

Qualifications options

The following information sets out some of the options available to home-educating families who wish to provide opportunities for their children to study for recognised qualifications. This is not an exhaustive list, but sets out the main options available and provides contact details for relevant organisations. Please note that the following information is also liable to change from time to time.

Enrolment at a Further Education College

Some colleges may, at the discretion of the Principal, be willing to accept children of school age for full and part-time courses. This approach has the advantage that all the work and entry for qualifications is organised by the college, but it does require at least some attendance at classes which will not appeal to all home-educating families. If a student enrolls at a FE college, their parents will normally be liable to pay all of the course fees themselves unless the education authority or the Learning and Skills Council are willing to provide funding. Colleges also have the discretion to waive fees, which they may do for low income families.

Self-Study

Many home educating families prefer not to enrol for attendance at a further education college but choose instead to work independently towards recognised qualifications. Because of compulsory internal assessment components, there are many subjects and qualifications which are not available to external candidates unless an appropriate arrangement can be made with an approved centre which meets with the examining board's requirements. Some centres and examining boards may be willing to accept coursework which has been marked and authenticated by a private tutor. Thus, families who study for qualifications from home will need to:

- contact the relevant examination board to find out about their requirements;
- register with an approved centre for their child to be presented for the qualification; and
- pay a registration fee for each subject their child will take.

It may also be possible for a group of home educators to consider seeking approved status in their own right.

Correspondence Courses

Correspondence courses can be an option for students who prefer to work independently, though they will be required in most cases to follow a structured curriculum and programme of work. Correspondence courses offer a wide range of qualifications at different levels and the organisations offering these courses will advise about arrangements which need to be made for registering with an examination centre and for marking and authenticating coursework. The cost of this option varies depending on the organisation and the qualification chosen, but can prove expensive.

There are an increasing number of organisations offering open and distance learning

organisation:

- The Open and *Distance Learning Quality Council* (ODLQC) is an independent body which accredits open and distance learning courses. The ODLQC produces a free information leaflet which lists all approved organisations and their courses. Contact:

16 Park Crescent, London, W1B 1AH Tel:
020 7612 7090 Fax: 020 7612 7092.
Website: www.odlqc.org.uk E-mail:
info@odlqc.org.uk

- The *Association of British Correspondence Colleges* (ABCC) Is a voluntary association of colleges which comply with a code of ethics. Contact:

PO Box 17926, London SW19 3WB Tel:
020 8544 9559 Fax: 020 8540 7657
Website: www.nationline.co.uk/abcc
Email: abcc@msn.com

- The *British Association for Open Learning* (BAOL) promotes quality and best practice in open, flexible and distance forms of learning. BAOL members work to a code of practice for open learning and are listed on the BAOL website. Contact:

Suite 12, Pixmore House, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6
1JG
Tel: 01462 485 588 Fax: 01462 485 633
Website: www.british-learning.com
Email: info@british-learning.com

Alternative qualifications!

The internal assessment component of many UK qualification courses such as Standard Grades, National Qualifications and GCSEs can restrict the choice available to home educated students. The following qualifications have, however, been identified as particularly suited to home study students as they are not dependent on internal assessment and moderation.

National Christian Schools Certificate (NCSC1)

The National Christian Schools' Certificate (NCSC) provides a graduated series of certificates, ranging from Level 1, which is equivalent to 5 GCSEs (grades A*-C), through Level 2, which equivalent to 2 AS/A2 passes, and culminating with Level 3, which is equivalent to 3 AS/A2 passes (grades A-C). There is also an Honours Certificate, which is awarded to pupils who show exceptional performance.

Examinations are conducted at home under the supervision of parents, but the NCSC Board has strict moderation procedures to ensure the validity of results. The course is highly structured and requires a minimum pass mark of 80 per cent for each module test. During the course of 2004, the NCSC is to be superseded by the International Certificate of Christian Education, which will have very similar content and standards to the NCSC Certificate programme.

Elective Home Education : LEA Guidelines

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Contact: The European Academy for Christian Homeschooling (TEACH)
Marantha House, Unit5, Northford Close, Shrivenham, Swindon,
Wiltshire, SN6 8HL
Tel: 01793 783783 Fax: 01793 783775

Website: www.christian-education.org

Email: admin@ncsboard.org.uk or cee@christian-education.org

Examining boards

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

The AQA is one of three unitary examining bodies in England incorporating the now merged Associated Examining Board and the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board. The AQA also has responsibility for the City and Guilds' GNVQ qualification.

Contact: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester, M15 6 Tel:
0161 953 1180 Fax: 0161 2737572 Website:
www.aqa.org.uk Email: mailbox@aga.org.uk

Oxford Cambridge & RSA (OCR)

OCR is one of three unitary examining bodies in England incorporating the RSA (Royal Society of Arts), UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), and MEG (Midland Examining Group).

Contact: OCR Information Bureau, General Qualifications:
1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Website: www.ocr.org.uk
Tel: 01223 553998 Fax: 01223 552627
Email: helpdesk@ocr.org.uk ^^

OCR Information Bureau, Vocational Qualifications: Progress
House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JQ Tel: 024 7647
0033 Fax: 024 7646 8080 Email: cib@ocr.org.uk

Edexcel

Edexcel was formed in 1996 by the merger of BTEC and the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council (ULEAC). Edexcel is one of the main examination boards for England and Wales.

Contact: Edexcel, Stewart House, 32 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5DN
Tel: 0870 240 9800 Fax: 020 7758 6920
Website: www.edexcel.org.uk,
Email: enquiriesc5jedexcel.org.uk

Elective Home Education : LEA Guidelines

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Annex B

Useful contacts

This list of organisations should be alphabetical to ensure that there is no inference suggested that DfES is biased in favour or against any home education advisory body.

