.net

Would my child still be able to take exams?

Yes, but home educating parents report that it can be problematic. You would have to enter your child for their exams at local exam centres or colleges. Home educators have reported that this is not always easy and centres are not always convenient. You should consider the cost of this and whether the education you are able to provide would enable your child to achieve better results in accredited examinations than if your child was attending school. (See Section 4: Preparing for post-16).

Where do I start?

Ask yourself, "Why do I want to home educate?" and then "What do my child and I want to achieve during the years that remain of statutory education?"

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 it is *efficient, full time and suitable to age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs*. This is all that the law (Section 7: The Education Act 1996) requires an education to be, and nowhere is this further defined. This endorses the potential for individual circumstances and interpretation. You can be creative and find 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.

My preferred school is full and my child's name is on a waiting list? Can I educate my child at home while I wait for a school place.

You can, but it is rarely a good idea. Sometimes the wait can be lengthy and on occasions a place may never become available at the school of your choice.

Home education works well when parents are highly committed to it as a long-term option. If this is not for you, then think very carefully before you remove your child from the school system. Your child does not get a school place more quickly by being out of school. He or she can be at one school and still have their name on the waiting list of another school.

If you choose to educate at home while your child is waiting for a school place, you will still have to satisfy the Local Authority that a suitable education is being provided. If it is not, then the Local Authority has a duty under the Education Act 1996 to proceed to a School Attendance Order. This means it has to prosecute the parent through the court, naming the nearest school with available spaces where you must register your child.

SECTION FOUR: PREPARING FOR POST-16

CAREERS ADVICE

From 13-19 every young person has the right to a Personal Adviser from Connexions. Making decisions about future career paths is a long and serious process, so it is strongly suggested that you make contact with Connexions. An Adviser will be able to give advice about the future and will guide your son/daughter through the careers process.

Advisers are usually available through schools so, if you make contact, please tell Connexions that the young person is home educated. The addresses and telephone numbers of local contact points are as follows:

Connexions
Go for It Centre
Station Road
Portsmouth
PO35 BG

Tel: 023 9273 2450

53a High Street
Cosham
Portsmouth
PO6 3AS

Tel: 023 9222 1278

Website: www.connexions-southcentral.org

AREA PROSPECTUS

From September 2007, you will be able to access an on-line prospectus showing the range of courses available in schools, colleges, private training providers and voluntary organizations. There is a line available on the Portsmouth City Council website: <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk>

GCSE EXAMINATIONS

GCSE is not one centrally organised examination. There are a number of different examination boards and each offers a variety of syllabuses. Before embarking on a course programme for Key Stage 4 it is vital

- a) to identify a centre prepared to accept your entry, and
- b) to know exactly which syllabus you are going to follow.

All this is made easier if an educational institution such as a school or college is prepared to arrange examination entry.

Suggested procedure:

1. If you have an existing and good relationship with a school or college, ask them if they will enter your child for the exams you wish them to sit. At the same time make sure they will undertake to assess the coursework. The school/college is under no obligation to do so for a child whose parents have elected to home educate.
2. If you do not have a contact with a school or college you need to contact an examination board, which should be able to arrange a local centre for you. If you do this make sure they can also arrange for the coursework to be assessed.

NB In either case make sure you know and have a copy of the exact syllabus to be studied for that year. Exam boards can supply these and previous exam papers for a nominal cost.

Note It is normal for GCSE courses to be studied over two years though some people have managed them in a single year. Exam entries need to be finalised in the January, prior to the exam in June. Therefore advance planning is essential.

Where a young person has been withdrawn from a school part way through Key Stage 4 there may be a need to liaise with the previous school to ensure continuity.

There are two good sources of information about examinations and qualifications for home educated young people.

