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**WELCOME**

## **WHAT IS EDUCATION OTHERWISE?**

Education Otherwise (EO) is a membership organisation which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children. Most of our work is carried out by a team of members who volunteer their services free to support other members and to promote home education.

EO is a limited company with charitable status. There is a council consisting of between 14 and 19 members, who are Company Directors and Charity trustees and legally responsible for what the organisation does; a team of Helpline volunteers; a network of voluntary Local Contacts and administrative volunteers as well as contacts for special concerns; and two part-time paid administrators.

EO forms a 'grass-roots', self-help group in which everyone is welcome to play a part. Through each other, members increase access to wide-ranging experiences, expertise and even resources. National and local groups and gatherings give opportunities for developing friendships, with all members being encouraged to participate, if they wish, in social activities, workshops and business meetings. Ideas to improve this mutual support are always welcome.

### **Education Otherwise, who are we?**

EO is you, me, our families and anyone who joins in support of a greater range of alternatives in education. We are a charity funded by members' subscriptions and run primarily by voluntary workers. We do not run on a *them and us* basis; the members who help out as volunteers are people who are committed enough to offer some of their time to assist other families personally or the organisation more generally. Many members are not aware of the amount of work going on, such as with families who are facing (sometimes severe) difficulties. Recent examples are the establishment of Strategic Planning Group to look at streamlining EO's structures and taking it, as a growing organisation, forward: members of the EO Scotland group met with Scottish Executive to discuss operation of Scottish Guidance for Education Authorities; Government Policy group responded to Schools White Paper issued by DfEs, to Government Consultation on Pupil Registration Regulations and members met with DfES personnel to discuss guidance for 'children missing from education', guidelines for Local Authorities and other issues relating to home education; an email bulletin was sent to every LA in the UK regarding delay in DfES home education guidance, giving links to the expanded information for LA's on EO's website; EO trifold sent to every school, special school, LA, SENCO, Young Offender Institute and many disability charities; information directories for Media and Local Contacts produced and distributed; introduced 'credit card' style membership and home education cards; and fully revised SINC, now Version 6. We are only able to carry on with this essential work thanks to the families who decide to join Education Otherwise and subsequently renew their annual membership.

### **Why It's Good to Renew Your EO Membership**

By renewing your EO membership each year, as well as receiving the benefits of membership, you are offering back support both to the many volunteers who make it happen and, in a tangible and visible way, to the existence and strength of the actual choice of home education in society. There is strength in numbers that can be counted, and action needs money even when carried out by volunteers! And let's not forget, volunteers need support and encouragement. (see membership renewal section p. 15).

*These funds are vital. On behalf of EO - thank you for joining and renewing and supporting the organisation.*

If you have any ideas for developing EO's network (and more needs to be done), or feel you can contribute in any way to help extend the support we can offer, then please get in touch, either with your voluntary Local Contact, with any postholder or council member, or by writing to the newsletter or EO Forums or email list with ideas.

### **Support for Members from Education Otherwise**

New members receive: this Handbook and a contact list of EO members (both updated annually); a free copy of *School is Not Compulsory*; bi-monthly newsletters; discounts on EO publications and a reduced subscription to Learnpremium online educational service; membership card allowing free or reduced access to many places of interest; home education card (truancy card) and car sticker, and a Useful Organisations

leaflet. In addition, and very importantly, members can access the support of a voluntary Local Contact who can help new members feel at home with home education and EO.

Where there is no Local Contact for an area, members should feel free to contact a Local Contact for an adjacent area. If you have any difficulty accessing a Local Contact please get in touch with the Local Contact Co-ordinator or Database Administrator. The Local Contact should have up-to-date news of members plus any local activities, and may be able to advise about the attitude and 'expectation' of the Local Authority (formerly known as Local Education Authority) in England and Wales, or Education Authority in Scotland.

Other volunteer members offer specific support or information on issues such as school anxieties, single parenting, special needs, autonomous education, child protection, pre-16 College entry, GCSEs, newsletter production and contributions, publicity and research work. Detailed legal information and support is accessible through Local Contacts, some of whom assist personally.

The handbook and contact list are received on joining and then a further copy when they're updated during your first year's membership. The membership fee is then reduced on renewal, after you've been a member for a year, as the costs of printed items for renewing members (see p.15) are lower.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS**

This booklet offers a basic introduction to important issues relating to home education and may arouse your curiosity and interest in the many different aspects of education from home. Education Otherwise has a range of publications giving more detailed information, including many excellent books and a selection of special topic Leaflets from the EO Information Leaflet Series. These leaflets cover in greater depth many of the topics referred to in this booklet, including for example a fuller description of the Deregistration procedure; Courses & Qualifications; and a useful summary of the research which has been carried out into the effectiveness of home education. All of EO's leaflets are for sale via the online store on the EO website or from the Publications leaflet, or are available to download free of charge and read online or print at: [www.education-otherwise.org/Publications%20Files/Leaflets/NdxLflt.htm](http://www.education-otherwise.org/Publications%20Files/Leaflets/NdxLflt.htm)

Index to Leaflets Available for downloading from the EO website:

- Choosing Your Approach to Home Education
- Courses and Qualifications
- GCSEs
- Useful Home Education Organisations
- Educational Resources Directory
- Taking a Child Out of School and LA Contact
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Home Education
- Dyslexia
- Legal Aspects of Home Education in England and Wales
- Further Reading Related to Home Education
- School Anxieties
- Home Education and Steiner
- England and Wales Trifold Leaflet
- Scottish Trifold Leaflet
- Flexi-Schooling
- Home Education Research

It seems researchers are no longer asking; "Is home education a viable option?" Rather the question has become; "Why is home education so successful in terms of the academic achievement and social development of children?"

What is home education?

A fundamental aspect of our society is that parents are responsible for ensuring children receive proper care and a “suitable” education. A suitable education may be provided by attendance at different types of school; learning at home and in the community with parents, family, friends, and/or tutors (including informal work and skill-based mentors); or through a combination of the two called flexi-schooling. Families who choose to provide a home and community-based education come from all backgrounds, circumstances and beliefs, and have many reasons for deciding to do this. Some continue the home education of their child beyond the official start of compulsory education at five years; others withdraw their child from school, perhaps following concerns or difficulties. A unifying factor though is a belief that a range of alternatives is needed to cater for children’s individual needs, interests and learning styles.

Home educating may seem daunting at first and cause much re-thinking of life and learning. However, families generally report increasing confidence in their abilities to develop an approach to education that is unique, individual and often child-led. Home education may be very different from the school-regulated approach, but research shows that amongst other things home educated children are noted for their well-developed sociability and their academic achievements. This powerful combination equips them well for dealing with life’s opportunities and problems. Further, parents of children who have developed severe school anxieties possibly leading to school refusal, report a steady return to balance in general and with enthusiasm for learning being completely restored.

## Legal Requirements

Parents must see that their children receive education, but they need not send them to school. In England and Wales, children must receive education "either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" (Education Act 1996, s.7); in Scotland, education must be provided "either by causing [the child] to attend a public school regularly or by other means" (Education (Scotland) Act 1980, s.30). Although most parents do enrol their children in schools, the two alternatives have equal status in law. There is no question of seeking special dispensation to home educate, and if the child has never been to school there are no formalities involved in starting home-based education. Furthermore, "suitable" education may take a variety of forms. In particular, home educators, unlike state schools, are not bound by the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Where a child is being withdrawn from school in order to embark on home-based education in England the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006; in Wales the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 set out the conditions under which a pupil’s name must be removed from the register of a school. A child whose name is on the school admission register is a registered pupil. Under Regulation 8(1)(d) in England, Regulation 9(1)(c) in Wales, the name of a school-age pupil is to be deleted from the register if *he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school. This means that the parents need to write to the school explaining that they are or will be home educating. On receiving the letter the school must take the child’s name off the register and should notify the LA.*

In Scotland, if a child is a registered pupil at a public school, parents must gain consent from the education authority to withdraw the child from school before they begin home education. This is different from the situation in England and Wales where parents only need write to the school to ask for the child’s name to be removed from the register as the child is being educated otherwise than at school. See Section 3.3.3 in *School is Not Compulsory (SINC) 6<sup>th</sup> Edition* for more information on withdrawing a child from school in Scotland.

Local Authorities (England & Wales – formerly known as Local Education Authorities) and Education Authorities (Scotland) are mainly concerned with school education, but they do have a duty to try and determine whether a "school-age" child in their area is receiving suitable education. To do so they will almost certainly ask parents for information about their educational provision. Exactly how this information is provided is a matter for negotiation between the LA/EA and the family.

For more detailed accounts of the legal background to home education in the UK, see legal summaries elsewhere in this handbook and in *School is Not Compulsory (SINC) 6<sup>th</sup> edition*.

## Common Questions

### **Do parents need permission to home educate?**

No. As parents are responsible for their child's education, parents have the right to take appropriate decisions. The same applies to children with special needs, except where they attend a Special School (see SEN section). Parents in Scotland need to obtain consent from the Education Authority to withdraw a child from a state school, but consent should not be unreasonably withheld (see legal summary).

### **Do home educators have to inform the LA?**

No. There are no legal requirements in England & Wales for parents to inform the LA of the intention to home educate a child. The authorities will, however, automatically be aware of those who have been removed from a State school because of the deregistration procedure.

### **Do parents have to be trained teachers?**

No. Parents do not need any formal qualifications to home educate. Helping children to learn how to access information is probably the most valuable skill a parent can teach them. Efficient learning doesn't have to revolve around lesson and curriculum planning, or testing and recording. What *is* required is time, commitment and resourcefulness.

### **Do families need a timetable, or a special room or facilities?**

No. Schools need timetables and classrooms to cope with large numbers of children, but at home greater flexibility and originality is possible. Most home educators take advantage of learning in real situations, adding to their work at home by using a range of community facilities. Children do not need to keep to school hours as learning can, and does, take place at any time and anywhere. The education must be "full-time", but in a home-based context there is no definition of what this means.

### **Do home educated children have to follow the National Curriculum?**

No. This, and the associated formal tests and assessments, apply to children in State schools only. Some parents do choose to follow the National Curriculum; others feel reassured using it as a guide, especially at first; others follow the child's interests, perhaps with varying degrees of formal structure in areas where they *all agree* this is beneficial. Active involvement, even full autonomy by the student in decisions about their education is usually considered of great importance. Although there are no compulsory subjects, and evidence of learning in separate subject areas is not required, families often do pay particular attention to literacy and numeracy skills and the acquisition of general and special knowledge. But, here again, a great deal of variation will occur depending on the child's individual style of learning. Also, this would not outweigh the importance placed by many on the development of personal and social skills.