Education Otherwise Association Limited

Nationwide charity for home education information and support. Subscription of £20 also entitles members to receive a handbook, UK and overseas contact list and bimonthly newsletter, access to further resources, special interest and local groups and national gatherings

Address:

PO Box 7420
London
N99SG

Website: www.education-otherwise.org .*

Email: enquiries@education.otherwise.org

Helpline: 0870 7300 074

Home Education Advisory Service,

HEAS produces a range of publications' "and leaflets'b'n different aspects of home education. Annual subscription [currently £12] gives access to the Advice-line, quarterly magazine, card for educational discounts, resources for loan and a regional list of other subscribers.

Address:

P.O. Box 98f§ Welwyn
Garden City
Hertfordshire :.&& AL8
6AN

Website: ['uft](http://.heas.org)

E-mail:

admingijheas.org.uk Helpline:

01707 371854.∴

Home Education UK

Website: www.home-education.org.uk

Home Education Resources

Website: www.home-education-resources.co.uk

The Home Service - a national Christian home education group

Website: www.home-service.org

Elective Home Education : LEA Guidelines

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Christian Home School Website:

www.homeschool.co.uk

Muddle **Puddle** - an independent **site focusing on learning for 0-8 year olds**

Website: www.muddlepuddle.co.uk

DfES related links:

Education of Sick Children www.dfes.gov.uk/sickchildren www.dfes.gov.uk/mentalhealth

Ethnic Minority Achievement Project www.standards.gov.uk/ethnicminorities

Vulnerable **Children Grant**
www.dfes.gov.uk/standardsfund

Exclusions and Alternative Provision "
www.dfes.gov.uk/exclusions

Looked after children www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects

Elective Home Education : LEA Guidelines
CONSULTATION DRAFT

General Comments

All response text in this document has been put into colour and italics to enable the reader to discern the comments and suggestions separately from the original text.

This LEA fully respects the parent's right to elect to educate their child outside of the state system either by enrolling them in a private education establishment or by elective home education. We fully accept that some parents will wish to take on the responsibility for education provision because they believe that the state system is not in compliance with their religious beliefs, moral philosophy, cultural beliefs and or any other principals that they hold sacred.

There may be disparate practice on the monitoring of and reporting on elective home education across the country but the guidance that LEA's are given should be based on the best and most rigorous practice. Furthermore the guidance given should be both clear and unequivocal, to prevent the likelihood of LEA's being subject to future litigation from young people who felt that the LEA did not respond to its duty to satisfy itself that child was in receipt of an adequate education. The section in this document related to Traveller communities as it stands before the suggested amendments could be construed as racist as there is a implication that the lack of permanent residency somehow excuses the lack of effort to ensure that the child gets their legal entitlement to a full and efficient education.

In reading this consultation document there were serious weaknesses that would fail to provide adequate protection of a child's right to receive an education.

The guidance is significantly weaker than the legislation. Where a duty has been conferred in legislation, the person or body must act to fulfil that duty yet this document suggests in several places that there are options to act and that omission is acceptable. Where persons or bodies are given a power to act they may choose to or choose not to exercise that power.

The document does not emphasise the importance of a parent's decision to take up elective home education as a choice and fails in a number of ways to make parents accountable for proving that they have taken their responsibilities seriously. Schools and teachers would not be allowed to practice in a way that did not demonstrate accountability.

There is much to say on the right of parents to make choices for their children but there must be a balance that ensures that the right of the child to receive an education is properly protected. There needs to be a balance of evidence that a child's views and wishes have been taken account of in determining whether they are happy with the parent's choice to opt for elective home education. It is not too much for a parent and child to expect that someone will want to speak with them to verify that learning is taking place. This is to enable the LEA to be satisfied that the child is having his/her right to an education protected.

LEA staff should be objective in their judgements based on experience and expertise. The document refers to LEA trusting parents. Parents should also trust the LEA officer to be objective professional and sensitive to the needs of children.

The majority of parents who opt out of state provision do so understanding the significance of their decision. They meet with the EAH consultants show examples of

Elective Home Education : LEA Guidelines

CONSULTATION DRAFT

work done and the child talks to the consultant on their experiences. In the majority of cases the EAH consultant is able to produce a report for the LEA and the parent acknowledging that the work being done is satisfactory evidence of education being undertaken and that meets legal requirements.

However there are parents who make the decision spontaneously in response to an issue that caused them or their child some stress. Sadly there are a few parents who take the decision to withdraw children from the state education system to avoid the scrutiny of authorities in relation to prosecution, or child protection, or those who have parental control issues and ensuring school attendance, is an added burden to their coping abilities, or in rare occasions where mental health problems lead them to take irrational actions.

There is an issue inequality in expecting parents who educate within the state system with it's clear curriculum framework, to ensure that their child attends regularly whilst providing guidance that makes assumptions and does not require clear evidence of education for those parents who opt out of this system. There is a danger that having unequal standards of evidence that children are receiving a suitable education will form the basis for future litigation against local authorities for applying a different set of rules for those parents who educate within the state provision and those to elect to educate at home. There is access to case law for those pursuing actions to challenge LEAs in relation to their processes for checking that education is taking place, stating what successive judges have said to strengthen the meaning of suitable education. It could be deemed reasonable by a judge to rule that if the law places a duty on an LEA to satisfy itself that parents are providing an education that meets the needs of the child that there must be processes in place to act on the legislation.

Doncaster LEA