<p>For a leaflet covering all aspects, you can download an order form and buy from:</p> <p>Home Education Advisory Service PO Box 98 Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6AN</p> <p>Tel: 01707 371854</p> <p>Email: enquiries@heas.org.uk Website: www.heas.org.uk</p>	<p>For leaflets about courses and qualifications and GCSEs, either to download or buy, contact:</p> <p>Education Otherwise PO Box 325 Kings Lynn PE34 3XW</p> <p>Tel: 01449 711537 0891 518303 Recorded Details</p> <p>Email: eoemailhelpline@education-otherwise.org Weblink: http://www.education-otherwise.org/Publications</p>
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Other Useful Addresses are as follows:

Some GCSE Examination Boards	
<p>Midlands Examining Group (MEG) Local Examinations Syndicate 1 Hills Road Cambridge CB1 2EU</p> <p>Tel: 01223 553311</p>	<p>Edexcel Foundation (Formerly: University of London Examinations) Stewart House 32 Russell Square London WC1B 5DN</p> <p>Tel: 0870 2409800</p>
<p>AQA – Assessment and Qualification Alliance Stag House Guildford Surrey GU2 5XJ Tel: 01483 503123</p>	

Colleges in Portsmouth and the surrounding area	
<p>Portsmouth College Tangier Road Portsmouth PO3 6PZ</p> <p>Tel: 023 9266 7521</p>	<p>Highbury College Dovercourt Road Portsmouth PO6 2SA</p> <p>Tel: 023 9231 3373</p>
<p>South Downs College College Road Waterlooville Hampshire PO7 8AA</p> <p>Tel: 023 9279 7979</p>	<p>Havant College New Road Havant PO9 1QL</p> <p>Tel: 023 9248 3856</p>
<p>Fareham College Bishopsfield Road Fareham PO14 1NH</p> <p>Tel: 01329 815200</p>	<p>St Vincent College Mill Lane Gosport PO12 4QA</p> <p>Tel: 023 92588311</p>
<p>Chichester College Chichester Campus Westgate Fields, Chichester PO19 1SB</p> <p>Tel: 01243 786321</p>	

Note: Colleges of Further Education may agree to accept Key Stage 4 students of statutory school age if there are spare places. However, parents will need to fund College places themselves, as neither the local Learning & Skills Council nor the Local Authority can fund students of statutory school age whose parents have elected to home educate.

SECTION FIVE: MEETING INDIVIDUALISED NEEDS

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs this makes some difference to the procedures to be followed because the Statement Educational Needs is a legal document that is binding on all parties. The Local Authority now has a duty to maintain statements of SEN when children are educated at home. Formerly it was quite common for Local Authorities to allow statements to lapse, once they were satisfied that home education was well established. The duty on Local Authorities safeguards the interests of children with SEN, particularly if there should be an unforeseen interruption to their education at home. The requirement for Local Authorities to maintain statements is not intended as a means of interfering with home education. Nor does it mean that parents have a duty to provide what is in the Statement, as this part of the Statement refers to what is needed if the child is in school.

If you are considering educating a child with a statement at home, it would be advisable to discuss your intention with SEN Services (contact details at the front of the booklet). If your child has a statement and attends a special school, you should contact an officer from Special Educational Needs Services to discuss fully the implications of this decision before you take any action. The Local Authority has to give consent to a request to home educate a child who is placed in a special school. The purpose of this is simply to ensure smooth transition can be made into home education for those children with complex special educational needs.

If a child has a statement of SEN, home educating parents should be aware that access to some additional provision may be restricted if they remove their child from school, especially those services that are made available through schools.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 recognises a parent's right to choose to educate their child at home. Such arrangements are described as 'education otherwise than at school'. In such cases, if the child has a statement of special educational needs, it remains the Local Authority's duty to ensure that the child's needs are met. The statement must remain in force and the Local Authority must ensure that parents can make suitable provision, taking into account their child's special educational needs. If the parent's arrangements are suitable the Local Authority is relieved of its duty to arrange the provision specified in the statement. If the parents' home education results in provision, which falls short of meeting the child's needs, then the parents are deemed not to be making 'suitable arrangements' and the Local Authority could not be relieved of their responsibility to arrange the provision in the statement. This

would mean that the Local Authority would need to take appropriate action. Even if the Local Authority is satisfied, the LA remains under a duty to maintain the child's statement and to review it annually, following the procedures set out in Chapter Nine. (Section 8:95)

THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT

Local Authorities must review all statements annually, and the review should focus on what the child has achieved as well as on any difficulties, which need to be resolved.

