



Elective Home Education Policy (Draft) Consultation Response



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North Eastern Education and Library Board

Elective Home Education Policy (Draft)

Consultation Response

April 2014

Introduction

The North Eastern Education and Library Board is seeking to engage in consultation with those people and groups who have an interest in the Elective Home Education for children and young people.

Before arriving at the final policy and related procedures for Elective Home Education, the Board is seeking the views of those most directly involved.

Vision

The North Eastern Education and Library Board has, since its inception in 1972, remained committed to excellence in the delivery of education so that every pupil can realise their potential and contribute to a caring, inclusive and progressive society.

In striving to realise this aspiration, the Board has aimed to ensure that every pupil has:

- access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities to realise his or her potential;
- an education in which the learning outcomes are appropriate to their needs;
- access to quality teaching delivered in a caring and supportive environment;
- education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the delivery of education in the twenty-first century.

Board Position

The Board recognises the right of parents to make provision for the education of their child through Elective Home Education. Current legislation places a duty on Boards to ensure that every child of compulsory school age has access to a suitable education, including children who are educated at home.

Methodology

1. Pre consultation publicity

To ensure maximum awareness of the draft policy, the Board will correspond with those parents within each Board area who have informed the Board that they are home educating. Such correspondence will advise them of the existence of the draft

Elective Home Education policy and the consultation process that will take place from Monday 28 April to 27 June 2014.

2. **On-line Consultation**

With effect from 28 April 2014 information will be made available on the Boards web-site and will include the draft policy and a short questionnaire.

3. **Communicating with key Education Partners**

Consultation with key education partners including those representing Health and Social Care will take place during the period April – June 2014.

4. **Consultation with Young People**

The Board recognises the importance of obtaining the views of children and young people. Consultation methods which are age appropriate will be used with the permission of parents.

5. **Communication to Equality Consultees**

To ensure compliance with the Section 75 Equality Legislation, the representatives of the designated equality groups will be invited to participate in this consultation exercise. All Equality Consultees will be advised of this consultation via e-mail and directed to the consultation documentation which is available on individual Board's web-sites.

Timescale for Consultation

This consultation process will commence on **Monday 28th April 2014** and will close on **Friday 27th June 2014**.

Elective Home Education Policy – Draft

Questionnaire Response

Please return this completed questionnaire by 27 June 2014 to:

Corporate Development Officer

The North-Eastern Education and Library Board

Antrim Board Centre

17 Lough Road

BT41 4DH

Or by email to: electivehomeeducation@neelb.org.uk

*Boards are mindful of the accessibility issues faced by some who may wish to provide feedback about this draft Elective Home Education Policy, and will **upon request**; make all associated documentation available, in different languages and formats as appropriate.*

1. Name/Name of Organisation/other body (optional)

Harriet Pattison PhD, Institute of Education, University of London
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**2. Please select the category that best describes you as a respondent:
(Please tick one box only)**

Parent/Guardian	
Pupil	
Member of School Staff (Teaching)	
Member of School Staff (Non-Teaching)	
Governor (individual)	
Board of Governors (Please insert name of school) _____	
Education/Sectoral Support	
Political Representative	
Local Government Representative	
General Public	
Other (please specify) ___ Home Education Researcher _____	

3. Having read the Draft Policy for Elective Home Education, I consider that the draft policy:	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Not applicable
3.1 Provides relevant information about the Board's responsibility for Elective Home Education, clearly and concisely			X	
3.2 Outlines the procedure to be followed should parents decide to home educate their children			X	
3.3 Provides parents with a greater understanding of their role/responsibilities when deciding to home educate their children			X	
3.4 Provides parents with a greater understanding of the Board's statutory role/responsibilities for Elective Home Education			X	
3.5 Clarifies the role of the Education Welfare Service/Officer in relation to children who are home educated			X	
3.6 Clarifies the role of the School/School Principal in relation to children who are home educated			X	
3.7 Clarifies the role of other agencies in relation to children who are home educated			X	
3.8 Highlights the importance of establishing arrangements for safeguarding children who are home educated			X	

