

Policy Directive and Procedures

HOME EDUCATION

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Policy Statement

Guernsey law places a legal duty on parents/carers to cause their children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 years) to receive 'efficient, full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'¹. Whilst not defined in the law, education can be regarded as 'efficient' and 'suitable' if it is appropriate for the individual child, prepares them for life in modern society and enables them to achieve their full potential.

The majority of children go to school. For various reasons, some parents/carers want to take on the responsibility of educating their child/children themselves ('home education'). Home education does not need to mirror school education in content or structure, nor do home educated learners have to undertake school tests and examinations; however, the education provided does still need to be considered 'efficient' and 'suitable'.

The Committee for Education, Sport and Culture has a duty to take action in situations (either at school or 'otherwise') where a child is considered to not be receiving an appropriate education in line with local law. Education Services therefore requires procedures to ensure the identification and assessment of instances of home education in Guernsey and Alderney.

1.2 Policy Objectives

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to clearly set out how Education Services and parents/carers should manage cases of home education.

1.3 Policy Application

This policy and procedures apply to all instances where a child of compulsory school age is, or is proposed to be, home educated in Guernsey and Alderney.

Throughout this policy directive, 'Headteacher' refers to Heads of Service and the College of Further Education Principal, and 'school' refers to any education establishment.

1.4 Accountabilities

Parents/carers have a legal duty under Section 17 of the Education (Guernsey) Law 1970 to ensure that any children of compulsory school age receive an efficient and suitable full-time education.

¹ The Education (Guernsey) Law, 1970, as amended (paragraph 17) and the Education (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 1987 (paragraph 15)

The Director of Education has a duty to ensure that children who are educated at home receive efficient, full time education suitable to their needs.

1.5 Responsibilities

The Education Development Officer (Special Educational Needs (SEN), Inclusion and Intervention) (the EDO) is responsible for:

- Liaising with parents/carers, schools and other parties, as necessary, to gather evidence required
- Forming a judgement on (and communicating the decision) regarding the suitability of the home education to be/being provided
- Keeping approved home education situations under regular review
- Maintaining a register of home educated children
- Providing the Director of Education with an overview of home education, on an annual basis

The School Attendance Officer (SAO) involved is responsible for assessing the suitability of the proposed learning environment.

The Headteacher is responsible for (where appropriate):

- Providing the EDO with information about learners from their school for whom home education requests have been received
- Ensuring that the school roll is updated as appropriate when children embark on/end home education

The Administration and Procurement Manager is responsible for (where appropriate):

- Ensuring that Education Services' admissions etc. records are updated
- Making arrangements for home educated children opting in to the 11+ testing process

1.6 Associated Documents

[Attendance Policy for Schools](#)

[Admissions: Primary and Secondary Policy](#)

[11+ \(section on ConnectED\)](#)

[Child Protection \(section on ConnectED\)](#)

2.0 Home Education Procedures

2.1 Notification

If a parent/carer wishes to home educate a child of compulsory school age (5-16) in Guernsey and Alderney, they must write to the Director of Education in advance, including

details of the child, any school currently attended and relevant contact details. Situations might include where:

- The child is currently registered at (and would be withdrawn from) a Guernsey or Alderney (States or private) school
- The child is currently registered at (and would be withdrawn from) a school located outside of Guernsey or Alderney (such as a boarding school), but the home education will be provided in Guernsey or Alderney
- Parents/carers move to Guernsey or Alderney with children of compulsory school age, who they intend to home educate.

Whilst outside of compulsory school age, parents/carers of children under five years (not yet attending school), who intend to home educate, are encouraged to notify Education Services early in the year running up to the date that their child would otherwise start school. (If a notification is received late and the request to home educate is rejected, the parent/carer risks missing a place in their catchment primary school.)

Sometimes, information about home education (prospective or active) might be received from the School Attendance Service; the school where a child is registered; another agency, or a member of the public. Such information should be pursued and, where it is found that home education is taking place/is intended, these procedures should be followed.