The position regarding the annual review of the statement for children who are educated at home is given in the Revised SEN Code of Practice 2001.

When a child is educated otherwise than at school, the general timetable and arrangements for the annual review will remain the same as for children in schools. However, in these circumstances the Local Authority will convene the review meeting and the range of professionals involved may be wider and in some respects different from those involved in a school-based review. The child's parents must always be invited to the review meeting. The review meeting should take place in the most appropriate location, such as Local Authority offices, a hospital or the parents' home, and should normally be chaired by an officer of the Local Authority. (Section 9.36)

USEFUL SEN WEBSITES FOR HOME EDUCATORS

DfES website www.dfes.gov.uk/sen/parents

SEN home education website www.he-special.org.uk

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Everyone finds learning difficult at some time. However, if your child has a number of the difficulties listed below and these are persistent and severe they could indicate a significant learning difficulty. You may want to seek advice about how to help your child overcome this.

- Inability to read aloud fluently.
- Guessing many words wrongly, usually based on the first letter sound.
- Consistent mis-spelling of words with similar sounds in them.
- Reversing of order of letters in words or of words in sentences.
- Difficulty putting lists or events in order or sequence.
- Child cannot answer simple questions to show they have understood what has been read.

- Difficulty following simple instructions.
- Child tries to avoid written work.

Parents of children who are home educated are entitled to request the Local Authority for an assessment of their child's special educational needs. The Local Authority will put into effect the same procedure as for a child who is in a school. Advice about these procedures can be obtained from SEN Services by contacting the address or phone number at the front of this booklet.

SUPPORTING GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS

Some parents may choose to home educate because their child is gifted and talented and they are well equipped to develop their gifts and talents to full potential. Such children are likely to show signs of advanced development from an early age and parents will probably have noticed that their child is more able than his or her peers, and this will usually be confirmed by friends, health visitors, doctors and playgroup teachers.

Some children have talents in a particular area, such as in a sport or a single subject area, while others will be gifted in a more general sense. Their characteristics might include a wide vocabulary, a powerful memory, intense curiosity and concentration, a wide general knowledge, a vivid imagination and strong feelings and emotions. Gifted and talented children often learn quickly with minimum need for repetition, and draw inferences to ask further questions. They sometimes learn without seeming to be taught.

If your child is gifted and/or talented there are some sources of support, although these are not specifically aimed at home educators. Home educating parents who believe their child is talented in sport can contact the Partnership Development Manager of the Portsmouth School Sport Partnership through Priory School on 023 9281 9115, extension 354. For example, Portsmouth City Council has an arrangement with the University of Portsmouth to identify talented young sportsmen and women aged 11 and 12 and information about this project is available through the Partnership Development Manager.

Useful addresses of organisations giving advice for gifted and talented children are as follows:

National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth
 The University of Warwick
 Coventry
 CV4 7AL
 Tel: 024 7657 4930
 Website: www.nagty.ac.uk/

National Association for Able Children
NACE National Office
P.O. Box 242
Arnolds Way
Oxford
OX2 9FR
Tel: 01865 861879
Website: www.nace.com

National Association for Gifted Children
Suite 14, Challenge House
Sherwood Drive
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK3 6DP
Tel: 0845 450 0221
Website: www.nagcbrtain.org.uk

EFFECTIVE LEARNING

The skills children and young people need in order to learn effectively depend on the age of the child. However, over time you will need to ensure your child can:

- Read with understanding
- Skim read to find single facts
- Research in reference books or on computer data bases
- Make notes
- Summarise information, both verbally and in writing
- Synthesise ideas from a variety of sources
- Answer questions
- Write descriptions
- Write instructions
- Sequence and structure ideas
- Argue a point of view and understand other people's points of view
- Devise questions and hypotheses
- Judge the value of different sources of information

COMMUNITY PROVISIONS

Most of our schools now offer a range of provisions that are available to **all** children and young people living in the community. You and your child(ren) are able to access any of the extended schools opportunities and services that are advertised. These include:

- A range of sporting activities, including leadership and volunteering for young people aged 14 – 16. For further information contact the Partnership Development Manager of Portsmouth School Sport Partnership on 023 9281 9115, extension 354.
- Childcare, parenting support and family learning opportunities.
- Community access to Information Communication Technology, sports and arts.

