

Tameside Elective Home Education Policy

Updated September 2023

1.1 Elective home education is a term used to describe the choice made by parents to provide full-time education for their children at home or in another preferred way, instead of sending them to school. This is different to education Local Authority other than at a school which is provided by a Local Authority, for example for children who are too ill to attend school. For the purposes of education law, the Department for Education (DfE) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, a guardian or other relative
- any person who, although they are not a biological parent and do not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

This can also include the Local Authority as corporate parent where a child is cared for. Local Authority.

Although there is no requirement to do so, parents can choose to engage private tutors or other adults, or may use online tuition, to assist them in providing a suitable education. Similarly, in addition to the family home, other settings may be used to deliver the education. However, these settings may not be formally regulated and there is no external assurance that they comply with basic standards, such as proper vetting of staff and safeguarding of children.

1.2 The reasons for deciding to home educate are many, as are the styles of education undertaken. For some families the decision is based upon their philosophical, spiritual, or religious beliefs, for others it is to meet the specific needs of a child or children, or it may be because of dissatisfaction with "the system". Tameside MBC officers understand and are supportive of the many different ways chosen to educate young people which are equally feasible and legally valid.

1.3 Although children receiving home education are not normally registered at a school college, parents may choose to make arrangements for a child to receive part of their total education at a school ('flexi-schooling') - or at a college or other 16-19 provider where the child is aged 14 or above. The purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home. Schools and colleges are under no obligation to agree to such arrangements, but some are happy to do so.

1.4 The purpose of this document is to clarify, the policy and procedures to be observed when a parent living in the Tameside area chooses to home educate a child who is of compulsory school age. The policy sets out the parents' rights to educate their child at home, together with the legal duties and responsibilities of Head teachers and Tameside MBC. It also sets out the arrangements Tameside MBC will make in order to carry out its legal duties.

1.5 In compiling this document the Local Authority has drawn on the information and guidance provided by the:

- Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 2004
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (last updated April 2020)
- Elective Home Education Departmental guidance for local authorities (April 2019)
- Elective Home Education Departmental guidance for parents (April 2019)
- Tameside Framework for Help and Support (2023)

2. What is the legal position of parents who wish to home educate their child?

2.1 Parents - not the state - are responsible for ensuring that their child is properly educated, if they are of compulsory school age (aged 5-16yrs old). The law says that all children of compulsory school age should receive a full-time education – this does not have to be at school. Parents of any child living in England may request a state-funded school place and where they do, the Local Authority in which they live is obliged to find one. However, parents can make alternative arrangements to educate their child.

2.2 There is no legislation that deals with home education as a specific approach. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Elective home education is a form of 'education otherwise than at school' and this piece of legislation is the basis for the obligations of parents. It is also the starting point for local authorities' involvement.

2.3 A child becomes compulsory school age from the first of three dates following their fifth birthday - 31 August, 31 December or 31 March) (or if the fifth birthday falls on one of those dates, on that day). The child remains compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the academic year in which they become sixteen. Children may also be educated at home in order to participate in education and training until the age of 18 years.

2.4 Parents may decide to exercise their right to educate their child at home from a very early stage, before they reach compulsory school age. There is no legal requirement for any education to take place at all before a child becomes compulsory school age and so, no rules as to the content of any home education provided although state-funded places of between 15 and 30 hours a week would normally be available in early year's settings for children of an appropriate age.

2.5 There is no definition of an efficient education. However, it can be interpreted as meaning education, which 'achieves what it is intended to achieve'. This is not the same as the education being 'suitable' - because it is possible to efficiently deliver an education, which is definitely not suitable for a child. Conversely, it is possible to deliver a suitable education very inefficiently.

What is a 'full-time' education?

2.6 There is no legal definition of "full-time" in terms of education at home, or at school. Children attending school normally have about five hours of tuition a day for 190 days a year, spread over about 38 weeks. However, home education does not have to mirror this. Elective home education typically comprises almost continuous one-to-one contact and education may sometimes take place outside normal "school hours".

2.7 Home-educating parents are not required to have a timetable, set hours during which education will take place, or observe school hours, days, or terms.