Cont. 3. Having read the Draft Policy for Elective Home Education, I consider that the draft policy:	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Not applicable
3.9 Provides information and clarifies the role of the ‘Named Officer’ as appointed by the Board			X	
3.10 Provides appropriate information about the arrangements for and frequency of monitoring			X	
3.11 Highlights the minimum standards that will be used for monitoring purposes			X	
3.12 Signposts resources/information that may be useful for parents who are home educating			X	
3.13 Provides information about the process to be followed to facilitate children with identified Special Educational Needs			X	
3.14 Provides parents with sufficient information to contact the named Board Officer			X	
3.15 Overall, I consider that this draft policy provides me with a clear understanding of provision for Elective Home Education for children within the Board’s area			X	

Please use the space below to comment further:

Since 2006 I have been a research associate of the Institute of Education, University of London specialising in home education practices and philosophy. Research undertaken by myself and in collaboration with Dr Alan Thomas, Visiting Fellow of the Institute of Education, has encompassed a number of European countries (including the UK and Ireland) as well as Australia, USA, New Zealand and Canada. I hold a PhD from the University of Birmingham in alternative education and literacy.

I am very concerned that underlying the Boards' proposals is a model of education based on formal schooling which is irrelevant and inappropriate for many families undertaking home education. Assessing formal education is conventionally based on the matrix found between curriculum, timetable, resource provision and children's achievements whether these are measured formally or informally in classroom settings. Research into different styles of home education has clearly shown that these ideas are frequently not applicable to children educated at home. One of the major advantages and strengths of home education is precisely that it does not need to rely on pre-set plans or standard achievement targets. The notions of curriculum and timetable are not directly transferable to home education which frequently follows a much more dynamic, flexible and child directed course. This leads to an organic form of education in which parents are able to take a creative and changeable approach taking into account children's own interests, strengths and personalities as well as environmental and contextual features of life which give rise to new possibilities. Assessment is much more effectively carried out over the long term as the course of learning may well differ entirely from the national benchmarks and standard age related norms found in schools. To assess home education both in terms of its provision and the achievements of home educated children requires an understanding of education far broader than the application of school assessment principles.

In the light of this it is particularly worrying that Boards are suggesting that parents need to provide a programme which will be assessed for suitability by a third party. This is obviously incompatible with the flexible and dynamic approach research has found to be so effective in home education. It is also extremely worrying that the Boards intend to impose monitoring and 'minimum standards'; again this cannot be done in any straight forward or standard fashion given that home education is a highly individualised process in which children may progress in different directions and at different rates. Much that is championed as the ideal in school is not attainable for reasons of policy and practical restrictions. It would be highly iniquitous to have this ideal stamped out in home education merely for the purposes of easy comparison with school education.

4. Equality Consideration

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all public bodies are obliged to consider the implications of any decisions on nine different groupings before decisions are implemented.

The two duties within this Equality legislation include promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all communities.

The equality of opportunity duty requires that the Boards shall, in carrying out all their functions, powers and duties, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- 1. Between persons of different religious belief.**
- 2. Between persons of different political opinion.**
- 3. Between persons of different racial groups.**
- 4. Between persons of different age.**
- 5. Between persons of different marital status.**
- 6. Between persons of different sexual orientation.**
- 7. Between men and women generally.**
- 8. Between persons with a disability and persons without.**
- 9. Between persons with dependants and persons without.**

The Good Relations Duty requires that the Boards shall, without prejudice to their equality obligations, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations:

- 1. Between persons of different religious belief.**
- 2. Between persons of different political opinions.**
- 3. Between persons of different racial groups.**

In light of these obligations do you consider that review of provision in this area will impact positively or negatively on either Equality of Opportunity or the Promotion of Good Relations in any way?

Section 75 Category	Positive	Negative	Don't Know
Religious Belief			
Political Opinion			
Racial Group			
Age			
Marital Status			
Sexual Orientation			
Gender			
Disability			
Dependants			

If you ticked any of the above boxes please clarify your reason:

Thank you for completing this survey. Your privacy is very important to us and we have taken every step to ensure your confidentiality and the security of your data. We will not at any time, release your personal data to third parties.