There are five community partnerships, each with a project manager. For further information about how to find out what's going on in your area, contact 023 9284 1691.

SECTION SIX: THE FOUNDATION STAGE AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The Foundation Stage is a part of the early years learning journey that runs from birth to the end of a child's first year of school. It currently runs from age 3 to 5 and is used in a range of settings, by accredited childminders, in nurseries, pre-schools and early years centres, as well as in Year R at school. Some children may need to access the Foundation Stage beyond that time, depending upon their development. Home educators wishing to provide for their children once they reach statutory school age may want to find out about the Early Learning Goals that comprise the Foundation Stage. Many home educators of children with special educational needs find that even beyond the age of 5, their child benefits from a curriculum that is based upon learning through well planned and high quality play experiences.

The Early Learning Goals are within the following six areas:

Personal, social and emotional development
Communication, language and literacy
Mathematical development
Knowledge and understanding of the world
Physical development
Creative development

Parents can find out about these goals by downloading information from:
<http://www.surestart.gov.uk/improvingquality/ensuringquality/foundationstage/downloadpublications>

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Should you wish to follow the National Curriculum the following pages may be of interest.

Children educated at home are **not** bound to follow the National Curriculum.

Good education ensures a child gains attitudes, skills and knowledge to equip them for the challenges of our rapidly changing world.

- (a) A broad education introduces a child to skills and areas of knowledge, ensuring an open rather than a closed mind.
- (b) A balanced education ensures no one subject area takes up so much time that there is no room for others, or for the creative use of leisure. In practice this means planning to include at least the three core National Curriculum subjects together with many, if not all, the foundation subjects (see p. 17).
- (c) Any education must be suitable to the individual needs of the child. This means taking into account, curriculum planning, the child's age, aptitudes and any special needs he/she may have.

The National Curriculum is fully accessible on line:

www.curriculumonline.gov.uk

NATIONAL CURRICULUM – DESCRIPTIONS OF TERMS

The National Curriculum information may seem very complex. Remember it is designed for implementation by schools and teachers. To cover the whole breadth of the curriculum can be a difficult task.

Key Stage 1 Designed for pupils aged 5 – 7

Key Stage 2 Designed for pupils aged 7 – 11

Key Stage 3 Designed for pupils aged 11-14

Key Stage 4 Designed for the last two years of education for pupils aged 14 -16

Programmes of Study: These set out what pupils should be taught in each subject

Attainment Targets: Each National Curriculum subject has one or more attainment targets. The targets identify the knowledge; skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage.

Except in the case of Citizenship, attainment targets for each statutory subject consist of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty, plus a description for exceptional performance above level 8. For Citizenship, there are attainment targets at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4.

Levels: The National Curriculum is divided into levels at the end of each Key Stage, for all subjects except art, music and physical education; standards of pupils' performance are set out in level descriptions of increasing difficulty. For art, music and physical education, end of key stage descriptions set out the standards of performance expected of the majority of pupils at the end of each Key Stage.

HOW THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM WORKS

These levels do not necessarily relate exactly to a child's age – for example, the English Curriculum is divided into speaking and listening, reading and writing – each of these areas is divided into eight levels.

By the end of **Key Stage 1** most pupils should be within the range of levels 1 to 3 and at the end of **Key Stage 2** most pupils should be within the range of levels 2 to 5. Clearly this wide range allows for the differing abilities of different pupils.

The important thing to remember is that your child can only start and progress from the point they are at, not some arbitrary level determined just by age.

For example, a child may reach the end of their school career without reaching the highest level in some subjects, while in others they might reach the highest-level well before reaching the end of their statutory period of education. Find out your child's starting level of attainment and provide work that will allow him/her to move on from that point.

The National Curriculum at **Key Stage 3** is designed for implementation by schools and to be delivered at secondary level by specialist subject teachers. For any parent to cover the whole breadth of the curriculum is a difficult task.

By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils should be within the range of levels 3 to 7. Clearly this wide range allows for the different ability and learning speed of different pupils.