2.8 In practice, the question of whether education for a specific child is full-time will depend on the facts of each case; but you should at least be able to quantify and demonstrate the amount of time for which your child is being educated. Education which clearly is not occupying a significant proportion of a child's life (making due allowance for holiday periods) will probably not meet the section 7 requirement (see 2.2 for clarification).

What is a 'suitable' education?

2.9 There is no definition of 'suitable' education in statute law, although as stated in section 7 as quoted above, it must be suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and have regard to any special educational needs. This means that it must be age-appropriate, enable the child to make progress according to their particular level of ability, and should take account of any specific aptitudes. More generally, you should bear in mind that:

- a) even if there is no specific link with the National Curriculum or other external curricula, there should be an appropriate minimum standard which is pursued, and the education should aim to enable the child, when grown-up, to function as an independent citizen in the UK - and furthermore, beyond the community in which they were brought up, if that is the choice made in later life by the child;
- b) to be 'suitable', education at home should not directly conflict with the Fundamental British Values as defined in government guidance ([link at end of document](#)), although there is no requirement to teach these;
- c) local authorities may use minimum expectations for literacy and numeracy in assessing suitability, whilst bearing in mind the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs they may have;
- d) education may not be 'suitable' even if it is satisfactory in terms of content and teaching, if it is delivered in circumstances which make it very difficult to work (for example in very noisy premises). This might also affect whether it is 'efficient' and indeed, whether it is 'received' at all for the purposes of section 7; and
- e) education may also not be deemed suitable if it leads to excessive isolation from the child's peers, and thus impedes social development.

2.10 There are no legal requirements for parents educating a child at home to do any of the following:

- acquire specific qualifications in order to deliver home education
- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- aim for the child to acquire any specific qualifications
- teach the National Curriculum
- provide a 'broad and balanced' curriculum
- make detailed lesson plans in advance
- give formal lessons
- mark work done by the child
- formally assess progress, or set development objectives
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation
- match school-based, age-specific standards

2.11 However, many home-educating families do some of these, at least, by choice. Furthermore, it is likely to be much easier for you to show that the education provided is suitable if attention has been paid to the breadth of the curriculum and its content, and the concepts of progress and assessment in relation to your child's ability.

Children's Rights

2.12 The United Kingdom has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC requires states to provide a right for children to express their views and for due weight to be given to those views, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. This does not give children authority over parents, and a decision to educate a child at home is a matter for parents. You should, however, consider whether home education is realistically possible in your family's particular circumstances, and if your child is happy to be educated in this way. The Local Authority may wish to gain your child's opinion on the suitability of the home education received (as distinct to the question of the child's preference for being educated at home rather than at school), as this can be relevant to any decision it needs to make on whether the section 7 requirements are met.

3. What should be considered before deciding to educate my child at home?

3.1 Deciding to educate your child at home instead of sending them to school is a step which should not be taken lightly. It requires a major commitment of your time, energy and money. Think hard before making a final decision. It is especially important that you consider the nature of the education you intend to provide for your child before you begin to teach them at home. Think about the curriculum you will provide, and whether it will allow your child to reach their potential now and in the future, including whether you expect your child to sit public examinations such as GCSEs or not. Also consider whether home education is in your child's best interests, including whether it will affect their social development.

3.2 There are a range of reasons why you might consider educating your child at home, including:

- Ideological or philosophical views which you feel would be better promoted through education at home
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Dissatisfaction with the school system
- Distance to a local school
- Bullying
- The child's unwillingness or inability to go to school
- Special educational needs not being met within the school system
- Health reasons, particularly mental health

3.3 Some of the reasons listed above may provide a stronger basis than others as a foundation for successful home education. In particular, if you are considering home education because the school system is not currently working well for your child, or because you have other family problems which make it difficult to ensure regular school attendance for your child, you should consider what other steps you could take to secure a more satisfactory education. It is recommended at this stage that you request a meeting with the relevant school staff to discuss the best way forward.

Schools are advised to offer an intervention meeting in school parents/ carers and their child to discuss any issues their child may be facing and how these barriers to learning can be removed. If you are considering home education for your child due to a disagreement with the school or a teacher, talk to the teacher concerned, or to the head teacher if appropriate before you make your decision. This is particularly important for children in years 10 and 11 who are already preparing for public examinations. It is also unwise to consider temporary home education as a means of getting your child into a school other than the one they are currently registered at.