2.2 School Roll

Children of compulsory school age must stay on the school roll and attend full time until Education Services has approved the intended home education provision. If a child stops attending school before the provision has been approved, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence.

If the child is registered at a Special school in accordance with arrangements made by the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture, it is against the law to withdraw the child without the prior consent of the Committee².

2.3 Liaison with Parents/Other Interested Parties

Upon receiving information that home education is intended/underway, the EDO will collect appropriate background information (including, where relevant, from the child's school, the Educational Psychology Service, the Schools Attendance Service and any other appropriate body or person).

² The Education (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 1987, 10(2)

2.3.1 Initial Meeting

The EDO will arrange a date and time for both themselves and an SAO to meet with the parents/carers at home (where the child is proposed to be taught).

At the beginning of the meeting, its purposes will be stated. These are to:

- Explain the requirements of the Education (Guernsey) Law 1970 as amended and, if relevant, the Education (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law 1987
- Explain the role of the officers
- Assess whether the home is an appropriate learning environment for the child
- Gain an understanding of the reasons for wanting to home educate. (If this relates to concerns about the school the child attends, the parents/carers should be advised to discuss the issues with the school and any other relevant parties to see if they can be resolved)
- Ensure that the parents/carers appreciate the implications of home education for both the child and the parents/carers (including financial costs, which are potentially significant where exams are likely to be involved)
- Offer advice and information on potential resources
- Explain what sort of evidence will be required to satisfy Education Services that the home education will be efficient and suitable
- Agree a date for a further meeting to look at evidence

The EDO will make it clear that Education Services cannot:

- Provide resources or financial support, although at the officer's discretion example documents can be loaned
- Provide any training for parents/carers
- Spend extensive time advising them
- Extend access to related Education-funded services, other than where there is spare capacity when, at Education Services' discretion, access may be able to be granted on a fee-paying (cost recovery) basis. Services include the Educational Psychologists, Schools' Library Service and Schools Music Service etc. - see section 3.0. (It should be explained that home educated children remain entitled to routine immunisations and health checks etc. provided to school-age children by the Committee for Health and Social Care, and to access the Sexual Health and Relationship Educators (SHARE) team)

The EDO will also:

- Provide details of the normal school curriculum and any tests/examinations that school educated children would undertake
- Make it clear that a home educated child is entitled to return to/start school at any time, although placement in a State's school would need to be in accordance with Education Services' Admissions: Primary and Secondary Policy and Procedures, and

negotiation may need to take place with the receiving school. In particular, the EDO should highlight that, to enable consideration of implications surrounding option choice, class sizes etc., any intention to return to school during:

- Key Stage 4 (school years 10 and 11), should be notified to the Director of Education by the end of what would be school year 9
- Key stage 5 (school years 12 and 13), should be notified to the Director of Education by the end of what would be year 11
- Make clear that if the planned education is considered unsatisfactory either at initial consideration or any subsequent review, parents/carers will need to work with Education Services (and other services, as appropriate) to secure the child's education, either at home, or in a school environment

If there are concerns about the welfare of a child as a result of the meeting with the parents/carers, where appropriate these will be raised with the parents/carers. If necessary, the EDO will immediately contact the School Attendance Service to discuss concerns and appropriate action.

2.3.2 Evidence for an Efficient and Suitable Education

Discussion with both the parent and child is valuable in considering home education requests. Where a child attends school, discussion to include them will be scheduled for outside of normal school hours, to avoid them needing to miss any schooling for the purpose.

The EDO should expect to find evidence of serious intent by the parents/carers to educate the child, and evidence of an approach to education that is consistent with their values and educational aims and with their understanding of how the child learns effectively. The evidence should convince a reasonable person that, if the arrangement was approved, the child would receive efficient full time education suitable to his or her age, ability, aptitude and to any special needs they might have. Such evidence might include:

- Curriculum statements that clearly define aims
- Schemes of work that describe the content and learning objectives of the curriculum
- Long and medium term plans that detail progression and continuity
- Short term plans that include teaching methods and resources and that have been evaluated
- Timetables
- Methods of assessment, recording progress and target-setting
- Examples of work

(The above list is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive.)