Most parents teaching their own children at home try to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, often similar in spirit to the National Curriculum taught in state schools. This is not surprising, as home-educated children will need to cope with further education and employment in their post school lives.

In schools **Key Stage 4** comprises the courses leading to GCSE examinations. Many parents and young people who have embarked on a programme of home education will consider taking some GCSE examinations, others will not. Some may be beginning to think about more vocationally orientated programmes, which may include work experience. These are matters, which need careful thought if a young person's future options are to be kept as broad as possible.

Sitting examinations whilst being home educated can be a complex process. However home educated pupils do achieve success in public examinations. Some possible approaches are outlined here. Please read this guide carefully, information becomes out-of-date very quickly – if you find any errors, as a result of your enquiries, please advise the Personalised Learning Manager as soon as possible, so that this guidance can be revised for other home educators.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

Core Subjects

English
Mathematics
Science

Foundation Subjects

Art
Geography
History
Modern Foreign Language (Key Stages 3 and 4 only)
Music
Physical Education
Information and Communication Technology
Design and Technology
Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship
(Non-Statutory at Key Stage 1 and 2)

Religious Education is also a compulsory subject in state schools, although parents may withdraw their child.

TEACHING METHODS

There are a number of ways of teaching – some will suit your child better than others. There is no ‘right’ way of teaching and a variety will enhance interest in learning. For example, teaching on a subject-by-subject basis may be most appropriate where GCSE or NVQ examination courses are being followed. A topic method that integrates the knowledge and skills of a number of subjects often offers a more natural approach to a younger student. Some home educators prefer their child’s learning to be entirely autonomous, following the interests and experiences of their child.

Assessment that tells you where your child is in terms of learning, careful planning and recording the learning outcomes are important skills for home educators to use if a child is to make progress.

SECTION 7: GENERAL ADVICE

- Ensure a good working environment, a room or area away from distractions, suitable furniture and sufficient paper, pens, books and other resources.
- When planning, think of the balance you want between the activities of reading, note taking, answering questions, researching further information, recording work. What do you expect your child to write? What other methods of recording do you wish to use e.g. drawings, diagrams, audiotape, and computer stored data?
- Establish a routine of work times but be flexible enough to alter this when it would be of benefit to your child.
- It is often best to do the academic work in the morning and practical and recreational elements in the afternoon.
- Be ready to stop and focus on weaknesses when necessary, especially in the area of basic skills.
- Try hard to make sure the books and other texts used are at the right level for your child. Check that they understand what they read.
- Be prepared to adapt texts and other materials to make them more accessible to your child.
- You will not be an expert at everything. Use the resources within the family, friends, neighbours and the wider community to contribute towards your child's learning.
- Discuss the work with your child before they start to make sure they have understood the task. Do read your child's work and talk to them about it and suggest where improvements might be made.
- Presentation of written work is important. However, do not insist that everything is presented perfectly. Allow use of rough notebooks and select some items to be revised and presented as a 'final copy.'
- Mark work and give written, as well as oral, feedback. Do not necessarily pick out every error, where there are many, instead concentrate on the worst errors or on one type of error to avoid discouragement and demotivation.

Consider how you will assess that your child is learning and making progress. For example, this could be through questioning on informal/published tests.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AND PROFESSIONAL TUTORS

Some home educating parents buy correspondence courses or employ professional tutors. These methods are expensive, but may be a solution where parents do not feel confident to teach particular topics themselves.

There are a number of Correspondence Courses available. Portsmouth City Council does **NOT** recommend any specific correspondence college but strongly advises that parents satisfy themselves that any course purchased accords with their own philosophical and educational aims.

To find providers and check the status of Correspondence Colleges contact: The Open and Distance Learning Quality Council on 027 612 7090.

Portsmouth City Council **CANNOT** recommend particular tutors; as to do so would imply approval. If employing a private tutor, it is vital to protect your child's welfare and ensure their progress by satisfying yourself the tutor is a fit person to be with your child and has the appropriate qualifications for the subject and level for which you are employing them.

Ideally you might find a tutor through personal recommendation. However, failing this, there are a number of agencies offering the services of tutors. Advertisements for these can be found in most local newspapers. You should ensure that any tutor you use has been fully checked by the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure there are no known reasons why they should not work with children.