3.4 It is important that families, pupils and schools are fully informed of the expectations and implications of home educating before committing to making this important decision. Tameside MBC recommends that parents are given contact details to seek advice from Tameside Education Welfare Service on 0161 342 2112 before formally asking school to remove their child from the school roll. Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their child at home to avoid legal proceedings or because the child has a poor attendance or behaviour record.

Remember that pressure should never be put on you by school staff to remove your child from a school to avoid formal exclusion, or because your child is having difficulty with learning or behaviour. This practice - sometimes called 'off-rolling' - is illegal, and if pressure of this sort is put on you by any state-funded school you should inform the Local Authority immediately on 0161 342 2112.

3.5 If you genuinely believe that your child's current school is not suitable, then you should also discuss with Tameside MBC what alternatives might be available before taking any decision to home educate your child.

3.6 Remember that if you choose to educate your child at home, you must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility for your child's education, including bearing the cost of any public examinations. Tameside MBC does not provide financial or other assistance to home-educating families for public examinations. Other costs to consider include learning resources: books, paper, technology and other equipment, educational visits and sporting activities.

Tameside may consider giving support when special educational needs are being met through home education and additional costs are incurred as a consequence of those special needs.

3.7 In summary, before making a decision to home educate your child, as parents you should consider:

- Why are you thinking of educating your child at home? What does your child think about the idea?
- Do you have the time, resources, and ability to teach your child properly?
- Is your home suitable for undertaking teaching and learning, in terms of noise, space, and general environment?
- What support do you have from others? What would happen if you were unable, to provide teaching for your child for a period of time e.g., due to illness?
- Can you provide social experiences, access to cultural experiences and physical exercise, to help your child develop?
- Do you envisage educating your child at home for the whole of their time of compulsory school age, or only temporarily?
- What are your long-term intentions for the education of your child?

4.1 Where a child has been registered at school, parents are required to notify the school in writing when withdrawing a child for elective home education. This is to confirm that provision is being made for the child's education otherwise than at school and requesting removal from the school roll. Parents are not required to register or seek approval from the Local Authority to educate their children at home; however, they must obtain the consent of the Local Authority to de-register pupils placed at special schools under arrangements made by the Local Authority. Where a child is registered at a school as a result of a school attendance order, parents must ask the Local Authority to revoke the order.

Some local authorities operate voluntary registration schemes. Parents can register their child as home educated by emailing their child's details through to ehe@tameside.gov.uk. Following the email, an Officer will contact the parents to gather further information.

4.2 The school is obliged to inform the Local Authority of children removed from its admission register and will state home education as the reason for removal, if notified of this by the parent. Parents of children withdrawn from school for home education are not legally obliged to inform the Local Authority themselves - but it is sensible to do so, by emailing ehe@tameside.gov.uk.

A copy of any written intention to home educate by parents should be scanned and emailed to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service by the school.

4.3 These points also apply to children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan attending mainstream schools. However, if a child attends a special school and this was arranged by the Local Authority, then the permission of the Local Authority must be obtained before their name can be removed from the admission register. If the Local Authority refuses consent, you can ask the Secretary of State to settle the dispute. The other circumstance in which the Local Authority's consent is necessary before beginning to home educate is if your child is attending any school as a result of a school attendance order. This order must be revoked by the Local Authority before you can have your child's name removed from the admission register.

4.4. As set out above, you must ensure that your child receives an efficient and suitable full-time education so long as they are of compulsory school age. If they are not attending a state-funded school - or being educated under alternative arrangements made by the Local Authority - you assume the full financial responsibility for the provision of education. You should therefore consider how you can do this if you intend to educate at home. Such costs may not just be direct but also indirect (for example, loss of income if a parent is at home educating their child).

4.5 If at any stage, it becomes apparent you cannot provide a suitable home education, you should contact the Local Authority on 0161 342 2112 as soon as possible with a view to securing a suitable school place for your child and minimising any interruption to studies. Every pupil is allocated a 'link officer' who will support you. If your child is of compulsory school age, the Local Authority must find a suitable school place; however, as pointed out above, this may not be in a school of your choice.