### **So can parents provide the kind of education they feel is the most appropriate?**

Yes. As long as it suits the child's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs, it does not isolate the child and it prepares them for life in a modern civilised society parents are free to provide the kind of education they prefer. This can be especially important for those with different learning requirements such as dyslexia, as they may not realise their potential in certain areas such as literacy, numeracy and organisational skills, within a standard time-scale. Conversely other aspects of their learning have the potential to move forward ahead of 'standard'.

### **How do parents know that home education is right for their child?**

The decision can only be made by the family concerned and depends on their individual circumstances. EO has a range of publications on offer to enable families to make an informed choice. Even so, written information is no substitute for the kind of support available through membership of EO with its network of home educating families. If a child does seem resistant to learning it may be worth investigating a fresh approach.

### **Can a home educated child go to school later if circumstances change?**

Yes. Parents may approach a school at any stage to see if they have a place available. Many teachers say they welcome the social maturity and enthusiasm for learning often displayed by these children. Even if they have not been covering the same material, this confidence and flexibility means home educated children generally integrate well. Children who choose to go to school are usually committed attendees - some try flexi-schooling first.

### **'Flexi-schooling'; an – an unusual yet viable alternative, what is it?**

Flexi-schooling means a child attends part-time, but permission is granted at the head's discretion, as this is not an absolute right. The child becomes a registered pupil, therefore the school has the advantage of receiving income related to that child, and any time at home is considered 'absent with leave'. The arrangement does not have to lead to full-time attendance, but the child will become subject to the National Curriculum unless an exemption is applied for.

### **How do children learn at home?**

The approaches to life and learning are as varied as those reasons for undertaking home education and as diverse and individual as the people involved. People join Education Otherwise from all social, cultural and educational backgrounds; a unifying factor is the desire to facilitate their child's development. Families usually discuss ideas and decide together what they feel comfortable with, the approach often varying as the child develops and parents become more experienced and confident. Siblings often study in a different way reflecting recognition of individual styles or intelligence. Many people believe that education can be highly successful in other ways than the approach that is taken in school. This view is certainly supported by research which has investigated effective learning. Case law has established that many different approaches can fulfil the legal requirements for a "suitable education".

Some parents teach in a formal manner, using a fixed timetable that keeps to school hours and terms, and with a curriculum based on traditional school subjects. This approach may be chosen when a child is first withdrawn from school, the family appreciating the sense of stability offered by a familiar routine. If a return to school is likely in the future, many families prefer to plan their education in a similar way. Sometimes a fully, or partially, structured approach is the child's choice.

Other families take advantage of the freedom from having to follow a strict timetable, and choose an autonomous approach, using a child's real life interests and natural curiosity as a starting point and allowing the child to determine what and how to study. Subject areas may be integrated by means of topic and project work. Children whose enthusiasm for learning has been seriously affected by school problems often benefit from this relaxed and child-centred approach.

Home educating allows families to choose aspects and materials from other educational philosophies such as Steiner and Montessori, or from therapists such as Peto, and incorporate them into their own unique approach. There is no "correct" educational system that suits all children as they are individuals who learn in different ways, at varying speeds and have different abilities, aptitudes and interests. It is vital for parents and children to choose the kind of education that is right for them, the main thing probably being to have a positive outlook on life and education. Home education often seems to evolve of its own accord with the child being an active participant. This may not produce a uniform 'end product' but it does allow children to develop as flexible and motivated individuals who are positive about what they wish to contribute.

### **How can parents teach children things they do not know themselves?**

Parents do not need to "know everything". These days, with the ever-increasing volume of facts that change and soon become out of date, a more important skill is learning how to learn, how to think and how to find and use information. We live in an information rich society with easy and variable access to fascinating educational possibilities. We can add to our own knowledge in so many ways, through libraries, the media, clubs and societies, inter-active museums, the internet, historic battle re-enactments, open lectures etc. In the local community there are enthusiasts in many hobbies or professions who are usually more than willing to share their expertise with a keen youngster. Friends or neighbours may happily offer special knowledge and resources. Evening classes, private tutors, correspondence courses, educational books, materials and specialist equipment can be used as appropriate. The internet is a rich source of information, including worksheets/books to download and online educational games and worksheets free of charge. There are also structured learning programmes such as Learnpremium, to which EO members can subscribe at a reduced charge. (See P/ 18)

### **How much does education from home cost?**

There is no financial assistance for home educators, so inevitably some expense will be incurred. However, home educators do not have to buy school uniforms, pay bus fares to and from school, or the other incidental expenses connected with school. Home education can cost as much - or as little - as parents are able or prepared to spend; many families manage on very low incomes. A lot of resources may be available in the

home including equipment for measuring, weighing and simple science experiments as well as woodwork and other tools.

Many families have access to computers and the internet. Many excellent educational broadcasts (including the Night Learning Zone and the Christmas Lectures etc.) are available on radio and TV. Educational resource catalogues can provide many ideas for things to make together such as multiplication bingo or other such games.

Many libraries provide topic loans and special tickets for additional books. Some LAs allow home educating families access to their teacher resource centres. Major industries have education packs (even 'propaganda' can be used educationally). Free and cheap materials can be obtained at Agricultural and other shows, exhibitions, and the like. A lot of materials are available free from businesses such as wood off-cuts and from Scrapstores. The EO membership card allows free admission to many places of interest, some local, and some of national interest such as English Heritage sites (if booked in advance). Social and educational visits involve some expense, but many EO'ers arrange group discounts for trips to places of interest. It is always worth asking whether, as a home educator, you can have a discount.

Clubs such as Brownies, Venture Scouts, and Woodcraft Folk, and local drama, art, sports or music clubs are all popular with home educators and school children alike. So are special interest societies such as conservation groups like 'Watch', joining in the local 6th Form outdoor pursuits expeditions with school friends, gardening co-operatives or junior archaeological events. So families may have this expense anyway. All of these activities can be a great source of friendships.

## Socialisation

### **What is socialisation?**

People frequently enquire about the socialisation of home educated children, but parents have found that the question is often based on a rather narrow interpretation of 'socialisation'; i.e. that which occurs in school. More broadly, people can think of socialisation as the ability to mix freely and comfortably with different people.

Professor D. Lawton, Head of Curriculum Studies at the University of London Institute of Education, comments: "Primary socialisation takes place in all societies, mainly within the family, as a process of inducting children into the rules, beliefs, and values of society; they are taught the kind of knowledge necessary to allow them to live in society and become members of it".

The process is furthered and enhanced as young people become more actively involved in their community, communicating with a broad range of individuals in work, play and every day life settings. This integrated way of life is truly traditional and develops a feeling of belonging and commitment.

### **Do children need school socialisation?**

Socialisation in the classroom or playground is of a very specific kind. Children are usually grouped with large numbers of others in the same age range, relationships between those of different ages being less common. This also applies to contact with adult staff, which tends to be more formal than social (this balance of young to older does not reflect a natural community, and may be the source of some of the feelings of alienation experienced by young people today). Also, some socialisation learned in schools is highly undesirable. For example, it can be difficult to avoid peer group pressure; many pupils join in activities that go against their better judgement. Further, some school children find they are lonely in spite of being part of a crowd; many have experienced this paradoxical kind of isolation and cite it as a reason for joining EO.

### **Surely children need school to learn how to work in a group, and prepare them for coping in later life?**

Of course school is one way to learn some valuable skills useful in later life, for example working co-operatively in groups, but a child who does not attend school can utilise the many opportunities to become involved with learning and leisure groups in the community as mentioned above. Many people believe that home educated children do not have the opportunity to function in group settings, but this is not necessarily the case. Many home educated children participate in group activities with other home educators and in a variety of after school clubs and activities. It is also a myth that a child needs to suffer hardships in early life

in order to cope with them in later life; it is secure, happy, confident children who, as adults, are able to cope with many diverse circumstances.

### **Where do children who are educated at home make their friends?**

Children educated at home make their friends with other home educated children, with school children who live nearby (which in turn may give access to an even wider network of friends), and through clubs, play schemes and activity groups, etc. These are friendships of choice, and are based on mutual respect and pleasure in each other's company, often spanning a wider age range than is common at school. Children may choose to have other home educators who live far away as pen pals and make long distance friends, meeting for holidays or at EO camps and national gatherings.

It is the quality rather than the quantity of friends, or the amount of time spent together that counts. Home educated children may spend fewer hours in the company of large groups, and parents may have to make extra effort, but friendships tend to be positive and lasting.

## **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

*(now termed Additional Support Needs in Scotland – see page 51)*

### **Can parents home educate a special needs child?**

Yes. Anything other than this would constitute discriminatory practice. The Education Act refers to the responsibility of parents to provide children with a suitable education, in school or otherwise, while taking account of any special educational needs. Parents do not need any training. Their special knowledge of the child's specific situation, coupled with information they will have received from health care professionals over the years, enables them to make informed decisions about the child's needs and how these can best be met. In any case, the majority of children with special needs in school are taught by teachers without special training; the same applies to the Advisors who may visit home educators.

### **What is a Statement of Special Educational Needs ?**

Statementing is a procedure aimed at establishing and providing for the needs of a child who appears to have different learning requirements that cannot be met from the school's own budget. Once a school have identified that a child requires this additional help, they or the parents may request a formal assessment. Only a small percentage of children with special needs will eventually obtain a Statement. This sets out the additional help and resources to be made available to the child in the school setting. The procedure may take some years to get under way and some parents say they find the process difficult as opinions in these matters can vary quite considerably. In any case, where a child is going to be assessed, parents might consider obtaining the ACE Handbook (Tel: 0808 800 5793, Mon-Fri 10am-5pm) [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk) so they know what is involved.

### **Can a child with a Statement of SEN be educated at home?**

Yes. Even where the Statement names a school. The LA must arrange for the provision set out in the statement to be made "unless the child's parent has made suitable arrangements". Such arrangements can include home education and the deregistration procedure, if in school, is the same. Once the child has been de registered neither the LA nor the parent are obliged to provide what is written in the statement, but the parents must be able to demonstrate that they are meeting the child's special needs. It is possible for an LA to make provision for a child with special needs who is educated at home, but as there is no legal requirement for them to do so, this rarely happens. Therefore there is usually little reason for a parent who intends to home educate to request a statement. The LA must maintain the statement, to be reviewed annually, although it may be possible, with the agreement of the LA, to have it ceased.