2.4 Assessment of Home Education

The EDO will produce a report summarising meetings and evidence presented, to be retained on file.

2.4.1 Home Education Assessed as being Satisfactory

If the EDO has assessed the educational provision as appropriate to meet the requirements of the law, they will provide written confirmation to the parents/carers and, where appropriate, the school admissions team (SchoolAdmissions@gov.gg) and the school, to enable the school roll to be updated. If the child involved is registered at a Special school in accordance with arrangements made by the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture, the letter issued to parents should include formal consent on behalf of the Committee to withdraw the child from the school.

The EDO will add the child and parents/carers details to the home education register.

2.4.2 Home Education Assessed as being Unsatisfactory

If the EDO is not satisfied that the proposed education would be able to satisfy the requirements of the law, a letter will be sent to the parents/carers to explain. The letter will also set out a reasonable period of time within which to revise proposals. If the parents/carers remain unable to convince the EDO that the child would receive an efficient and suitable education, the home education will not be approved and the child should remain attending school. (If the child has not yet been admitted to the roll of a school, the case should be treated as if home education was already underway, with the options set out at 2.5 below pursued as necessary. If a child is on a school roll, but has already been withdrawn, their non-attendance at school will be recorded as unauthorised absence under the Attendance Policy.)

2.5 Monitoring and Review

The EDO will visit approved home educators and their learners twice a year (and an SAO will accompany them on one of those visits each year), unless circumstances indicate that visits should be more or less frequent. A report to record findings will be filed on each occasion.

The EDO will provide the Director of Education with an overview of home education on an annual basis.

If at any point the home education or learning environment is assessed by the EDO/SAO as falling short of what is required, the EDO/SAO will endeavour to work with parents/carers to explore how the provision could be suitably improved. (This may be accompanied by

service of a notice³ on the parents/carers, giving reasonable opportunity (not less than 14 days) to bring about the improvement.)

If the parents/carers either wish to continue home education but are unable to bring about sufficient improvement, or refuse to engage in the process, there is a range of options open to Education Services and any (or all) can be pursued, dependent on the circumstances:

- Referral to the Multi-Agency Support Hub
- Service of a School Attendance Order, requiring the child to become registered at a named school
- Referral to the Children's Convenor
- Prosecution (where a School Attendance Order is not complied with / a child fails to regularly attend a school at which they are registered)

The end result of whatever action is pursued should be that the child receives the required efficient and suitable education, whether through home education or attendance at school.

2.6 Appeal

2.6.1 Non-Approval of Proposal to begin Home Education

If Education Services has not approved a proposal to begin home education, the parent/carer may appeal the decision. The appeal should:

- Be made to the Director of Education
- Be in writing and dated
- Set out the grounds on which the appeal is being made

The Director of Education may decide to uphold the appeal in full without a meeting. In all other cases, the Director of Education will aim to hold a meeting no more than 10 working days after receiving the appeal, where reasonably practicable. The meeting will be held at a convenient time for all those attending.

The outcome of the appeal will be given in writing within 10 working days of the meeting. That decision will be final.

2.6.2 Withdrawal of Approval for Active Home Education

If home education has been taking place but has subsequently been deemed by the EDO to fall short of what is required, the parent/carer may appeal the decision in the same way as described in 2.6.1 above. The outcome of the appeal will be given in writing within 10 working days of the meeting. That decision will be final.

³ Section 18(1) of the law

If the appeal concludes that the home education is not suitable and efficient, but the parents/carers do not arrange for alternative suitable and efficient education, how the matter progresses will be determined by what further action Education Services pursues.

In cases where a School Attendance Order is served, the parents/carers may apply to have the Order revoked at any time on the grounds that appropriate home education arrangements have been made. Any new arrangements should be assessed on their merits, in line with this policy.

2.7 Home Educated Children Leaving Guernsey or Alderney/ 'Disappearing' from Education Services' View

Parents/carers of home-educated learners leaving Guernsey or Alderney should make whatever arrangements are required by the law of their new jurisdiction of residence for the proper education of their child. Parents/carers must also notify the Director of Education of the move, in advance.