Local Authority Responsibilities and Outline of Procedures

5.1 Tameside MBC believes that children are best educated in school. Notwithstanding this fact, Elective Home Education Officers understand that there is no one 'correct' way of learning. All children learn in different ways and at varying rates. It is vital that parents and children choose a type of education that is right for them.

Tameside MBC has a statutory duty under Section 436 (A) of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to enable it to establish the identities, so far as it is possible to do so, of children of compulsory school age in its area who are not receiving a suitable education. The simple fact that a child is being educated at home does not mean that they are not receiving a suitable full-time education. However, to fulfil their Section 436(A) duty, local authorities are entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided.

Tameside MBC has a statutory duty under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 to intervene if it appears that a parent is not providing a suitable education to the age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs of the child.

'If it appears to a Local Authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.' If evidence of a suitable education is not received, the Local Authority may then commence statutory action, including the issuing of a School Attendance Order (SAO), penalty notices and fines.

Tameside MBC has no legal power to monitor home education on a routine basis, although we are under a duty to make enquiries if it is not clear that a child is receiving a suitable education.

The United Kingdom has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), November 1989, which includes the right to be safe, to an education, the right to express their views and for due weight to be given to those views.

Tameside MBC actively promotes children's right to be heard, as stated in the UNCRC and in the statutory guidance 'Listening to and involving children and young people', January 2014. Tameside MBC officers will wish to gain the child's opinions on the home education received in order to help inform decisions about suitability.

Tameside MBC, in partnership with other agencies, including Social Care and Health, has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children resident in their Borough under Section 175 (1) of the Education Act 2002 and under the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', updated July 2022.

5.2 Education Welfare is therefore likely to make such enquiries if they become aware that you are educating a child at home - or may be doing so. As parents you are under no legal obligation to respond, but if you do not, they are entitled to conclude from the absence of any response that it appears that your child is not receiving a suitable education, with all the consequences which can follow from that (see below).

5.3 Tameside Local Authority Officers will ask to see the child at home or in another location (within 30 days of being notified) as well as requesting to see examples of any work done. As parents, you are under no legal obligation to agree to such a meeting (refer to section below on safeguarding) or to produce specific evidence but you should consider carefully the reasons for not doing so, what is in the best interests of your child, and what the most sensible approach may be.

If it appears that a suitable education is not being provided, the Local Authority will seek to gather any relevant information that will assist them in reaching a properly informed judgement. This will include seeking from the parents any further information that they wish to provide which explains how they are providing a suitable education. Parents will be given the opportunity to address any specific concerns that the Authority has.

Children are welcome to attend any meetings and make contributions to the information provided. Whilst parents are under no duty to respond to such a request, DfE guidelines state that if you do not do enough to satisfy the Local Authority about the sufficiency of education being provided at home, it may have no option but to conclude that the education does not meet the section 7 requirement.

5.4 Tameside MBC understands that, in the early stages, your plans may not be detailed, and you may not be in a position to demonstrate all the characteristics of an "efficient and suitable" educational provision. You may want to ask the Tameside MBC for advice and support. A reasonable timescale should be agreed for you to demonstrate that all aspects of your provision are in place, but this does not mean that there can be any significant break between the end of formal schooling and the provision of good education at home. Some parents have historically adopted a period of de-schooling; this would signify a period in which a significant break in education is evident.

Tameside Officers contact parents as soon as they are notified that you are home educating your child, with a view to visiting within 30 days of the initial referral. A further visit is then offered by a teacher from the Specialist Outreach Service within the following 12 weeks. Once Tameside MBC is satisfied that your child is receiving a suitable education, further half yearly visits are offered by Education Welfare and the Specialist Outreach Team via telephone, email, or letter. The purpose of the visits is to assess the level of education being provided and to offer advice and support and to signpost families to other agencies if necessary. Tameside MBC Elective Home Education Officers are available to provide more frequent support if required.

5.5 If Tameside MBC decides it has not had sufficient information about the home education being provided, or has had no information, and it appears to Tameside MBC that your child is not receiving a suitable education at home, it must serve a notice (known as a S.437 (1) notice), requiring that you as parents to satisfy the Authority that the child is receiving a full-time and efficient education at home that is suitable to your child's needs. Again, it would be sensible to respond to such a notice if you receive one; and you will have at least 15 days to respond so that you have time to gather suitable material that you may wish to rely on.