When a child attends a special school, the LA's consent is required for the child's name to be removed from the register. This is meant to safeguard the child and is not meant to undermine the rights of the parent or limit their duties and responsibilities. Consent must not be withheld without good reason, as to do so would amount to discriminatory practice. Usually consent is given without any difficulty but if this is not the case parents are advised to seek information from Education Otherwise.

### **What are the benefits of home education for a child with Special needs?**

Not all children with special needs thrive at school. Some parents turn to home education because they are unable to find a suitable school for their child or because their child's special needs are not being met in the school setting. Parents often feel daunted by the challenge of meeting their child's needs without the input of specialists, but it is important to remember that they are the experts where their child is concerned, and there is a great deal of information and support available, especially on the internet.

The increasingly less flexible approach to learning provided in schools means that a child with special needs such as dyslexia or Asperger's syndrome often feels at a disadvantage: a learning difference then becomes a handicap, and the child can develop an increasing sense of failure or stress or low self esteem. Away from the school situation they can learn in a style that suits them, follow their own interests, rest when needed, get individual help and support and develop their talents and skills. Many children who were having difficulty in school flourish in a different environment.

Our present school system emphasises the need to have certain skills that may be more of a problem for people with special needs, such as the ability to remember facts taught in a certain way, and being an efficient scribe, or getting along with a lot of children all the same age. Useful as these skills certainly are, they are likely to become less significant in the world of work, where people type rather than hand write and where computers spell check or have voice recognition software, and where we are able to choose a career environment that suits us. Home Education can help a child develop skills that will be most useful in adult life.

### **Dyslexia - a learning disability or a learning difference?**

Dyslexia is an umbrella term that refers to a range of difficulties in processing language (written or verbal) and may affect short-term memory, such as remembering instructions, and sequential skills, like spelling and times-tables. Varying degrees of dyslexia are sometimes called "specific learning difficulties", but this is not a popular description to many people who have dyslexia. It is a condition that affects 1 in 25 of our children, and something which may actually enhance certain aspects of right-brain functions such as problem solving skills. The increasingly less flexible approach to learning provided in schools means that a child with dyslexia often feels at a disadvantage: a learning difference then becomes a handicap.

Our present system emphasises the need to have certain skills that may be more of a problem for people with dyslexia, such as the ability to remember facts taught in a certain way, and being an efficient scribe. Useful as these skills certainly are, they are likely to become less necessary as technology has a greater impact on ordinary lives. Not only can computers store information for us, they also enable people with varying degrees of literacy to convey what they wish to say. Citizens of the future will need to be flexible and adaptable and have the ability to manipulate easily available information in the most creative way.

Many children who turn to home education because they have become unhappy in school are later found to have dyslexia. With a fresh approach, unfettered by restrictions on learning certain skills to a set time scale, these children invariably flourish. When the time is right, progress in basic skills can be extremely rapid, and meanwhile the student will have the chance to enjoy learning in a variety of ways.

### **What about Courses and Qualifications?**

Rather than limiting a child's chances of gaining qualifications, home education often enhances opportunity as the education can be tailored to meet each child's particular needs. Even those going into higher education without standard exams have various options, such as university Access courses, direct entry as a mature student, or enrolling in the Open University at 18 years. Some people prefer to develop their position directly through employment; either self-employment, by taking a Modern Apprenticeship or by training through work-based qualifications, the NVQs.

GCSEs or A Levels may be taken over a number of years, as the young person feels ready. There are a number of ways of taking the courses, such as independently, through Correspondence College, or classes at the local College of Further Education. Some families may pay a private tutor to work towards exam courses or when children hit a problem. It is well worth a visit to the local F.E. College to investigate options, both for 'academic' and 'skills-based' possibilities. The GNVQ courses on offer have proved very useful to many students, especially those with dyslexia, as the material is mainly based on course work with learning support being readily available.

## **Bullying in school**

Bullying is a deliberate act designed to cause distress to victims in order to give a feeling of power to the bully. It ranges from name-calling, threats and teasing to ostracising an individual, extortion and physical assault. Bullying in school is a discipline problem that can lead a child to illness, truancy, 'school phobia' and in some cases even suicide. There are many misconceptions about the supposed 'value' of bullying. Some people suggest that bullying is a normal part of childhood and that victims probably bring it on themselves, but bullying is not natural. Bullying is learned behaviour and can be unlearned, just as co-operation and kindness can be learned instead. It is not character-forming, except in unhelpful ways, in that it may teach children to side with the bullies and ostracise the victims in order to protect themselves. It may also teach the victims that aggressive, disempowering behaviour is the most successful – not lessons which help children.

No child asks or deserves to be bullied. "Learning to mix more" can mean hiding real interests and abilities, compromising oneself in order to fit in, and pretending to be something one isn't. Bullying should be sorted out at source as it is not the bullied child's problem, in fact if the 'problem' is that the child is refusing to go along with the herd, then s/he is showing real strength. Parents should tell the Head and school governors and even involve the LA or a local councillor on the Education Committee if nothing is being done. Children have a right to be safe and aware that concerns about these issues are taken very seriously. Bullying can and must be stopped. Contact the Anti-Bullying Campaign (ABC) set up under the auspices of Kidscape and Kidscape 0845 120 5204 [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) for further help and ideas of possible whole school approaches. Parents of a bullied child may decide to consider another school or to home educate (and many do with every success) but ideally this should be seen as a choice, a positive decision.

## **School "Phobia" or school anxieties**

The vast majority of children who experience severe school anxieties have understandable reasons for becoming upset such as unrecognised learning difficulties, bullying or being at odds with the social or learning environment. Children who are having problems at home with a bereavement or parental separation may also find it too difficult to manage school attendance. Again, this is completely reasonable. To apply the label "school phobia" to any of these children is misleading. It implies the child has a problem which must be rectified, effectively placing all the 'blame' on the child rather than addressing the issues.

Some school-anxious children cope, with support from family, friends, teachers, and officials connected to Education Welfare Departments. Others are helped by attending small classes in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), also known as Tutorial Units. Some schools are particularly good at giving the child time to recover, while actively dealing with the source of the problem such as bullying. Many children, however, do not have the benefit of this degree of sensitive understanding. In fact parents frequently report official behaviour of an oppressive nature. School-anxious children often gain enormous benefit from an alternative approach such as home education, and parents have a right to be informed of all options.

School-anxious children and their parents may be greatly misunderstood and families can feel isolated. This is largely because "school phobia" is often misrepresented as a "separation anxiety". However most of these children are perfectly able to leave their families and homes in all situations except for attending school. Children may become deeply distressed, some to the point of ill health with real physical symptoms. Sadly some feel driven to trying to commit suicide.

Children who are unable to cope with the school environment are in danger of automatically being treated as if they have a mental or emotional problem, and they may lose a great deal of self-confidence. Home education can provide a real opportunity for these children to regain self-esteem and interest in learning. Contact with other home educated children can also help children with school anxieties to realise that they are not alone in finding school a difficult environment.

## **DE-REGISTRATION & CONTACT WITH LA/EA**

### **How do parents take their children out of school?**

Parents in England and Wales must write to school asking the head to remove the child's name from the register because the child is receiving education otherwise than at school. The head then has a duty to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Parents in Scotland need to approach the Education Authority for consent to withdraw a child from a state school but, as stated earlier, this consent should not be unreasonably withheld. Parents whose children are being withdrawn from school need to ensure they have followed the necessary de-registration process, or the LA may instigate non-attendance proceedings. It is important to state in the de-registration letter that "*the child is receiving education otherwise than at school*" since any other wording may be used as an excuse not to remove the child's name from the register. Members of EO should seek information from their Local Contact in case of difficulty. There are deregistration leaflets aimed at LA's and schools available to print out from the EO website, or postal copies can be obtained from Xxxxxxxx (Database Administrator).

### **What form will contact with the LA take?**

As stated earlier local authorities are entitled to ask home educating families informally for information about their approach, but it is for both parties to negotiate how any discussions about provision are to take place. LA representatives often welcome the opportunity to discuss the educational provision with parents and with children if the parents are happy for the officer to meet their children. However this is only one possible arrangement and they do not have an automatic right of access to the home or child. Other parents choose to provide information to the local authority by other means. They may write reports, take photographs, make videos, submit educational philosophies, attach reports from third parties, send examples of work or provide information by any other means they choose. Many parents prepare a summary of aims and resources, and keep an education diary as a (private) source from which to extract information for further visits or writing reports. LAs are mainly interested in hearing about broad-based educational opportunities and the availability of social contact. Parents can ask for a copy of any reports and comment on them if necessary.

If for any reason a family feels the LA or its representative is taking an authoritarian stance, then they might want to discuss the situation with their EO voluntary Local Contact (who may in turn seek assistance if required). Attitudes of local authorities do vary, but EO and local home educators are working to improve their understanding and treatment of home educators.

### **What if the LA do not think the education being provided is good enough?**

There is a formal procedure the LA must follow if they think arrangements are not adequate. The LA can serve a School Attendance Order (*see S.I.N.C. or the EO Leaflet "Legal aspects of home education in England & Wales"*) and parents may be threatened with prosecution if they do not comply with this. If parents decide not to comply with a School Attendance Order they will have the opportunity to show that their arrangements are suitable in court. The court will accept evidence in a number of forms and will be looking for evidence that would convince a reasonable person on the balance of probabilities that a suitable education is being provided. Parents do not have to defer to the LA's view of what constitutes a suitable education. Families in Scotland may present their case to the Children's Panel.

Where a child is being home educated following a period of stress, and the education really can be shown to be less than adequate, then there are many reasons why parents need their LA to show special understanding. These children may have been under-achieving in school in any case and home education can, in time, prove to be a highly effective alternative. A period of recovery may be needed for confidence and interest in learning to return and it is worth trying to negotiate with the LA to allow time for this to happen. This would apply particularly to those who have become severely school anxious as they are running out of options. The alternative, if it means forcing school attendance, potentially holds very serious implications for the child's future well-being.

## **DEREGISTRATION/WITHDRAWAL LETTERS – ENGLAND, WALES & SCOTLAND**

### **Sample letter to head teacher in England**

Dear (insert head's name)

Re: insert name of child (date of birth)

After careful consideration we have decided to withdraw my/our daughter/son from school in order to take personal responsibility for her/his education. Please delete her/his name from the register in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 8(1)(d) 2006, as she/he is now receiving education otherwise than at school.

Please will you confirm receipt of this letter and inform us of the date that our daughter's/son's name was removed from the register.

Yours, etc.

