

Home Education Guidance

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Policy Author(s) and Owner	Catriona Walker
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1. Introduction

Aberdeen City Council wishes to build effective relationships with home educators and aims to make the process as straightforward as possible. Positive relationships will enable the Authority to work with home-educators to safeguard the educational interests of children and young people.

Information and contact details are available to parents on the [Aberdeen City Council website](#).

2. Home Education Process

Within Aberdeen City Council we aim to have a process that is clear, fair, consistent and without delay.

The following flowchart sets out the Aberdeen City Council Home Education Process –

Request permission to withdraw your child from school	Request should be made in writing and addressed to the Chief of Education (Eleanor Sheppard – Esheppard@aberdeencity.gov.uk)
	Parents can state their reasons for withdrawing their child from school and for choosing to home educate if they wish to do so.
Initial meeting or visit to establish intentions	The Home School Coordinator/ education officer will make contact with the family to arrange a meeting/visit at a mutually agreed venue.
	Purpose of the meeting is to seek the views of the child. Discuss the educational provision planned for the child. Provide the family an opportunity to state main reasons for withdrawing their child. Provide a list of suggested resources, short and long term planning for the child. Check if all persons with parental rights are in agreement.
Checks by Aberdeen City Council	The authority will seek to gather any relevant information that will assist them in making a decision and therefore will use all information provided by the family. Aberdeen City Council will check with schools/social work for any of the following – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referral to Social Work• On Child Protection Register• Supervision Order• Referral to Children's Reporter
Grant Consent	Families will receive a letter stating the authority's decision
Refuse Consent	Families may be asked to submit further details of their educational provision if Aberdeen City Council cannot establish that a suitable and efficient education will be provided by parents.

3. Good Practice

For parents

Initially parents should inform their child's school of their intentions to withdraw their child to home educate. It may be helpful for the school and local authority to know if the reason for home schooling is dissatisfaction with the school or problems such as bullying. This will give the school an opportunity to try to resolve any such issues or problems before the family decide to withdraw their child from that school.

Although there is no statutory duty upon parents to inform the local authority that they are home educating if they do not require consent, knowing that families are home educating allows the authority to offer support and we encourage home educating families to contact the Chief of Education.

Children should continue to attend school until permission is granted to withdraw the child.

For the local authority

A written record should be kept of all requests to withdraw a child from school, of the processes followed and decisions reached.

Timescales -Aberdeen City Council aim to issue a decision within six weeks of the receipt of the original application.

4. Contact with the Authority

The Home School Coordinator/ Education Officer should make contact on an annual basis with those families they know to be home educating. This annual contact is not a statutory requirement but it allows the authority to fulfil their duty to serve a notice on any parent who is not providing efficient and suitable education. Initial contact should be made in writing to the family, seeking a meeting or requesting an updated report. The primary purpose of the contact should be for the authority to satisfy themselves that suitable and efficient education is being provided and to offer appropriate support to the family. This can be done either through a meeting, at a mutually agreed location, or through other means, e.g. the submission by the family of written, recorded or electronic material. There is no set format in which information can be submitted. The important factor is whether the information can demonstrate that suitable and efficient education is being provided.

Following this contact, the Home School Coordinator/ Education officer should write to the family letting them know the outcome, i.e. whether or not the educational provision was seen to be suitable and efficient. If there was no problem with the educational provision, there will be no need for further contact until the following year. Where there are concerns about the efficiency or suitability of the education being provided, the Home School Coordinator should make the exact nature of these concerns clear to the parent.

5. Support to Families

Although Authorities are not legally obliged to provide any resources for home-educated children, Aberdeen City Council will offer home-educating families the following:

- The opportunity to meet with the Home School Coordinator/ Education officer at least once per year to discuss the provision they are making and to seek advice on education matters.
- Access to the Curriculum Resource and Information Service. - This will allow access to educational resources for work with children and young people and also professional development resources, which may support parents in considering the methods of education they choose.
- Access to Leisure card – proof of entitlement by showing evidence of qualifying benefits
- Accord Card – proof of residency in Aberdeen
- School Health Service - Parents will be offered the opportunity to receive the Core Programme delivered at the child's nearest school. Parents can meet with a school nurse and discuss the health checks and immunisations normally offered through schools.
- Free access to sanitary products
- Education Maintenance Allowance - Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) are a government-funded scheme which enable young people from lower income families to stay on in school for further education. EMAs are also to be available to eligible young people who are undertaking full-time non-advanced level study by home-education if they remain in education after their compulsory school leaving date (31 May or Christmas - depending on birthday). The EMA programme will be administered for these students by the Local Authority in which the home education is based. Guidance and information on applying for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) can be found on the [Aberdeen City Council website](#).

6. Recognised Qualifications

There is no legal requirement for children to take a particular set of qualifications. The internal assessment component of many qualifications such as Standard Grades, National Qualifications, and GCSEs can restrict the certification of external candidates. This is usually because written performance alone is insufficient to assess students' attainments. Authorities are not required to meet any costs associated with external candidates taking examinations or other qualifications. Where it is possible to support families by allowing pupils to be presented for exams as external candidates through registered examination centres this should be encouraged.