5.6 Tameside MBC must consider the response, if any, which you make to the notice, in order to decide whether your child is receiving an education which meets your responsibilities under section 7, taking account of any evidence you have provided and any other information it has about the education your child is receiving. If parents make no response at all, then Tameside MBC is entitled to conclude that the child is not receiving a suitable education.

Tameside MBC officers will also make enquiries, including from Children's Social Care, the Health Authorities and any previous school/Early Years provision, to ensure that there are no concerns about the child's welfare or safeguarding, including whether they may be a Young Carer.

5.7 If you fail to satisfy Tameside MBC that your child is receiving a suitable education, and the Local Authority considers that it is expedient that they should attend school, then the Local Authority has a legal obligation to serve on you as parents a school attendance order (SAO). This will name a specific school and require you to register your child at that school. There are provisions in the Education Act 1996 (sections 438-441) governing the basis on which a school is selected to be named in the order.

5.8 If a School Attendance Order is issued by Tameside MBC it must be complied with, and failure to do so is a criminal offence. If you comply with it and send your child to the school named in the order you can still choose to send your child to a different school where there are places available. This should be done by requesting a place at your preferred school; and where a place is available and offered, asking Tameside MBC to vary the order. Alternatively, you can seek to have the order revoked by presenting evidence to Tameside MBC that satisfactory arrangements have been made for suitable education to be provided at home, so that your child need not attend any school and can

continue to be home educated. If Tameside MBC refuses to revoke the order, you can choose to refer the matter to the Secretary of State to settle the dispute by contacting the Department for Education.

5.9 Whether or not you seek to have the order revoked, if you do not comply with it, and in the meantime, Tameside MBC may prosecute you. It would then be for a Magistrates' Court to consider the case. If the order has not been complied with, a conviction for non-compliance is inevitable unless you can prove to the court that you are currently meeting your duty under section 7 to provide efficient full-time suitable education.

5.10 The court can end the order by directing that the order be no longer in force, if it is satisfied that the parents are fulfilling their section 7 duty and acquits them; or it may convict the parents of an offence.

If parents are convicted, Tameside MBC can apply for a parenting order which carries requirements set by the court designed to reduce the likelihood of a further offence.

How does the safeguarding role of the Local Authority affect parents educating children at home?

5.11 Local authorities have a general duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (section 175 of the Education Act 2002) in relation to their education functions. This applies equally to children who are being educated at home, as it does to children attending school. This duty does not entitle a Local Authority to insist on visiting a child's home, or seeing the child, simply for the purposes of monitoring the provision of home education.

5.12 As outlined in the sections below, the Local Authority may decide that circumstances justify applying to a court for an education supervision order or even a care order made under the Children Act 1989. Both of these give the Local Authority the right to contact with a child. In order to obtain information in preparation for an application for either type of order, the Local Authority may initiate an investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if it has reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

If this does not yield the information needed, the Local Authority may ask a court to grant an order under section 43 of the 1989 Act for a child assessment to be made to gather further information in order to determine if the significant harm threshold is met.

5.13 In order to apply successfully for a care order, the Local Authority must show to the satisfaction of the court that the 'significant harm' threshold is met because of the lack of suitable education – this would mean that your child's intellectual and social development was being, or was likely to be, substantially impaired. Lack of a suitable education is capable of being construed as 'significant harm' for the purposes of section 31.

5.14 A care order makes the Local Authority responsible for decisions relating to the education of your child because it becomes the child's corporate parent even if the child continues to live with you as their actual parents. If you as parents then frustrated the wishes of the Local Authority in its role of corporate parent (for example, by physically preventing the child from attending school) the child can be removed from the family home and put into the direct care of the Local Authority. Only in the most serious of cases would this be expected to occur in relation to home education, as opposed to other types of safeguarding concern.

5.15 Plainly, it is in the interests of all parties not to let any dispute about a child's education get to the stage described in paragraphs 5.8 – 5.14 above. Informal discussion should enable most difficulties to be resolved, and a willingness to co-operate so as to secure the proper education for your child should be shown by everyone involved.