### **Sample letter to head teacher in Wales**

Dear (insert head's name)

Re: Insert name of child (date of birth)

After careful consideration we have decided to withdraw our daughter/son from school in order to take personal responsibility for her/his education. Please delete her/his name from the register in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 9(1)(c) 1995, as she/he is now receiving education otherwise than at school.

Please will you confirm receipt of this letter and inform us of the date that our daughter's/son's name was removed from the register.

Yours, etc.

### **Sample withdrawal letter to Director of Education in Scotland**

Nb. Law regarding withdrawing a child from school is different in Scotland. See section on Summary of Law in Scotland. Page 48 in this handbook

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: insert name of child, (date of birth)

We write to inform you that after careful consideration we have decided to withdraw our daughter/son (insert name of child, and age) from (*insert name of school*). In accordance with our rights and duties as parents under section 30 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 we are taking personal responsibility for her/his education by means other than attendance at school.

*[Continue with brief details of background to decision to the extent you feel appropriate, followed by a summary of your plans. N.b. It is not usually a good idea to use this letter requesting consent to withdraw the child for making complaints nor to go into more than a brief summary of your plans.]*

If the parents are happy to wait until the end of term to remove the child from school they might conclude:

*We are confident that our provision will be suitable to (insert name of child)'s needs. We intend to start carrying it out as soon as practicable, and we envisage that by the start of the next school from home-based learning will be well established. We trust that you will respect our decision to take this step, and we ask for your consent to (insert name of child)'s withdrawal from (insert name of school) with effect from the end of the present term.*

*Yours faithfully*

If the parents wish to begin home education as soon as possible the last paragraph of the letter might instead conclude:

*We are confident that our provision will be suitable to (insert name of child)'s needs and we intend to start home educating as soon as possible. We trust that you will respect our decision to take this step, and we ask for your consent to (insert name of child)'s withdrawal from (insert name of school) immediately in accordance with section 3.7 of the Guidance on the Circumstances in Which Parents May Choose to Educate their Children at Home. Please let us know if you would like us to provide any further information.*

To avoid any misunderstandings it's advisable to write a brief letter to the school as well, to arrive on or before the first day of non-attendance.

## Sample Brief Letter to Scottish Head teacher

Dear Mr

Re: insert child's name, (date of birth)

After careful consideration we have decided to stop sending our daughter/son (insert child's name) to school with effect from (insert date). We are now taking personal responsibility for her/his education in accordance with our legal rights as parents. Please could you therefore remove her/his name from the roll.

We have written to the Director of Education to explain our intentions.

Yours sincerely,

**NB If you have already taken the child out of school it is advisable to seek some individual support in writing the letter suited to your situation)**

## CHILD BENEFIT AND CHILD TAX CREDIT

Child benefit is paid for all children under 16 and for some children between 16 and 20. The parents of home educated children under 16 should receive child benefit automatically in the same way as parents of schooled children do.

Once children reach 16, benefit is continued if they are receiving non-advanced full-time education by attendance at a recognised educational establishment or if they are on unwaged work-based training programmes. In addition, it may be paid for children being educated "elsewhere", including those who "could reasonably be expected to attend such an establishment". In the latter case the parent must be able to show that such education was being provided immediately before the child reached the age of 16.

This "elsewhere" provision was originally meant to cater for children with special needs, but the present wording, secured through pressure from home education, specifically includes those who have opted for home education.

When a child is 15 the Child Benefit Office sends the parent a form to complete in order to declare whether the child intends to continue in full-time education beyond 16. If the parent indicates that the child is being educated 'otherwise', the Child Benefit Office may ask the local authority to confirm that the parent is home educating satisfactorily.

The Education Section at the Child Benefit Offices use section DMG11094 (Decision Makers Guide) to decide whether or not full-time education is taking place. DMG11094 states:

### *Full-time education*

*To decide whether education undertaken elsewhere is full-time, the decision maker should consider the guidance in DMG11093. This might include supervised study since the circumstances of home education could be quite different from those at a recognised educational establishment. If the decision maker is satisfied that the number of hours studied each week exceeds 12 they should accept the education as full-time.*

Since most education at this age is exam oriented, it may be difficult to satisfy the Child Benefit Office unless the child is studying for recognised qualifications. Sometimes a junior official will make an arbitrary decision, e.g. that one 'A' level plus work on an art portfolio is only part-time education and therefore not eligible for benefit. It may be even more difficult to help an official to understand that autonomous education is valid. One argument here could be that the local authority has been satisfied until now – otherwise it would have taken steps towards a school attendance order – and it cannot become dissatisfied without a substantial reason. Considerable letter-writing may be necessary.

If the child begins home education after the age of 16, then DMG11093 applies:

### *Full-time education*

*A full-time education course is one where a person attends a recognised educational establishment to study for more than twelve hours a week.*

Many of the Child Benefit Line operators are not aware of the rules that apply to home education and they may give parents the wrong information. If a parent is told that their Child Benefit will be stopped because their child is not attending a recognised educational establishment or training course, the parent should ask to be transferred to the Full Time Education Section who should correct the situation.

## **CHILD TAX CREDIT**

From the 10 April 2006, the rules for eligibility for child tax credit and child benefit were brought into line with each other. This means that a parent can claim child tax credit for a child who is under 16 regardless of how they are educated and for a qualifying young person who is:

- Under 19 years old and;
- In non-advanced full-time education that is not provided by virtue of their employment or any office which they hold.

Parents can argue that where home education has been accepted as full time education for child benefit purposes, it should also qualify for the purposes of child tax credit.

## **HEALTH**

If required, all routine health checks, immunisation, dental and eye care that is normally administered by schools is available to home educated children via their GP or health visitor.

# **HOW EO WORKS**

## **MEMBERSHIP – JOINING & RENEWALS**

EO membership is per family and runs for a year from the time you join, when you receive a full membership pack. Thereafter you will receive a newsletter every other month along with an updated contact list and handbook when they're printed, usually with the April mailing, as well as a membership card. We are now producing more durable membership cards displaying your membership number, family name and expiry date. This card will be sent to you on receipt of your membership payment so that you will know that your renewal payment reached us. We ask for an sae if you post your renewal payment to us, but not if you renew online or over the phone or if you pay by bankers order. We can provide replacement or extra cards for a small fee. See below.

The current membership rates are as follows:

Membership Fees for Joining New Members or Lapsed ones who renew and wish to receive a complete joining pack:

UK Members £25, European Members £30; Rest of World £35

Concessionary Fees (low/unwaged families) for Joining new Members or Lapsed ones who renew and wish to receive a complete joining pack:

UK Concessions £18; European Concessions £25; Rest of World Concessions £30

Membership Fees for Renewing Members (and lapsed members who do NOT require a full joining pack) are as follows:

UK members £20; European Members £25; Rest of World £30

Concessionary Renewing Membership Fees are:

UK Members £14 or £8 for 6 mths; European Members £20; Rest of World £25

With your 6<sup>th</sup> newsletter you should receive a renewal letter telling you how to renew your membership. You can do this either by post or via the secure server on the internet,

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/About%20EO/Joining/membershiprenewal.htm>

If you renew by 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following receipt of your renewal letter you will receive the next newsletter with no delays; if your renewal is received after this date you may miss the label run for the next newsletter. As well as offering support to existing members, your subscription helps EO to carry on spreading the word about home education, influence government policy affecting home educators, and also respond to the thousands of enquiries which it receives each year.

If you do not renew in time, you will receive a second renewal letter instead of your next newsletter advising you that your membership has lapsed and how to go about renewing.

If you have missed a copy of the newsletter due to late renewal you will still receive 6 copies of the newsletter before you need to renew again. If you want a copy of the newsletter that you did not receive you can buy a copy from Publications.

If you have lost a copy of your membership card, handbook or contact list, replacements can be purchased from the Database Administrator. Write with a cheque or postal order made payable to Education Otherwise Association Ltd., and an sae as below:

- Contact List or Handbook £3 each and an A5 addressed envelope with 50p stamp for 1 item or 75p stamp for 2 items
- Membership Card or Truancy Card £1 and addressed envelope with 23p stamp

## **Moving House or Change of Details**

If you change any of your details, such as your name, address, phone number, email or want to add any more children to your family membership, please advise the Database Administrator so she can alter your details on the database. Contact: xxxxxxxxxxxx, Email: [database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org) Tel: xxxxx xxxxx

## **Where does the membership money go?**

If anyone is interested in the accounts (sent out automatically to signed up members each year), they can obtain a copy by sending an SAE and stamps to the treasurer. They are also available to view in the members area of the EO website. We encourage people to read the accounts carefully and to share in the responsibility for the organisation's finances.

## **Where do I go if I need help?**

Any members needing information or help should first contact their voluntary Local Contact. If there is no voluntary Local Contact for their area, or if the voluntary Local Contact is unable to help, then any of the postholders or council members are happy to be contacted. In addition, inside the back cover of the newsletter there is a list of contact people who can help with specific issues.

## **How can I contribute to EO?**

If you are interested in becoming more involved with EO you can attend council meetings, learn about the issues, and volunteer to help out with anything that needs doing. At a local level you can help to organise events and offer your services to support your voluntary Local Contact. Renewing your membership contributes great support for EO's charitable outreach work. See the section on volunteers P/20 for other ways to help.

## **EO NEWSLETTER**

This is sent out bi-monthly to all members. Back copies of newsletters are available from EO Publications. All members are welcome to contribute to the newsletter, and the recent membership questionnaires indicated that you want to see more of personal stories and experiences and more information about the increasing number of Government consultations which EO is responding to. Ideas for things to write are about home-educating children with SEN, or different ages simultaneously; home education styles, eg. structured, autonomous, Steiner etc; faith based home education; how home education has worked for your child; how you provided evidence of educational provision to your local authority – and was it accepted?;

activities with your local group; and young people writing in with what they feel about their home educating experience. Please think about the things **you** can contribute to the newsletter which will help others who are willing someone to address a question they're too shy to ask about. As a self-help organisation, we help each other – the help doesn't come from a panel of professionals, it comes from the experts, **us!** The newsletter is EO's major vehicle for offering help and inspiration so be part of it.

The Regional Diary is a useful way to find out what other home educators are organising in your county and a great way to find out what activities and events are organised locally and meet other families, but it's only useful if members remember to keep their entry updated. If you have an entry in the listings, can you check to see if the details are correct, and advise Jo; similarly if you are no longer holding meetings so that she can update the listings. Contact: xxxx xxxx Tel: xxxxx xxxxx or Email: xxxxxxxxxxx.

