



Educating Your Child at Home

Guidance for Parents and Carers

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1.0 Introduction

Guernsey law¹ places a legal duty on parents/carers to cause their children of compulsory school age (5-16 years) to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have. This can be through regular attendance at school or 'otherwise'.

The majority of children go to school. For various reasons, some parents/carers may wish to take on the responsibility of educating their children themselves. These guidance notes have been put together to help you with this approach to education.

The Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture has a legal duty to take action if a child in Guernsey or Alderney is considered to not be receiving an appropriate education in line with local law. Education Services therefore needs to know about instances of home education and needs to be able to assess if the education is efficient and suitable, both at the start and on an ongoing basis.

2.0 What is 'efficient' and 'suitable' education?

These words used in local law are not defined, but education can be regarded as 'efficient' and 'suitable' if it prepares the child for life in modern society and enables them to achieve their full potential.

In terms of home education, lessons don't necessarily need to be the same as those provided at school, nor do the children have to undertake school tests or examinations. The programme of work does have to help the child learn and develop according to their age, ability and aptitude and, if there are special needs, these need to be met.

3.0 What do successful home educators do?

Successful home educators:

- Have an approach to education that is consistent with their values and educational aims for their child, and with their understanding of how their child learns effectively
- Make the learning process active, practical and participative
- Make systematic plans for their child's learning
- Take full advantage of all available resources, such as museums, libraries, parks, computers, a range of adults, educational programmes and recordings, clubs etc.
- Encourage their child to read widely
- Plan a programme of educational visits
- Provide opportunities for physical development
- Encourage their child to develop socially with other children and adults

¹The Education (Guernsey) Law, 1970 and the Education (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 1987

- Make learning enjoyable by using a variety of approaches
- Give their child opportunities for independent learning
- Make sure their child has a quiet area for studying

4.0 Points to consider

If you are considering home educating your child, think about it carefully; it is a big responsibility and needs a great deal of time and energy. If you are thinking about home educating because of concerns about the school your child attends, make sure you have discussed these problems with all concerned to see if they can be resolved.

Think about the following:

- The costs involved. Can you afford visits, equipment and, if relevant, examination fees? (Home educators do not have to enter their children for tests and examinations, but they may choose to do so – see section 10.2)
- What you would intend to do with your child
- How the work could be organised
- What alternative arrangements you could make should you not be able to provide the education, for example, if you are ill
- What opportunities you could provide for your child to be involved in social and other activities with other children
- Whether you see home education as temporary, for example for a certain time period or stage of your child's development, or as a permanent measure

If you decide you would like to educate your child at home, we advise you to contact one of the organisations that support home educators. For example, Education Otherwise is a national organisation that supports those who choose to educate outside of the school system. Living Education Guernsey (email: contactleguernsey@gmail.com) is a local group.

5.0 How do I go about home educating in Guernsey or Alderney?

The first step depends on the age of your child and whether they are already registered at school (in Guernsey or Alderney, or elsewhere).

- **Child under five not yet attending school** - You are encouraged to write to Education Services to state that you intend to educate your child at home, early in the year running up to when your child would otherwise start school. Please include your child's name and date of birth and your name, address, telephone number and email address (if you have one). Please send this to the Director of Education at Education Services (email educationsportandculture@gov.gg).

Please be aware that if your notification is received late and your proposals for home-education are not supported, you may risk your child missing out on a place at their catchment primary school.

- **Child between the ages of five and 16 (compulsory school age)** - Situations might include where:
 - Your child is currently registered at a Guernsey or Alderney (States or private) school
 - Your child is currently registered at a school located outside of Guernsey or Alderney (such as a boarding school), but the home education will be provided in Guernsey or Alderney
 - You are moving to Guernsey or Alderney with children of compulsory school age, who you intend to home educate

You must write to the Director of Education, including details of your child, any school currently attended and relevant contact details.

Your child must stay on roll at school and attend full time until we have approved your home education proposals. If your child is registered at a Special School, it is against the law to withdraw your child without the consent of the Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture. If your plans for home education are approved, this consent will be provided as part of that process.

Once Education Services becomes aware of your intention to home educate your child, an Education Development Officer (EDO) will contact you to arrange for themselves and a School Attendance Officer (SAO) to meet with you. The EDO's role in the process is to consider the suitability of the intended home education, while the SAO checks that the intended learning environment is appropriate. In advance of the meeting, the officers will collect background information as relevant, such as from any school involved, etc.

6.0 What information and evidence will I have to provide to Education Services?

The initial meeting offers an opportunity to discuss your desire to home educate and its implications. You will not be expected to provide firm evidence for your educational plans at this point, rather the EDO may pose initial questions for discussion, such as:

- How do you plan to ensure that your child has a broad and balanced education?
- What are your long term plans?
- What are your short term plans?

- How do you intend to provide for your child's physical development?
- How do you plan to arrange for your child to mix socially with others?
- How do you intend the work to be organised?
- Do you intend to include practical activities as well as written work?
- How do you plan to record your child's progress and difficulties?
- Would your programme allow your child access to further or higher education?
- Would your programme give your child a wide range of career opportunities?
- Have you considered the implications of home education in relation to the 11+ selection process (where relevant)? (See section 10.2.1.)

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The EDO will be keen to discuss with you ways in which you believe the education you are planning to be appropriate for your child, and to understand how you intend to fulfil your duties to provide education for your child.

The EDO will want to talk to both you and your child about the proposed home education. If your child attends school, discussion to include them will be scheduled for outside of normal school hours, so they don't have to miss any schooling for the purpose.