What is the Local Authority's role if my child has special educational needs?

5.20 Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to educate children, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at home. Home education must be suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs.

Local authorities should work in partnership with, and support, parents to ensure that the special educational needs of these children are met where the Local Authority already knows the children have special educational needs or the parents have drawn the children's special needs to the authority's attention. Further information is available in the SEN Code of Practice, which has a chapter on home education.

5.21 Parents may educate children who have special educational needs but do not have an Education Health Care plan (EHC) at home. The Local Authority should work with parents and consider whether to provide support in the home to help the parents make suitable provision.

5.22 Local authorities have powers under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to arrange to make the special educational provision that they consider necessary for a child with special educational needs in the form of education provided at home (e.g. medical case management panel, through tutors), that is not the same as parents deciding to educate the child at home. The latter is not a matter for a Local Authority to 'arrange'.

5.23 Where a child or young person with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan is on roll at a mainstream school and the parent decides to home educate, the parent must notify the school in writing that the child or young person is receiving education otherwise than at school and the school must then remove the pupil's name from the admission register. The parent does not need consent from the Local Authority, although they should be encouraged to engage with the authority before doing so, whenever possible.

If the school is a special school, the Local Authority must give consent for the child's name to be removed, it should be considered whether the home education to be provided would meet the special educational needs of the child, but this should not be a lengthy or complex process.

5.24 If you are already educating your child at home and come to later believe that they have special educational needs, you can contact the Local Authority for advice. Parents have the right to request a statutory assessment of a child's special educational needs from the Local Authority. The Local Authority must consider the request within the same statutory timescales and in the same way as for all other such requests. (Information can be found on Tameside's local offer)

5.25 Where children have an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan, it is the Local Authority's duty to ensure that the educational provision specified in the plan is made available to your child.

5.26 Where the Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan gives the name of a school or type of school where the child will be educated and the parents decide to educate at home, the Local Authority is not under a duty to make the special educational provision set out in the plan provided it is satisfied that the arrangements made by the parents are suitable. The Local Authority **must** review the plan annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's special educational needs continue to be met. Where the Local Authority has decided that the provision is appropriate, it should amend the plan to name the type of school that would be suitable but state that parents have made their own arrangements under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

5.27 Where the Local Authority and parents agree that home education is the right provision for a child or young person with an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan, the plan should make clear that the child or young person will be educated at home. If it does then the Local Authority, under Section 42(2) of the Children and Families Act 2014, must arrange the special educational provision set out in the plan, working with the parents. Under Section 19 of the Act, the Local Authority must have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child and their parents, or the young person.

5.28 In some cases the Local Authority will conclude that, even after considering its power to provide support to home-educating parents, the provision that is or could be made for a child or young person with an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan does not meet the child or young person's needs. The Local Authority is required to intervene through the school attendance order framework 'if it appears...that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education'. The serving of a school attendance order is a last resort if all attempts to improve provision are unsuccessful. 'Suitable education' means efficient full-time education suitable to the child or young person's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational they may have.

5.29 The authority will of course continue to check the suitability of the home education as required by sections 436(A) and 437 of the 1996 Act, and if at any point it considers that the home education is no longer suitable, it must ensure that the special educational provision specified in the Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan is made available as well as taking the steps set out above in relation to school attendance.

5.30 Local authorities do not have the right of entry to the family home to check that the provision being made by the parents is appropriate and may only enter the home at the invitation of the parents.

Parents should be encouraged to see this process as part of the authority's overall approach to home education of pupils with special educational needs, including the provision of appropriate support, rather than an attempt to undermine the parents' right to home educate. Local authorities should not assume that because the provision being made by parents is different from that which was being made or would have been made in school, the provision is necessarily unsuitable.

5.31 Even if the parent is making suitable alternative arrangements by the provision of home education the Local Authority is still under an obligation to conduct an annual review of the EHC plan, and that should provide an opportunity for parents to seek additional support or discuss alternatives to home education.

5.32 Children over compulsory school age may also be educated at home in order to meet the requirements to participate in education and training until the age of 18 years. Local authorities should involve you as parents in reviews of Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plans of home educated children who are over compulsory school age.