Please note that EO is legally responsible for the material printed in the newsletter, and sometimes it is necessary to edit letters and articles to ensure that there is no possibility of legal action against EO. We try to consult with authors when this is necessary but we reserve the right not to print anything we consider puts EO at risk.

Any item published in the newsletter may be reprinted in other home education magazines in the UK or abroad or on the internet. If you do not want your contribution reproduced without your consent, please state clearly that you wish to retain the copyright. If you send material from another source, please acknowledge this clearly. See P/40 in this Handbook for full guidelines for contributing to the Newsletter and Children's Pages.

## ***EO WEBSITE & EMAIL LISTS***

EO has a website with lots of information and relevant links. Go to [www.education-otherwise.org](http://www.education-otherwise.org) for EO email lists and Members Forum. There are also links to a number of general email support lists.

EO runs three email lists with Yahoo Groups. One is for general discussion about home education and would normally be the first port of call for someone seeking advice and peer support. This can be accessed via <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eo/>

The second list is for single parents who have some problems unique to single parents. This can be accessed via <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-SingleParent/>

The third list is for the children of members only to chat with each other. This can be accessed via <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-Children/>

Some information will be asked of you whichever list you attempt to join. This is to protect existing members of the list from spam or other unwanted disruption. There is also a Members Area on the website with several discussion forums including one for the children of members. Most of EO's policies, procedures and forms are available to read together with minutes of meetings. Members are encouraged to join in on the Business forum where the discussions on the business of EO take place. The Members Area is also where updates on the actions of the Government Policy Group are reported. Electronic versions of policies and Handbook, together with past copies of newsletters can also be found in the Members Area.

If you are a local contact and would like to talk with other local contacts, email Xxxxxxx at [forums@education-otherwise.org](mailto:forums@education-otherwise.org) and let her know which area you are local contact for and she will arrange access to the forum for you.

To join the Member's Forum, send an email to [forums@education-otherwise.org](mailto:forums@education-otherwise.org) giving your preferred User Name which should be between four and fifteen characters, your Full (real) Name, the email address you wish to have associated with the forum and either your full postal address or your EO Membership Number. You will receive an email at your associated email address confirming your Username and giving you a password. You will be able to alter this password to something more memorable yourself.

For those new to forums, please read the “Welcome to the EO Forum” messages first as these will help you navigate and use the Members Area and the various consultations to which EO contributes.

## **GOVERNMENT POLICY GROUP**

Education Otherwise Government Policy Group is a very active Small Group within EO.

The core members of the group are zzzzzzz (Chair); zzzzzzzzzz (Council Member); zzzzzzzzzz and zzzzzzzzzz (Council Member). Additional members of the Group with special responsibilities for campaigning, local authority issues, consultation responses and strategic development are [ list of 7 names removed ]. The members of the Group discuss the best way to approach the DfES across a broad strategy base involving the DfES itself plus Secretaries of State responsible for Education.

The Government Policy Group also responds to those DfES consultations which have significance for home educators.

Recently the Government Policy Group set up a Campaign Team within the group, consisting of [ Four names removed ] who have established and now maintain the EO Campaign Website <http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/>.

In addition the Campaign Team are running a series of Regional Workshops during Spring 2007 about the proposed Government changes for home educators.

Carole Rutherford now represents the SEN home education community within the Government Policy Group and there will now be SEN input to every DfES consultation response on behalf of Education Otherwise.

## **LEARNPREMIUM**

### **Subscriptions**

Learnpremium is an online educational service owned by the Guardian Newspaper. EO members have been offered a joint, low cost subscription to Learnpremium – an e-learning website aimed at primary and secondary age children and their teachers, covering KS1 – 4 in the subjects listed below and Post-16s in English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry & Physics. EO has agreed to pay Learnpremium a lump sum and is making a small charge to each user to cover this cost which can be paid when joining EO or at a later date.

Access to the service is for a period of up to a year and begins from when you join through to 17 October each year when we hope to renew our agreement with Learnpremium so we can offer this service to EO members again. It costs £25 for the full year, and this fee is pro-rata'd if you join for part of a year and is payable to Education Otherwise Association Limited. You can join by using the renewal form on the EO website if you're an EO member and simply completing your name, address, phone number and email address, ticking the 2 Learnpremium boxes towards the bottom of the page and then proceeding to the secure server to enter your payment details. We are unable to offer a refund after sending out your login info. Alternatively, you can send a cheque made payable to 'Education Otherwise Association Limited' to the address below, ensuring that you enclose your email address so that your login information can be forwarded to you. If you want find out more contact Xxxxxxxx – Database. Email: [database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org)  
Tel: xxxxxxxxxx Address: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

There are approximately 130,000 pages of online lessons and resources on a whole range of subjects including English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, French, German, Spanish, Business Studies, Design & Technology, ICT, Citizenship, Art & Design, Religions, Drama, Physical Education and Music. It offers interactive lessons and resources, games and activities, video lessons, Guardian lesson packs, whiteboard activities, randomly generated tests, a daily news service for 9 – 14 year olds and a personalised test centre where you can generate tests for your children or where they can generate their own as well as other material.

### **Free Trials**

A short free trial with no obligation is available so that you can look around the Learnpremium website and decide if the service is suitable for your needs; the trial enables you to access everything on the Learnpremium website apart from the Test Centre which is restricted to subscribers. A trial is a good way to investigate the website and see if it will suit you and your family. A lot of positive feedback is received from members who use Learnpremium and it seems popular. Contact [XXXXXXXXXX](mailto:XXXXXXXXXX) for information and to try out [Learnpremium\\_database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:Learnpremium_database@education-otherwise.org)

### **Difficulty with Website or Passwords**

Please note that, if you have problems accessing the Learnpremium website or any areas within it; or with your user login details you need to contact [XXXXXXXXXX](mailto:XXXXXXXXXX) and not Learnpremium to resolve your problem. Likewise, contact [XXXXXXXXXX](mailto:XXXXXXXXXX) if you forget your login details.

### **PHONE CO-OP**

EO runs the enquiry line through The Phone Co-op, which is the only co-operative non-profit making telecommunications provider in the UK. They were quick and efficient and gave us a very good deal. They are also the first telephone company in the UK to neutralise all of its carbon dioxide output! EO has an Affinity Scheme where members can use The Phone Co-op on their BT line, save money on their calls AND 6% will go to EO. The Phone Co-op provides very competitive rates and ploughs profits back into the charities that 'own' it via these Affinity Schemes. And there are no chief executives or shareholders raking in cash from your calls.

To become a customer costs nothing; there are no set up charges, no monthly fees, no standing charges, no change of phone number. Once you register, you dial a four-digit code before the number. The Phone Co-op will bill you monthly only for the calls you make with the code. Their prices, especially for long distance calls, are well below BT's rates. None of your other BT services (such as 1471, 1571 or Call Minder) are affected. The Phone Co-op can also provide you with an 0845 number direct to your home phone, so friends, family and other EO members can contact you for the costs of a local rate call. Plus internet deals, savings on international calls, other offers, and the chance to invest in and become a member of the co-operative.

Call Customer Services on 0845 458 9004 and ask for a registration form (check whether they need to see a copy of a recent BT bill as this used to be the case) and to discuss the current Phone Co-op prices, or look at <http://www.education-otherwise.org/PhoneCo-op.html> for a current comparison with BT charges. AND REMEMBER – say that you want to join the Education Otherwise Affinity Scheme

The Phone Co-op Ltd, 5 The Mill House, Elmsfield Business Centre, Chipping Norton, OX7 5XL

### **STATIONERY**

The items below are stocked by [Name, address and phone no. removed] email [eostationery@gmail.com](mailto:eostationery@gmail.com)

If you would like her to send any of these please let her know the approximate quantity required when making your request.

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| EO Business Cards        | EO General Information Leaflet                    |
| Compliment slips         | Trifold Leaflet (home education - a real option)  |
| EO Postcards             | Summary of Law relating to Home Education Leaflet |
| A4 Posters               | Publications order form                           |
| Car Sticker (£1.17 each) | Membership form                                   |

Re-use Address labels are available for a small charge: £4.00 per 100 but free for EO business use. These can be purchased online from the EO website, as can car stickers.

Summary of Law relating to Home Education, A4 posters and Publications order forms are also available to download from EO's website.

### **HOME EDUCATION CARDS**

All members receive a Home Education Card (truancy card) when they join EO (as well as the membership card). We are now producing more durable, credit-card size cards and further copies are available at a cost of £1 each from - EO HE Cards, [ address removed ]

Please send a stamped, addressed envelope plus a cheque or postal order for £1 per card required or the equivalent in 50p or £1 stamps to the above address. Cheques and postal orders need to be made payable to "Education Otherwise Association Ltd." If you have any queries please email: [database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org)

## **VOLUNTEERS**

EO is run almost entirely by volunteers and vacancies are advertised from time to time in the newsletter. Members interested in volunteering for a position should speak to the current post holder or the Co-ordinator for a team who can answer any questions you have about what the role entails. There are lots of posts in EO and something to suit everybody whether you like doing paperwork or chatting to people or campaigning or something else. There is a team of over 100 local contacts and EO is trying to expand this at present and we have vacancies in many areas, so if you think you would be able to talk to new home educators and answer their questions, then do have a look at the Local Contact guidelines on P/29 and get in touch with the Local Contacts Co-ordinator who can tell you more about the role. .

From time to time, EO has small jobs which need doing. These are usually short term jobs, sometimes unique, sometimes connected to the roles of other volunteers in EO. If you have some time which you could give to EO for 'odd jobs', please let xxxxxxxxxxxx the small jobs co-ordinator know and she will add you to EO's volunteer database and contact you with information when help is needed. Tell her what sort of thing you like doing/are good at and give her an indication of the amount of time you may be able to spare. You can contact her on [ phone no., address and personal email removed ]

EO also has several small groups including the Government Policy group, the Finance group, Enquiries, Strategic Planning looking at the structure of EO and future changes, Publications group, LA/EA group, Scotland, Child Protection and Complaints. New volunteers for any of these groups are most welcome, with expertise or just an interest. For more information, contact any of the members of individual groups. See P/

For a few posts, the members offer goes to the next meeting where (as usually happens) the volunteer is approved as 'Acting' for a period of 6 months - about 2 meetings in practice. If there is an urgent need for a replacement, the Council can proceed with the appointment and this decision would go to the next meeting. Volunteers can be ratified in post after the 6-month period.