Where a notification is received (from the parents/carers or any other source) that a home educated child will be leaving Guernsey or Alderney to assume residence in another jurisdiction, the EDO should seek information from the parents/carers both for Education Services' own records and for the purpose of sharing with the education authorities in the new jurisdiction:

- The name and address of the parents/carers that the child will be living with in the new jurisdiction
- The date of moving
- At least one telephone number for the parents/carers in the new place of residence
- Whether it is intended that the child will attend a school (school name and intended start date to be provided) or continue with home education

The sharing of information is for child protection/safeguarding reasons and to ensure that the child continues to receive an efficient and suitable education.

If a child who is being home-educated in Guernsey disappears from Education Services' view, for the same safeguarding reasons, Education Services should make reasonable enquiries to attempt to establish the child's whereabouts. Such enquiries might involve liaison with known family contacts, local agencies and indeed agencies or authorities in any other jurisdiction to which it is suspected the child might have moved. Any information uncovered should be shared with other parties, as appropriate to the circumstances.

3.0 Further Implications of Home Education

3.1 Access to Services

The Committee for Education, Sport and Culture has a duty under Section 3 of the Education (Guernsey) Law, 1970 (as amended), to ensure the availability of efficient education throughout a statutory public education system. It deploys considerable resources to provide for this directly through States-maintained schools.

Where families choose to opt out of this statutory provision to pursue either home education or private education, the Committee's view is that those parents/carers relinquish access to all aspects of Committee-funded education for their child. This includes access to school services such as the Guernsey Music Service (group and individual lessons delivered within a States-school setting), Educational Psychologists and Schools' Library Service, etc. However, where there is available resource capacity, at Education Services' discretion, some Committee-funded services may be able to be extended to such children, charged on a cost recovery basis.

Parents/carers of home educated children may of course access other States-funded public services that are designed to cater for the needs of all islanders, such as the Guille-Allès Library and Careers Guernsey. Children from outside the States schooling system who have achieved a suitable level of musical proficiency through private lessons can also access the Guernsey Music Centre, paying the usual registration fee.

3.2 Tests and Examinations

Home educators do not have to enter their children for tests and examinations, but they may choose to do so.

3.2.1 11+ Tests

The States of Deliberation has resolved to end the 11+ testing system. The last children to take the tests will be those who would enter school Year 6 in September 2017, who will sit the tests in early 2018.

Prior to this cut-off, if a primary aged child is educated at home with the intention that they move on to attend a local States secondary-level school, Education Services can make arrangements for the child to sit the 11+ tests (usually at the catchment primary school local to the home address). If parents/carers intend their home-educated child to sit the test, they must give written notice to the Director of Education by the end of what would be school Year 5. Acting on this information the Schools Admissions team should make appropriate arrangements, including writing to parents/carers to advise them of 'Borderline' procedures that would apply in the event that the child falls into the relevant result group.

3.2.1 External Examinations

Should parents/carers wish to enter a home-educated child for qualification examinations (GCSEs etc.), they are responsible for making appropriate arrangements to enter them as 'external' candidates. Education Services has two examination centres that are accessible to external candidates - the Guernsey College of Further Education and the Grammar School and Sixth Form Centre. Guernsey's grant-aided colleges might also be accessible to external candidates.

Any costs associated with a home-educated child sitting an exam are the responsibility of the parents/carers. Beyond the fact that the parents/carers have chosen to opt out of the States-funded system, Education Services would not have detailed knowledge of the child's abilities and preparedness for an exam, so would not be in a position to judge whether sitting the examination would be appropriate. Costs might be incurred for the exam itself, invigilation, administration and rooming. Where several exams are intended, costs can be significant.

Education Services' examination centres are subject to rules set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), which extend to where special examination arrangements might be required. If a home educated child might require special exam arrangements (such as additional time, reader, scribe, separate room etc.), the parents/carers must make early contact with the chosen examination centre to seek advice and arrange and fund any assessment that might be needed to secure evidence to support the request.