

HOME EDUCATION

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



WESTERN EDUCATION & LIBRARY BOARD
1 HOSPITAL ROAD
OMAGH
CO TYRONE
BT79 0AW

W

INTRODUCTION

In most cases parents are happy with their children's education being provided by a school. Schools work to a common curriculum framework and are generally very successful in supporting the academic progress and personal development of children. Effective schools develop a good partnership with parents. Occasionally, however, parents prefer to arrange their child's education 'otherwise' than in a school, usually providing their lessons at home. Parents who educate their children at home do so for a number of reasons. These guidelines have been produced for those parents resident in the Western Education and Library Board area, who choose to educate their children otherwise than by attendance at school.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS:

The law requires parents to ensure that their children attend school or receive education 'otherwise' than at school. The education provided must be appropriate to the child's age, ability and aptitude and should take account of any special educational needs the child may have. In all cases of children being educated at home, the Education & Library Board (ELB) will seek to be satisfied that the educational provision is of a reasonable standard. This does not mean that it must be the same as in school, but children should have experiences which allow them to reach their full potential and develop socially.

HOW TO ARRANGE YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION AT HOME

- **Children registered at a school.**

If your child is already attending a school you must write to the Principal stating your intention to educate your child at home.

We would also ask you to contact the Local Education and Library Board by writing to:

Mr Malachy O'Loane
Assistant Senior Education Officer
Special Education
W.E.L.B
1 Hospital Road
Omagh
BT79 0AW

- **Children not previously registered at school.**

If your child has reached the age of compulsory schooling and it is your intention to educate them at home, you should notify the local ELB in writing, as specified above.

Informing the ELB allows us to notify the appropriate staff who will later be involved in providing advice and support to ensure your child benefits from an appropriate education. The Western Education & Library Board (WELB) wishes to support parents who have chosen to educate at home and will pass the details you supply to the Principal of Altnagelvin Hospital School & Tuition Service who has responsibility for monitoring the continuing education of children educated other than at school.

The Principal will contact you and make an arrangement to visit you. This may take some time but please contact the Service direct if you require advice/assistance.

You should contact:

Mrs Sandra Long
Principal
Altnagelvin Hospital School & Tuition Service
Ground Floor
Altnagelvin Area Hospital
L'derry BT47 6SB
Tele: 028 7161 1453/028 7161 1454

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED:**Do children have to go to school?**

There is a legal duty for parents or guardians to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age. This can be done either by regular attendance at school, or "otherwise". For most children this means that they will go to school. For various reasons a small minority of parents will want to take on the responsibility of educating their own children themselves. WELB fully recognizes a parent's right to make this decision.

What is the parent's duty?

It is the duty of the parents of every child of compulsory school age "to cause the child to receive efficient full time education suitable to his (or her) age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he (or she) may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".
(Article 45, Schedule 13, N.I. Education Order 1986)

What is efficient and suitable education?

These words are not defined, but education can be regarded as "efficient" if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and suitable if it enables the child to achieve his or her full potential.

Do I have to provide a timetable?

You do not have to observe school hours, follow a fixed timetable, give formal lessons or match school standards, but you will need to show that what you provide instead is efficient and suitable for your child and allows them to reach their full potential.

What if I just keep the child out of school?

The WELB must satisfy itself that parents are fulfilling their duties. If you don't provide evidence that your child is being educated efficiently and suitably, then we may conclude that your child is not being effectively educated. We would then have to take steps to get the child to school.

Do I have to have a home visit?

A home visit allows you to satisfy WELB that your child is receiving an appropriate education. We hope to be able to reassure most parents that this is the case, and offer support and advice if necessary. (You could agree to meet elsewhere and show examples of work done by your child).

What will the visit entail?

The purpose of the visit is to check whether the education you are providing is likely to be "efficient" and "suitable". WELB are concerned with the welfare of your child and will seek to give you advice and information if you want it. We will not attempt to tell you how to educate your child or provide resources.

Do I have to enter my child for tests and examinations?

You do not have to, but for older children, you might wish to consider their need for qualifications.

Do I have to follow a set curriculum?

Your child does not have to follow the N.I. Curriculum. However, planning is important and will help you identify the targets you want to achieve with your child. CCEA produces many publications, which you may find useful, and suggestions for schemes of work. These are available on the internet at: www.ccea.org.uk

How often will I be visited?

Once the WELB is satisfied that you are providing an effective education for your child, we would expect to visit once a year.

How many other people are educating their own children in N.Ireland?

The number varies between ELB's. In WELB there are generally between 15 and 30 children at any one time.

FINALLY

- Do think long and hard about it. It is a heavy responsibility. It will take a great deal of your time and energy.
- Look at the costs involved.
- Plan what you intend to do with your child before making a decision.
- Provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social and other activities with other children.
- Think about why you are taking this decision. If your child has a problem at school, we may be able to find a solution.

If you do decide to educate your child at home, we wish you well in your decision. We advise you to contact one of the organizations to support home educators – please see the list of addresses on the next page.

USEFUL ADDRESSES:

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Principal:

Mrs Sandra Long
Altnagelvin Hospital School & Tuition Service
Ground Floor
Altnagelvin Area Hospital
L'derry BT47 6SB

If you wish to educate your child at home, please inform:

Head of Special Education Division:

Mr Malachy O'Loane
Assistant Senior Education Officer
Special Education
W.E.L.B
1 Hospital Road
Omagh
BT79 0AW

Organisations to support home education:

Education Otherwise
1 Dunbury Cottages
Milton Abbas
Dorset DT11 0DH
Tel: 01258 880355

Home Education Advisory Service
PO Box 98
Welwyn Garden City
Herts AL8 6AN
Tel: 01707 371854
Email 100752.1061@compuserve.com
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/home-ed-advisory-srv/>

Choice in Education
PO Box 5
Belvedere
DA17 5ZU
Email choiceeducation@btinternet.com

CEA
29 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast
BT1 3BG
Tel: 028 9026 1200
Email info@ccea.org.uk
www.ccea.org.uk