Where work is done for EO is on a voluntary basis, some **expenses** can be claimed; a form for this may be downloaded from the website or obtained by sending s.a.e. to Database Administrator. Please contact the Treasurer for guidelines as to which expenses may be claimed and when. From time to time decisions are made to buy in some services, where jobs become too large to be handled on a voluntary basis. EO currently pays for printing the newsletter, and has two part-time paid positions - database administration and memberships and website/virtual office services.

## **WHO IS ON THE COUNCIL?**

### **Could you be a Council Member?**

EO, as a registered charity, is required to have between 14 and 19 Trustees - known in EO as Council Members. There is always a steady turnover of council members and to maintain a healthy functioning council we need a few new Trustees every year. Do you have the interest and time to take on the role of Trustee.

Council members are elected by signed up members at the AGM (or can if necessary be co-opted between AGMs). They are either proposed by any signed up member, or recommended by the Council. A term of office usually runs for 3 years. A term of office usually runs for 3 years and Council members should

normally not serve more than two consecutive terms or 6 consecutive years. They usually have some direct experience of home education.

The Trustees of a charity have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and meeting the needs for which it is set up. The commitment required to be a Trustee for EO can be variable, to suit personal situations. Council members have a wide variety of backgrounds, skills and experience, and are usually fitting their work for EO into family and home educating life. It is useful, but not vital, to be able to access email regularly as some council business is discussed via an email list between meetings. In EO, Trustees are drawn from EO members, normally have some direct experience of home education and sometimes have already taken on other jobs within EO.

Council meetings take place 3 or 4 times a year, sometimes associated with a youth hostel gathering or a camp and other times just as a day meeting. They are in venues around the country, and it is useful to attend at least one meeting per year to meet other council members. Council meetings are open to any interested EO member.

Further information from the Charity Commission about the role of Trustees can be found in the publication "The Essential Trustee: What you need to know" available free from the Charity Commission 0845 300 0218 or [www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.asp](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.asp) If you would like to consider taking a share in the legal responsibility for decision making in EO or would like more information about what is involved then please contact any other council member to chat further.

If you wish to propose a candidate for Council, then written notice from the proposer and signed consent from the candidate (who must also be a signed up member) must both reach the Company Secretary no earlier than 28 and not later than 4 days before the Annual General Meeting. Any member of EO can become a signed up member by completing the form at the back of this handbook or by downloading one from the Members Forums on the website, and sending it to the Company Secretary. Members can also become signed up members at the AGM or any Council Meeting.

Anyone who is competent, responsible, willing to be active, and sympathetic to the general ethos of EO, is likely to be an asset as a council member. We rarely have more people willing to accept council membership than we need.

## What happens at a Council meeting?

There are three or four council meetings a year with an AGM at one, and EGMs (extraordinary general meetings) are held occasionally when necessary. Council meetings are normally open (i.e. anyone can attend, and speak when recognised by the chair) and run by consensus, with no differentiation between council members and others. Anyone can ring or write to put something on the agenda, can make their views and concerns known to the meeting, and can ask the meeting to consider doing something. This means that in practice regular attendance at meetings is more important than council membership.

The council, however, remains legally responsible for what is done (with unlimited liability in certain situations), so it has to be allowed the last word if controversy should arise. When there is disagreement and an issue is urgent, it can be settled by a vote of the council members only. This might well be preceded by a vote of the whole meeting, which has no binding power but which the council members would take into account. If there is controversy a decision is usually postponed to allow for wider discussion in the newsletter. On the rare occasions when something can be boiled down to yes/no, and agreement cannot be reached, postal voting may also be used so that the whole membership can express their opinion.

Full **council minutes** are sent to anyone who sends apologies, as well as everyone who was there. Members can received an electronic copy by email from Xxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx at [xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx](mailto:xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx) or by sending stamps and a self addressed label or A4 envelope to Xxxxxxx at [ address removed ]

Also, some time ago a custom was started of publishing an informal summary of the meeting in the newsletter, generally written by a volunteer at the meeting.

In addition there is a **steering group** consisting of the General Secretary, the Chair, the Treasurer, and two other council members. The steering committee, in consultation with as much of the council as possible, deals with any business too urgent to wait until the next Council meeting.

## **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

EO business is dealt with at Council Meetings and at General Meetings. Council meetings, which can be quite informal, cater for the routine running of the organisation. General meetings, which have to be conducted in a much more formal way by company law, allow *signed up members* a) to appoint council members, b) to consider the accounts, and c) occasionally to vote on special resolutions and formal issues. Special resolutions have to be put in the newsletter, or posted out to all guarantors, along with statutory notice of General Meetings. **Signed up members** are members who have guaranteed to pay £10 in the event of EO going bankrupt, thus 'acquiring an interest in the company' and becoming eligible to vote at general meetings. An application form for this purpose can be found at the back of this Handbook.

## **GATHERINGS**

Business meetings can take place during gatherings or camps which can last from a few days to a week, although sometimes business meetings are held at one day gatherings. Gatherings give members from different parts of the country a chance to meet and share interests and activities. Members also get a chance to meet council members and postholders and to discuss issues with them and with other members outside of the formal meeting structure. Gatherings are particularly useful for local contacts and others involved with EO business because they allow an opportunity to exchange local experiences and to develop a support network. All members are encouraged to attend gatherings for all or part of the time although members are also welcome just for a day or just for the business meeting. There are also camps without business meetings held all over the country which allow the same opportunities for meeting people, exchanging ideas and making friends.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **AGENDA ITEMS & REPORTS**

Draft reports from post holders, working groups, and small groups should be sent to the Virtual Office Administrator (Xxxxxxx XXXXXXXX xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx [address removed] at least 3 weeks before each council meeting. Agenda items should also be sent to the Virtual Office Administrator at least 3 weeks before each council meeting.

Agendas and copies of the reports are sent to council members two weeks before the meeting, and are available to any member who sends the Virtual Office Administrator an SAE or an email address.

### **CONTACT LIST - CONFIDENTIALITY**

Members who choose to be included in the contact list have indicated that they would like to have contact with other members. Feel free to contact anyone in the contact list for social purposes or to talk about home education.

**IMPORTANT – Please remember the information contained in the contact list is confidential and for the sole and personal use of members. In no circumstances can it be used for any purpose other than to facilitate direct social contact between members. You must not make information from the contact list available to non-members. It is NOT to be used to prepare circular letters/emails or mailing lists for advertising, research, marketing, resources or any other purpose.**

Anyone found misusing the contact list or divulging any of its contents to non-members will have their EO membership terminated. Please contact XXXXXXXXX (Database) with any queries or concerns, email: database@education-otherwise.org Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

If you have lost your contact list and would like a replacement, please send a cheque or postal order to Xxxxxxxx (Database) for £3 (made payable to Education Otherwise Association Limited) along with an A5 sae and a 50p stamp

## Database - Undertaking by those who hold a copy

The data will remain the property of Education Otherwise Association Limited. A computer that holds the database should not be linked to the internet unless checks are made to ensure that others could not access the data. Security and confidentiality will be maintained at all times and sufficient back up discs will be made. A Data Protection small group has been set up to look at data processing across the organisation and to develop policies and procedures to ensure EO as an organisation and its volunteers meet their obligations under the Data Protection Act.

## LAs (and other organisations) as members

We agreed that it was not appropriate for some organisations (particularly Local Authorities) to become EO members, and all organisations applying for membership will need to be approved by the council first. In cases where it is not suitable for an organisation to become a member then the Database Administrator will send them information about EO and home educating, and, where appropriate, put them in touch with the voluntary Local Contact. We will send them:

- A copy of SINC
- Copies of the publications Leaflet
- Copies of Summary of the Law
- Copies of the trifold Leaflet (home education – a real option)
- Copies of the Enquirers Leaflet

Organisations that we are happy to have as members receive newsletters but not contact lists.

## **EDUCATION OTHERWISE TRADING LIMITED**

EO Trading was set up as a separate company from Education Otherwise Association Ltd so that our trading activities, which might be taxable, could be kept separate from our charitable activities. It has been set up in such a way that any profit is covenanted back to EO Association but otherwise the running of the company is the responsibility of the Directors of that company. It is recommended that one Director of the Trading Company should also be a Council member of EO Association.

The main task of EO Trading is the selling of our stock of books. Suggestions on what books EO Trading sell or reprint are passed on by EO Association Publications small group who are also responsible for updating books and information Leaflets as necessary. Selling T-shirts and other merchandise and running camps, gatherings and conferences also come under the auspices of EO Trading.

Currently EO Trading has four directors, one being the secretary and one being the treasurer. The only shareholder of EO Trading is EO Association who appoint a member for all meetings that EO Trading hold. It is recommended that EO Association appoint the Secretary of EO Trading as the member representing them, as this means statutory meetings, such as the AGM, are quorate when the Secretary alone is present.

When EO Trading was set up, the stock of books was transferred to EO Trading and recorded as a loan by EO Association (this asset replaced the books in EO's balance sheet). EO Trading has its own bank account for its business, where it accumulates monies until they are paid to EO Association under the annual deed of covenant. If EO Trading cannot pay for additional stock then EO Association can lend it additional money via the loan account until the books are sold.

If it was ever decided that EO Trading should stop trading, the stock of books and the EO Trading bank balance should be sufficient to repay the EO Association loan.

EO Trading has recently undergone a 'growth spurt' and is now selling all publications, T shirts and a range of other merchandise via the EO website. New stock is being added all the time with the aim of having EO recognised by the public and ensuring that home education comes to be seen as a normal option.

## **LOCAL GROUP GUIDANCE**

With the rise in numbers of groups coming under the umbrella of Education Otherwise and wishing to be covered by the Education Otherwise Public Liability Insurance it has become necessary to introduce some rules and some guidelines which Education Otherwise requires the groups calling themselves 'Education Otherwise Groups' to use.

A sheet on responsibility for children at local groups and gatherings has also been produced as a response to requests for support from some members and organisers involved in local groups.

It is intended that local groups (if they wish to and feel it would be helpful) can copy these and give them out to current members and subsequently to new members as they join. It is hoped this will go some way to preventing the assumption that the group will act as childcare which sometimes crops up.