PARENTS' ORGANISATIONS

There are organisations supporting parents who educate at home and details of a range of these are included in the section below. These offer a variety of advice and support to parents educating their children at home. Amongst other activities, they hold meetings and run visits for the children, and are willing to give advice and support in the event that you find yourself in dispute with the Local Authority. Membership of such a group might also help to meet your child's needs, especially socially.

HELPFUL UK ADDRESSES FOR HOME EDUCATORS

N.B. If you are seeking written information, don't forget to send A5 stamped addressed envelopes.

<p>Education Otherwise PO Box 325 Kings Lynn PE34 3XW</p> <p>Tel: 01449 711537 0891 518303 Recorded Details</p> <p>Email: eoemailhelpline@education-otherwise.org Website: http://www.education-otherwise.org</p>	<p>Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS) P.O. Box 98 Welwyn Garden City Herts. AL8 6AN</p> <p>Tel: 01707 371854</p> <p>Email: enquiries@heas.org.uk Website: www.heas.org.uk</p>
<p>Home Education UK is a website that offers a wide range of advice and support. It also has hyperlinks into other home education websites.</p> <p>Website: http://www.home-education.org.uk</p>	<p>Activeo supports families who live in the mid-south of England, offering a diverse range of weekly activities and a monthly newsletter for a small joining fee. Most families who belong live within a 20-mile radius of Chichester.</p> <p>Email: enquiries@activeo.org.uk Website: http://www.activeo.org.uk</p>
<p>In addition the DfES has a Parents Centre website specifically about home education with a leaflet that can be downloaded: http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/search/?asset=document&id=13911</p>	
<p>World-Wide Education Service Waverley House Penton Carlisle Cumbria England CA6 5QU Tel: 01228 577 123</p> <p>Email: office@weshome.demon.co.uk Website: http://www.weshome.demon.co.uk</p> <p>Worldwide Education Service assists families with the education of primary aged children (4-12) while they are living overseas. It offers a range of courses including a full structured curriculum, teaching notes; help with planning, timetabling, assessment and SATs packages. Free information pack on request.</p>	

<p>Mercers College Ware Hertfordshire SG12 9DZ</p> <p>Tel: 01920 465927</p> <p>Email: mercers_college@lycos.co.uk Website: http://www.homestudy.org.uk/mercers_college</p> <p>(N.B. At the time of preparing this guidance, this website is in preparation.)</p>	<p>Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Ltd 1c Aberdeen Studios 22 Highbury Grove London N5 2DQ</p> <p>Tel: 0808 800 5793 (a freephone helpline open between 2-5 pm)</p> <p>Email: enquiries@ace-ed.org.uk Website: http://www.ace-ed.org.uk</p> <p>The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) is an independent national education advice centre, which offers confidential advice to parents. They have produced a useful handbook on Home Education.</p>
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PUBLISHERS OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR HOME EDUCATORS

<p>Cambridge University Press The Edinburgh Building Cambridge CB2 2RU</p> <p>Tel: 01223 312393</p>	<p>Stanley Thornes Ellenborough House Wellington Street Cheltenham GL50 1YD</p> <p>Tel: 01242 228888</p>
<p>Collins Educational Freepost (GW2446) Bishopriggs G64 1BR</p> <p>Tel: 0141 3063131</p>	<p>Schofield and Sims Dogley Mill Fenay Bridge Huddersfield HD8 0NQ</p> <p>Tel: 01484 607080</p>
<p>Folens Publishers Limited Albert House Apex Business Centre Boscombe Road Dunstable Bedfordshire LU5 4RL</p> <p>Tel: 0152 472005</p>	<p>Hope Education Orb Mill Huddersfield Road Oldham OL4 2ST</p> <p>Tel: 0161 3662900</p>

<p>Heinemann Educational Freepost P.O. Box 380 Oxford OX2 8BR</p>	<p>Opittec Educational Materials 7 West Road Woolston Southampton SO19 9AH (sells inexpensive design technology and art materials)</p> <p>Tel: 02380 446515</p>
<p>Hodder and Stoughton Mill Road Dunton Green Sevenoaks Kent TN13 2YA</p> <p>Tel: 02078 736000</p>	<p>Pearsons Educational Freepost Pinnacles Harlow Essex CM19 4BR</p> <p>Tel: 01279 623921</p>
<p>Coordination Group Publishers Kirkby-in-Furness Cumbria LA17 7WZ</p> <p>Tel: 0870 7501252</p> <p>Email: orders@cgpbooks.co.uk</p> <p>Web: www.cgpbooks.co.uk</p>	

Letts and the BBC also publish helpful study guides for GCSE, which can be purchased through booksellers such as WH Smiths and Waterstones.