At the point of assessing your proposed home education, the EDO would expect to see evidence of serious intent by you to educate your child, and evidence of an approach to education that is consistent with your values and educational aims and with your understanding of how your child learns effectively. The evidence should convince a reasonable person that, if the arrangement is approved, your child will receive efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they might have. Evidence could include such things as:

- 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

7.0 What happens if Education Services is satisfied with my proposal and plans?

If we are satisfied that the proposed education programme would be suitable and meet the requirements under the law, we will send you a letter confirming this and add you to our home education register. This will enable you to proceed with home education.

If your child is in school education in Guernsey or Alderney, we will also notify the school and Education Services' admissions team of our approval for your child's home education, to enable the school roll to be updated.

8.0 What happens if Education Services is not satisfied?

If we are not satisfied with your plans, either at initial consideration or any subsequent review, we will tell you what it is that does not satisfy us. We will write to you and give you a reasonable period of time to improve the situation. If you can't convince us that you can provide an efficient and suitable education for your child, we will require you to send your child to school.

If we do not support your proposal to start home education, or withdraw support for active home education, you can appeal for your case to be examined by the Director of Education, whose decision will be final. (Appeals must be made in writing, dated, and set out the grounds on which the appeal is being made. If an appeal meeting is necessary, the Director will aim to hold this no more than 10 working days after receiving the appeal, where reasonably practicable. The outcome will be advised within 10 working days of the meeting.)

9.0 Review

Once we are satisfied that you are able to provide an effective education for your child, the EDO would visit twice a year (and an SAO would accompany them on one of those visits each year), unless circumstances indicate that visits should be more or less frequent.

10.0 Frequently asked questions

10.1 How do the Bailiwick Curriculum and the Children and Young People's Plan apply to my child?

From September 2017, all maintained schools in the Bailiwick will follow a new 'Big Picture' curriculum that promotes joyous and purposeful learning, to produce:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens

- Effective contributors

The 'Big Picture' curriculum also embraces the four priority outcomes identified for the young people of Guernsey and Alderney by the Children and Young People's Plan, by making sure learners are:

- Healthy and active
- Safe and nurtured
- Reaching their individual potential
- Included and respected

A visual summary of the 'Big Picture' Curriculum can be downloaded at www.gov.gg/curriculum.

The Children and Young People's Plan can be downloaded at www.gov.gg/cypp

Whilst home educated children are outside the States education system, we would expect home educators to pursue these same principles and outcomes.

10.2 Would I have to enter my child for tests and examinations?

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

In Guernsey schools, children regularly have their progress assessed and their achievements considered to help analyse their strengths and weaknesses, and to set targets for further improvement.

10.2.1 11+ Tests

The States of Deliberation has voted 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.

Before this, if you home educate a primary aged child with the intention that they will move on to attend a local secondary school, arrangements can be made for the child to sit the 11+ tests (usually at the catchment primary school local to the home address.) You must give written notice of your intention to the Director of Education, by the end of what would be school Year 5.

10.2.2 Examinations

Parents/carers who want to enter their home educated child for an exam (GCSE etc.) are responsible both for making arrangements to enter them as 'external candidates' at an

examination centre, and for all costs involved. Guidance on fees can be obtained from Education Services.

Education Services has two examination centres that home educated students can access - the Guernsey College of Further Education (GCFE) and the Grammar School Sixth Form Centre (GSSFC). Guernsey's grant-aided colleges may also be accessible to external candidates, by private arrangement.

Intention to sit GCSEs must be notified to the chosen centre in advance (in September of what would be the learner's Year 11 for the GCFE; by January for the GSSFC). For post-16 exams, you are advised to contact the centre, at (or before) course commencement, for advice.

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 you think your home educated child might require special exam arrangements (such as additional time, reader, scribe, separate room etc.), you must make early contact with the chosen examination centre to seek advice and arrange and fund any assessment that might be needed to gather evidence to support the request. It should not be assumed that special arrangements desired will be able to be authorised.

10.3 What services can my home educated child access?

Services available to children attending States of Guernsey schools include such things as the Guernsey Music Service, Educational Psychologists and Schools' Library Service, etc. There is no automatic right of access to these services to children outside of Guernsey's States schools, including those being educated at home. However, where there is resource capacity, at Education Services' discretion, some such services may be able to be extended to such children, charged on a cost recovery basis.

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. Home educated children can of course also access other States-funded public services that are designed to cater for the needs of 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 are able to access the Guernsey Music Centre, paying the usual registration fee.

10.4 What if I just keep my child out of school?

Education Services must satisfy itself that you are fulfilling your duties to ensure your child is receiving efficient and suitable full time education. If your child stops attending school before

your request to home educate has been approved, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence. If you cannot show that your child is being educated efficiently and suitably, then Education Services would have to take steps to ensure your child attends school.

10.5 What if home education doesn't work for us?

Should home education not work out as you expect, we can provide advice on your child moving into a States school, at any time. Placement would need to be in accordance with our admissions policy and procedures, and negotiation might need to take place with the receiving school. At certain points, to enable consideration of implications about subject choices, class sizes etc., there needs to be an extended period of notice of a child starting school. Any intention for a child to start 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. (By February of Year 9 if you want your child to be able to be involved in the school's option choice process)
- During 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. (By March of Year 11 if you want your child to be able to be involved in the school's option choice process)

10.6 What do I need to do if I plan to move my home educated child away from Guernsey or Alderney?

If your child has been receiving home education in Guernsey or Alderney but will be moving elsewhere, you should make whatever education arrangements are required by the law of the new jurisdiction of residence. You must also notify the Director of Education of the move, in advance, including the following information:

- 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 information will be used to update Education Services' own records and may also be shared with the education authorities in the new jurisdiction.