## RULES

1. Children and young people under the age of 18 remain the responsibility of their parents or guardians. In their absence, parents should make specific arrangements for another adult to take this responsibility on their behalf. An information leaflet for group leaders to give to families is available.
2. Whilst some groups distinguish between age groups, the group shall be fully inclusive regardless of race, religion, (dis)ability, sexual orientation of parents, style of parenting and style of educational provision.
3. Whilst the group may be called an Education Otherwise group, it is not necessary that all members belong to Education Otherwise the charity.
4. There must be at least one named Education Otherwise member who is responsible for ensuring that the group acts within these guidelines.
5. To benefit from the Education Otherwise Public Liability Insurance, an Education Otherwise member of the group must organise the cover with the Insurance Volunteer. This may or may not be the person mentioned in 4 above
6. Finances
  - a. Groups which take advantage of the Start Up grant offered by Education Otherwise must undertake to be a registered Education Otherwise group before the grant is released.
  - b. Whilst groups may make charges to cover expenses, all groups are non-profit making.
  - c. One person should be responsible for any monies collected and keep an account of income and expenditure. Accounts should be available to all group members.
  - d. In the event of a group folding, any funds should be returned to the Education Otherwise treasurer.
7. New groups should ensure that their group's name is different from any existing group.
8. The group must be listed under the Regional Diary section of the newsletter.
9. Groups must adopt and follow Education Otherwise's Equality and Diversity, Child Protection and any other policies introduced at any time.

## GUIDELINES

1. Groups should renew their affiliation with Education Otherwise each year when Education Otherwise's insurance policy is renewed. At this time, rough numbers of home educating families attending the meeting should be given to the Treasurer so that Education Otherwise has an idea of numbers covered by the insurance policy (see below).
2. As far as is possible, all meeting venues should be accessible for all.
3. Membership of the group is open and members should be allowed to visit as and when they can. Non-attendance at a group for any reason should not restrict that member from attending when they can and wish to.
4. If it is necessary to ban a member from a group for any reason, the member must be given a reason and given leave to appeal the decision. Details of Education Otherwise's Complaint Group should also be provided to the member so that they can place an official complaint if they wish.

5. The group should be a safe environment for all children. Should any child begin hitting and fighting another, the parent of that child must take responsibility for the actions of the child. There shall be no abuse, ridicule, bullying or threatening behaviour by adults or children. Autonomy does not mean anarchy.
6. Every person attending should treat every other person attending with respect and dignity.
7. Someone(s) should be given responsibility at each meeting to welcome newcomers to the meeting to ensure that people feel welcome.
8. Quiet areas should be made available at the meetings for those children who have a problem with loud noises and frantic movements often evident at meetings.
9. Parents who opt to home educate to accommodate their child's disability often have different needs when attending a meeting. The group organiser should talk with a new parent to see how the child's needs can be accommodated. This may mean discussing the most appropriate way to explain the child's difficulties to others in the group so that tolerance and understanding can grow between all the adults and all the children.
10. A list of the guidelines under which the group is run should be available for parents at all times.
11. If a group has problems, these may be referred to the Education Otherwise Complaints Group in the event that the problem cannot be resolved locally. Education Otherwise can only be involved here with Education Otherwise groups.
12. The group organiser should have a supply of the Disability Leaflet published by Education Otherwise to give to all group members.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN AT LOCAL GROUPS/GATHERINGS

### **The Law, Insurance & EO Policy**

In society at large children are the responsibility of their parent/guardian unless other proper alternative arrangements have been made with specific individuals or organisations. Sometimes we are fairly informal about it e.g. as with family and neighbours and sometimes it is highly formalised e.g. with school or certain clubs. The organisation Education Otherwise Association Ltd never undertakes parental responsibility for members' children and similarly EO local groups have no authority to do so.

As such local groups are set up with the intention that children are accompanied by their parent/guardian and remain the responsibility of the parent/guardian whilst at the group. The exception to this is when a child's parent/guardian has made an explicit arrangement (i.e. not merely assumed) with another adult to act as the responsible adult (*in loco parentis*) on a specific occasion. The child should also know of the arrangement and be agreeable to it. The group facilitator should also be informed.

The group itself has no authority to act *in loco parentis*. It has to be an adult group member or some other adult designated by the parent/guardian (e.g. a grandparent) by express agreement between them. This means that children may not attend the group unless accompanied by their parent/guardian or a designated responsible adult (*in loco parentis*) who has expressly agreed.

Furthermore EO's public liability insurance for local groups and gatherings is invalidated if this fails to be the case. (This is also likely to be the case for any group relying on a venue's own public liability insurance. A group meeting including children without a named responsible adult will not usually be covered by such insurance.)

### **Sense, Safety & Support**

Home education itself is only possible because the law clearly puts the responsibility for education provision for a child with its parent who then may or may not enter into arrangements with others (e.g. a school) to make that provision. The principle is well enshrined in the law and it is one of EO's stated aims to support parents fulfilling that parental duty with the choice of home education. It is the parent's responsibility to choose safely for their child anytime and in any situation and a local home education group is of course no different. The above ethos fosters safety in the group. It is also supportive to the other parents in the group if everyone respects the above responsibility for children policy.

## **INSURANCE PROVISION**

EO's insurance policy offers Public Liability cover for both EO national events and local group meetings. In order to ensure we know who is covered by this policy we have a formal list of all local groups who wish to be included under the policy. Groups do not have to be wholly made up of EO members but the formal contact for the group should be an EO member.

The cover is only for normal 'educational and social' activities and does not cover any situation where parents leave their children in the care of a tutor or suchlike. Children must remain the responsibility of their parent or guardian. It is also appropriate for children to be in the care of a nominated adult, for example a parent bringing their child's friend with them to the group (please see local group guidelines).

It should be stressed that this is Public liability insurance, and it only covers groups in the event of injury or death or damage to property that happens as a result of demonstrable negligence by some person involved in Education Otherwise. This policy is in no way personal accident cover and does not cover accidental injury to people attending groups. Please also note that local groups in the regional diary are not obliged to be on this list and for groups who meet informally in people's homes or at the park or local swimming baths it is entirely unnecessary.

The insurance policy is renewed during July and it is requested that all groups should renew their entry on the list at this time. Similarly any group that closes or changes venue or contact information should send details using the email address below. A current list of all groups on the list is available on the website so members can check that the group they attend is covered. An application form is available to download from the EO website or by email from the Insurance Co-ordinator – [eoinsurancecover@education-otherwise.org](mailto:eoinsurancecover@education-otherwise.org) Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxx. A copy can also be obtained from the PO Box address.

## **MEDIA – TALKING TO THE PRESS**

The following list may be useful if you find yourself talking to the media. Many EO members do write to their local papers or find themselves being interviewed by the media.

- Home education is a legal option for anyone. It's education that's compulsory, not school attendance.
- You don't have to be a teacher / well educated to do it, you can learn together. However, around a quarter of all HE families have a parent who is also a teacher - a sad indictment of the school system.
- Single parents can do it.
- Children with special needs can do well at home.
- People of all incomes home educate.
- It doesn't have to be anything like school.
- The National Curriculum only applies to State Schools, not home educators.
- You don't have to work to a timetable or follow any set programme of work although some families choose to do so.
- Each child can be free to follow their own interests and learn at their own speed.
- Exams can be taken over a number of years in a variety of ways to suit the child and family.
- HE enables children to learn in a 'natural' environment without artificial constraints as to gender, age or ability.
- Isolation need not be a problem.
- EO puts families in touch with each other.
- Children choose their social contact.
- The local community can play an important part in HE.
- It promotes positive family relationships.
- Parents enjoy being with / learning with their children.
- You can give your children more attention.
- You can organise your own life rather than having to work around school hours.
- You can use local facilities e.g. swimming pools, at quiet times.
- You can take advantage of the weather, special events and unexpected opportunities.

- Every family has its own particular reason for and way of doing home education.
- Education Otherwise is a national support group run by volunteers.
- For more information or to join us, send an A5 sae to Education Otherwise, P.O. Box 325, Kings Lynn, PE34 3XW or phone 0870 7300074 or 0845 478 6345 for recorded details of phone contacts (calls are charged at National Rate), or find our website at <http://www.education-otherwise.org/>

A few useful answers to difficult questions if you can't think of a quick response:

- I'll have to come back to you on that when I've had more time to consider it.
- I'll have to check EO policy on that.
- I couldn't comment, as the experience is individual to every family.

Remember to use 'probably ...possibly... maybe ...' type responses if you're not sure your answer covers all home educators.

## ***RUNNING A GATHERING/CONFERENCE or STALL***

### **Financial Guidance for gatherings etc.**

Education Otherwise Association Ltd now has a subsidiary company called Education Otherwise Trading Limited. All the transactions for gatherings etc. are carried out by this subsidiary company. It is important that the finances of Education Otherwise Association Ltd (EOA) and Education Otherwise Trading Ltd (EOT) are kept separate. **All** money received for an event should be paid into **EOT**, and all expenses related to the event should be claimed from EOT and not added to other claims which may normally be claimed from EOA.

It should be kept in mind that stalls and events are primarily to promote home education, to make people aware of the option. Profit margins, particularly on books, are low. Whilst the aim would be to cover any booking costs, it is unlikely EO would be able to fund stall bookings at events where that cost is likely to be higher than the profits. In order to offset the costs for those running stalls, a percentage of the profit may be reclaimed by the stallholder in certain circumstances. Please contact June Kent (EOT Treasurer), when you send your stock taking form and pay-in stubs to him after the event, outlining how much the stall cost you, and what percentage of your takings were for EO if you want to take this option.

For **gatherings**, in the planning stage you will need to list **all** the expenses you expect to incur and work out the income you expect to receive. If you think you might be going to make a loss, EOA may be able to underwrite the event, but you will need to clear this with the Council in advance. The first point of contact for this clearance is Julie Arnold (EOA Treasurer). If a council meeting is to be held as part of the gathering, the hire of the hall should be charged separately to EOA.

Please send **in advance** to EOT Treasurer for a form to record the financial transactions of the event. If you are running a stall selling books and T-shirts, ask EOT Treasurer in advance for the form to ensure good book-keeping. He can also send you an expenses claim form. Please ask for cheques to be made payable to "Education Otherwise" rather than adding "Trading" or "Association", as this keeps it simple. People like to know that their bookings have been received and accepted, so be sure to send an acknowledgement (or tickets, if appropriate). You might want to include a map with details of how to reach the venue.

Money received should be paid in by post. EOT Treasurer can provide you with some Triodos Bank pay-in slips and prepaid envelopes. Should you receive cash, please convert it into a cheque through your own bank account. When paying in cheques/POs, fill in the pay-in slip and tear off the stub. When you send off the cheques and pay-in slip to Triodos Bank, please send the stub to EOT Treasurer **at the same time**, together with a note of what the money is for. If you are going to sell EO books/videos/t-shirts, EOT Treasurer will send you a stock form. If any of the money you are paying in relates to EO books etc., please complete this form and return it with the pay-in stub.