... and finally have you considered these implications?

**Elective Home Education
takes a lot of time and
commitment**

**The Local Authority
is unable to provide
you with textbooks
or a home tutor.**

**How does your child feel
about being removed
from their school and
friends?**

**If you take your
child out of school
you are
responsible for
their learning.**

**The Local Authority
cannot provide you
with financial
assistance.**

Parents are invited in July of each year to complete an annual plan for the following academic year. They may send information about the education programme in another preferred format in greater or less detail or choose to inform us through the annual visit

APPENDIX ONE

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION LONG TERM PLAN FOR ACADEMIC YEAR

TOPIC OR SUBJECT	MAIN AREAS OF LEARNING TO BE COVERED	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	TEACHING METHODS AND RESOURCES

Other comments about the programme:

Example

APPENDIX TWO

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION LONG TERM PLAN FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2006-07

TOPIC OR SUBJECT	MAIN AREAS OF LEARNING TO BE COVERED	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	TEACHING METHODS AND RESOURCES
Mathematics	Number work Interpreting data (graphs and charts) Measurement	The textbook covers maths at the right level and we expect to complete 2 sections of it. Use graphs and charts to understand things (e.g. in media project).	Maths text book 6 Measuring equipment for length and weight.
English	Reading for enjoyment Persuasive writing Comparisons of news media: newspapers, radio and TV Why was Shakespeare famous?	Choose and read 5 of Michael Morpurgo's books and talk about them. Write letters and articles to argue a point of view. Look at the same story in a number of papers etc and explain the differences. Make choices about which is most accurate. Write a letter to the editor of one/some. Learn the plot of a Shakespeare story, read a modern version and compare with a section from the period.	Michael Morpurgo books / website Computer (for writing) Newspapers etc Letters to real people/places Visit Stratford on Avon (summer holiday) and see a Shakespeare play
Science	The Solar System How Plants Reproduce How electrical circuits work	Name the planets and give some information about each. Find out about all the different ways plants regenerate and try to make some plants grow using a variety of methods Make an electrical circuit with a switch. Find some ways that household appliances use switches to trigger alarms, turn off etc	Library, internet, charts Seed trays and other planting equipment Electrical wires, batteries etc A switch from an old household appliance that can safely be taken apart

The Tudors	The lives of rich and poor The growth of the navy (Links with art, technology and English)	A project folder that outlines the key events of the period and compares the life of a merchant with a farm-worker. Know about Portsmouth's development as a naval port during this period of history.	Visits to: Mary Rose & Museum Hampton Court, Southsea Castle Use of library and Internet
Creative Arts and Technology	Painting portraits Design and make a Tudor garden	Be familiar with Tudor portraits and portraits through the ages. Choose preferred style and paint family portraits Learn about Tudor gardens and create own in flowerbed. Choose typical plants and look after them through the 4 seasons.	Library books Paints and brushes Gardening tools
PE and Games	Swimming Ball games	Increase speed and strength of stroke. Enjoy teamwork by continuing to play in local football team. Enjoy exercise.	Weekly tuition at Victoria Baths Weekly training with team and play when selected. Cycling and other outdoor pursuits with family.

Other comments about the programme:

John's mother has completed higher education and is home all day so she provides most of the learning opportunities. We have a private tutor for swimming, as he is a gifted swimmer and occasionally takes part in national competitions.

We are active members of a local home education group take part in weekly events, which supports socialization, as well as giving John input from another adult. John has friends through his swimming club and goes to their homes on occasions to play etc.

He reads a lot and is also very good at writing. He says he wants to be an author when he grows up.