Safeguarding at Home

6.1 You may choose to employ other people to educate your child, although, you will continue to be responsible for the education provided. You will also continue to be responsible for your child's well-being. This means you are responsible for ensuring that anyone you engage to help you provide home education is suitable to have access to children. Some companies or organisations make part-time provision for a significant part of the week to assist parents who educate at home but cannot themselves provide a full-time education. You will therefore wish to satisfy yourself by requesting appropriate references and checking that any private tutors have a recent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure certificate. Many such tutors also work with children attending school and may be able to provide references from other parents who have home educated children and/or children attending school.

6.2 Children who are being educated at home sometimes attend other settings to supplement home education. If you wish your child to attend a state or independent school part-time for this purpose, you should discuss this with the school concerned. The school is under no obligation to accept such an arrangement. If your child does undertake this form of 'flexi-schooling', you will need to get absences from school which occur when your child is being educated at home authorised by the school in the same way parents of full-time pupils do for other planned absences. The school should mark the child in the attendance register as having an authorised absence when not at school.

6.3 It is also possible for children aged 14-16 years who are educated at home for most of the time to attend state-funded colleges or sixth form colleges on a part-time basis, to receive tuition in specific subjects. If you are interested in this, you should contact local colleges to see if they have any such arrangements. Again, the college is under no obligation to make such provision.

6.4 Some groups of parents who home educate their children come together to support each other and teach their children on a communal basis. There is no reason why this should not take place, but such groups should be aware that if their intended provision will amount to full-time education of five or more children of compulsory school age (or just one if that child has an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan /statement of special educational needs, or is a cared for child), then it may require registration as an independent school. Enquiries on registering as an independent school can be made using the email address given at the end of this document.

6.5 A small minority of parents send their children to establishments which, despite the registration requirement mentioned in the paragraph above, are in fact already operating as unregistered independent schools providing a full-time education. The proprietors of these settings may be committing an offence, and the settings may be inspected by Ofsted and closed down. If you suspect that a setting you are considering for your child falls into this category you should ask the Local Authority if it has any relevant information about the setting or contact Ofsted.

6.6 If your child is involved in any of the arrangements described above the Local Authority will take account of the provision made in assessing whether you as parents are meeting your duty under section 7, and you should ensure that the Local Authority is aware that you are supplementing home education through attendance at another setting and, that you are able to provide information about your child's learning in that setting. The Local Authority should also take account of attendance at other settings which provide education or instruction on a more specialised basis for a small proportion of the week (e.g., madrassahs, sports clubs, and dance schools). Although such provision will often be marginal to the issue of whether a child is receiving a suitable full-time education, in some circumstances it can help to show that the education is suitable (for example by providing opportunities for physical exercise and development not available at home).

Engagement with Enhanced Nursing Team

6.7 Tameside has a duty to ensure that all children and young people who are educated elsewhere have access to the same medical care and intervention as a child in a school placement would receive. This includes engagement with the Enhanced Nursing Service and National Child Measurement Program (NCMP) to ensure that all children and young people have the option to participate in vaccination and measurement programmes.

When Tameside is notified by a school that a child is being educated elsewhere, information will be shared with Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care Foundation Trust including the name, address, date of birth and parents contact details to enable the nurse to make contact with parents and offer engagement with relevant NHS services.

National Careers Service - Positive Steps

6.8 Positive Steps are keen to ensure that all year 10 and 11 pupils are offered a service that would be provided within School. This service provides advice and guidance on career options, apprenticeships, traineeships and Colleges. Positive Steps is able to offer a home visit to ensure your child is fully aware of the range of education/ vocational courses available to them. Written consent is required from parents before any personal information is shared by the Local Authority. Positive Steps can also be accessed independently via walk-in sessions and appointments at their local offices.

Work Experience

6.9 Children educated at home have no entitlement to participate in work experience under arrangements made by the Local Authority or schools, but some local authorities may be able to assist the parents of home educated children who wish to pursue work experience through such arrangements.

Where home educated children do participate in such schemes, you should ask about the extent they are covered by, for example, the health and safety, child protection and insurance provision made on behalf of school children, often by intermediary bodies, which are necessary to safeguard the child.

Regulations regarding child employment apply to all children of compulsory school age whether they attend a school or are home educated. Children may not work until they attain the age of 13 years. Before a child is able to commence any form of employment, they must be in possession of a Work Permit.

Regulations regarding children in entertainment apply to all children of compulsory school age whether they attend a school or are home educated. A Performance Licence is required if a child is engaged in paid work in the theatre, in a film or television performance, in modelling or sport. Further information can be obtained by emailing the Local Authority Child Entertainment and Employment Team at cee@tameside.gov.uk

16 to 19 Bursary Fund

6.10 The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is not payable to young people whose parents elect to home educate them after the age of 16.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children

6.11 Local authorities should have an understanding of and be sensitive to, the distinct ethos and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. If you belong to one of these and move into a new area, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Education Welfare Team for advice and help to access local educational settings if you do not wish to home educate your children. If you do wish to educate your children at home, then the Local Authority's policies and procedures will still apply to you.

Children in Faith Communities

6.12 Local authorities should have an understanding of, and be sensitive to, the distinct ethos and needs of children in specific faith communities and be able to take into account the impact that faith has on the home education priorities of parents. You should be able to expect this in your dealings with the Local Authority. However, faith considerations should not prevent a child from receiving a suitable full-time education, and that will remain the Local Authority's main concern. It is likely to be helpful if you are able to explain how faith considerations have affected the content of the home education – if that is the case. There is no legal requirement for home education to include any element of teaching about religion or faith.

Contact Details

Education Welfare Team - P.O. Box 317, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 0GS - 0161 342 2112

Specialist Outreach Team - 0161 342 5503

Special Educational Needs Team - 0161 342 4433

School Admissions - 0161 342 4004

Examination Boards

- AQA - Aldon House, 39 Heald Grove, Manchester M14 4NA - 0161 953 1170 - www.aqa.org.uk
- OCR - 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU - 01223 552552 - www.ocr.org.uk
- Edexcel - 08702 409800 - www.edexcel.com
- Useful links for resources/information that home education parents may wish to explore:
- Ed Yourself www.edyourself.org
- Special Education Needs - SEN Home Education www.he-special.org.uk
- Cultural Education Information Christian Home Education www.homeschool.co.uk
- Islamic Home Education www.islamichomeeducation.co.uk
- Muslim Home Education www.muslimsandhomeeducation.com
- Gypsy/Traveller Information www.gypsy-traveller.org/education
- Worldwide Education Service www.weshome.demon.co.uk/teach.html
- Dyslexia UK www.dyslexia.uk.net
- Parent Partnership www.parentpartnership.org.uk
- Other Internet Safety www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Parent Line Plus www.parentlineplus.org.uk - 0808 8002222
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) www.ace-ed.org.uk
- Department for Education www.education.gov.uk
- National Curriculum & Examination Information www.nc.uk.net - 0300 303 3011
- Qualification and Curriculum Authority www.qcda.gov.uk
- Muddle Puddle www.muddlepuddle.co.uk
- Primary Resources www.primaryresources.co.uk
- BBC www.bbc.co.uk/learning
- BBC www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize
- Channel 4 www.channel4learning.net
- Education Guardian www.educationguardian.co.uk 18
- History www.schoolhistory.co.uk
- Open University Free Online Learning www.open.edu/openlearning.co.uk [Receive free statement of participation on completion]
- Top Marks www.topmarks.co.uk [subscription]
- Mathletics www.mathletics.co.uk [subscription]
- At School www.atschool.co.uk [subscription]
- ICT Games www.ictgames.com
- IXL Learning www.uk.ixl.com [subscription]
- Education City www.educationcity.com [subscription]
- Khan Academy www.khanacademy.org
- Ed Place www.edplace.com [subscription]
- TES www.tes.com
- Twinkl www.twinkl.co.uk [subscription]
- CGP Educational Resources www.cgpbooks.co.uk
- Tot Bags/Tot Boxes (Craft related) www.activitiesforkids.co.uk
- Doodle Maths www.doodlemaths.com [subscription]
- Doodle English www.doodlelearn.co.uk/english [subscription]
- Oxford Owl www.oxfordowl.co.uk
- Mysteries in Time (History) www.mysteriesintime.co.uk [subscription]