If you receive any invoices send them to xxxxxxxxxx, the EOT Treasurer, who will pay them. Also send EOT Treasurer any expense claims on the forms provided, and please enclose receipts. If you do not have receipts for everything, please add your signature to the claim certifying that the expenses were genuinely incurred in connection with the event.

You need to keep a note of all money coming in and going out so that you can draw up a simple income and expenditure account after the event. **Do not** include money received for books or T-shirts. As the 'event' has not paid for these, it cannot claim the income from them, so this income should be recorded separately. A copy of the account should be sent to EOT Treasurer so that it can be checked against the money passing in and out of the bank account.

Remember to order books/videos, T-shirts or EO literature in **plenty** of time. Jill Fisher has some display boards for loan if you can arrange for them to be collected from Leicester. Another set of display boards is available for collection in Central London along with 2 full sets of laminated material for display – contact Xxxxxxxx, [database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org) or Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxx for more information. Xxxxxxx Xxxxxxx has further laminated sets available for loan. Email: [xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx](mailto:xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx) or Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxx. This display material which is useful for local promotions, displays and EO stalls is available for download from the Members area of the website, you can then select which pages are appropriate. Why not arrange to do a display at your local library many of which have exhibition space available?

### **Useful Contact Details for gatherings/stalls:**

- EO Trading Ltd – Treasurer** [name and contact details removed]
- EO Association Ltd – Treasurer (for underwriting the event)**  
[ name and contact details removed]
- EO Literature – Leaflets, membership forms etc**  
[ name and contact details removed]
- EO Books**  
[ name and contact details removed]
- EO Hoodies and mugs**  
[ name and contact details removed]
- EO Merchandise – Receiving Online Orders**  
[ name and contact details removed]

### **TRADE MARK**                      *This is the wording on the Registration Certificate:*

Trade Marks Registry. The mark below has been registered under No. 2172166 as of the date 15 July 1998.  
**Education Otherwise**

The mark has been registered in respect of: Class 41: support and advice to parents choosing to educate their children at home; promoting knowledge of the freedom to home educate. In the name of Education Otherwise Association Ltd.

Sealed this day in my direction. P.R.S. Hartnack. Registrar. DATE 29 January 1999.

If your Local Authority is misusing the term Education Otherwise, contact xxxxxxxxxxxx, Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxx Email: [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) who will follow this up with the Local Authority.

### **LOCAL CONTACT GUIDELINES**

Thank you for considering taking on this role. The Local Contact needs to be currently involved in home education with preferably at least one year's experience. A telephone is essential.

S/he needs to have good listening skills, a great deal of patience, and a supportive family. S/he needs to be equally welcoming whatever the style of education, religious beliefs or lifestyle of the family needing help or support. S/he needs to be able to recognise and acknowledge his/her own limitations and seek help if needed. An ability to learn from mistakes, a good sense of humour, total discretion and the ability to be organised when necessary are also important.

There is a forum for Local Contacts in the Members area of the website to share experiences and support each other. If you are a local contact, please advise Xxxxxxx at [forums@education-otherwise.org](mailto:forums@education-otherwise.org) and the password for that forum will be sent to you. EO is currently preparing directories of useful information to be supplied to all Local Contacts when available.

## WHAT FAMILIES NEW TO OR CONSIDERING HOME EDUCATION NEED

- A welcome to EO and to their local home educating community.
- Information about deregistration and about the procedures and policies of their LA/EA.
- Encouragement to be confident in their ability to home educate in whatever way seems right for them.
- To be listened to.
- Information about there being no right or wrong way to home educate, but endless possibilities to explore.
- Information that 'education' need not mean 'teaching'; that home based education need not look anything like education in school; that there is no requirement to follow a timetable or curriculum; that the National Curriculum does not apply; and that most home educating families find that following a child's own interests works best.
- Information about local activities and who organises them.
- Support in their interactions with their LA/EA.
- Information that EO does not exist to tell parents how to educate, to provide tutors, courses, schemes of work etc; but rather to empower families to choose the best way for themselves.

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ Families new to home education appreciate one to one contact, so a welcoming telephone call is a good idea.
- ❖ A standard welcoming letter is useful
- ❖ Pass on information about local activities and a copy of the local newsletter/information sheet if you have one.
- ❖ Every family is different. Use your judgement. Some slot effortlessly into the local home educating community; some need sympathetic encouragement.

## USEFUL THINGS THAT LOCAL CONTACTS CAN DO

- *Delegate some of your work.* You don't have to do it all yourself. Your local group are a great resource and should be used. Some local contacts have established a team of people to do different parts of the work. You can ask other home educating families in your area to:
  - ❖ Spread information, e.g. posters and leaflets in libraries, community centres, Citizens Advice bureaux etc.
  - ❖ Think about and organise local activities or suggest venues
  - ❖ Run an EO stall at local festivals, conferences etc.
  - ❖ Establish a working relationship with the LA/EA
  - ❖ Share any specialist knowledge or experience (e.g. educating children with special needs, exams, single parents, etc.)
- Make yourself known to and communicate with other Local Contacts, especially neighbouring ones. Share information and experience with them.
- Make use of EO web sites, especially the LCs' list.
- Listen to any concerns of local members. Sort out problems locally if you can, drawing on the skills of other local members who you can trust to respect confidentiality. Talk to the local contact co-ordinator when you need to.
- Draw on the experience of the previous Local Contacts in your area.
- Think about whom to recruit as the next Local Contact.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of stationery, Leaflets etc.
- Keep an accurate record of expenses incurred.
- Keep your expenses to a minimum. For example, try to make telephone calls at the lowest rate.

- Read or re-read SINC. The sixth edition is now available with a green cover.
- Read the newsletters.
- Go to national meetings/gatherings/camps.
- Go to regional Local Contact workshops.
- Where appropriate, make use of EO's specialist members/groups, listed in the back of the newsletter or in the handbook.
- Remember that the Local Contact co-ordinator is there to support you.
- Encourage home educating families to join EO.
- Familiarise yourself with the procedures of your LA/EA.

## **USEFUL THINGS FOR LOCAL CONTACTS NOT TO DO**

### **DO NOT:**

- Feel that you have to do all the work yourself.
- Let families become dependent on you.
- Attempt to persuade families to home educate.
- Tell parents that they're doing it wrong.
- Allow the Contact List to be used inappropriately.
- Pass on information about a family without their permission.
- Discuss a family with LA/EA officials (or anyone else) in their absence.
- Allow yourself to be overworked in this role.
- Give yourself a hard time for feeling that you've done less than your best.
- Feel guilty about making mistakes. Mistakes are useful learning experiences.
- Blame others for what you see as their shortcomings: we're all doing our best.
- Be intimidated by the LA/EA.
- Be put off by these suggestions. Being a Local Contact is not as hard as it may appear and can be very rewarding.

## **APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL CONTACTS**

If you have read these guidelines and are interested in becoming a Local Contact, talk to the Local Contact Co-ordinator. They will ask questions and maybe talk to other local EO members who support your decision to take on this work. If other people in your area are also interested in becoming Local Contacts we can work out together how this job can be shared.

If the Local Contact co-ordinators decide that you are ready to be a Local Contact you will be designated 'acting' Local Contact. Your details will be passed on to Membership and Enquiries Secretaries and you will start to receive membership forms so that you can contact new members. Families may telephone or write to you for information about home education generally, the local group's activities, deregistration, the LA's role, contact with other families, etc.

If, after a period of 6 months, you want to continue with the job, your name will be put forward to a national meeting for formal ratification.

## **APPOINTMENT OF REGIONAL CONTACTS**

During 2007 EO will be recruiting a team of regional contacts. These will be experienced local contacts or home educators who will be the first port of call for local contacts in their region. A job description for the regional contacts is currently being formulated. If you are an experienced local contact and would like to take on a challenge, please contact Pauline Butterworth, the Local Contact Co-ordinator to discuss the role.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF EDUCATION OTHERWISE**

Local Contacts must be paid up members of EO. Membership cannot be offset against the expenses you would claim. All new local contacts are sent a copy of how to claim expenses and these guidelines should be followed. Information on claiming expenses can be obtained from the Local Contact Co-ordinator.

## **RESIGNATION OF LOCAL CONTACTS**

Sometimes a wish to resign can be a result of a local difficulty that we may be able to resolve. Sometimes it can be a result of feeling overburdened, in which case we may be able to work out a way of relieving the workload. Sometimes Local Contacts have to resign because they are moving out of the area or because they're no longer home educating.

Whatever the reason, it is essential that you inform the Local Contact Co-ordinator if you intend to resign. Ideally, you will have considered who might take over the work and discussed it with them. If not, the next best option is for you to carry on until the post has been advertised and a replacement found.

## **SUMMARY**

The Local Contact's role is to see that reliable sources of information and support for families choosing or considering home education are in place in his or her area; to facilitate and encourage contact between home educating families; to keep informed about current legislation concerning home education; to promote good relationships with LAs/EAs.

EO will provide Local Contacts with up to date legal information; reimburse Local Contacts' expenses; provide specialist information where available. The Local Contact Co-ordinator will support, value and appreciate Local Contacts; assist in solving local difficulties/disputes; facilitate meetings for Local Contacts to get together and share experiences.

## **ENQUIRY VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

An Enquiries Secretary (ES) is often the first contact for new enquirers and the public face of EO as a charitable organisation. Therefore it is important that this role is taken seriously, and that all enquiries are dealt with efficiently, comprehensively, promptly and without bias and enquirers encouraged to feel empowered to act for themselves.

An ES is part of the Enquiries Secretaries Group which aims to support and help each other. If you are not sure how to respond to an enquiry please ask others in the group for help and advice. We all need to do this from time to time. The group also has joint responsibility for ensuring that all ES adhere to the guidelines and understand and fulfil the commitments and obligations of the post. This guidance is divided into four sections. The first is general and relates to all ES's. The other two relate to the particular part of the Enquiries Team you are volunteering for.

### **Part 1 – All Enquiry Secretaries**

- 1.1 New ES will work a six month trial period to enable them to find out about the post and see whether they are suited to the role. Support and advice will always be offered by the other members of the team.
- 1.2 Keep a record of all postage etc so as to claim your expenses from the Treasurer. Receipts should be available where possible. If you attend a legal workshop, EO business meeting or ES meetings, you can claim travel expenses.
- 1.3 Feed information back to the Media Team when it is evident that a particular article or programme has generated public interest. If unable to contact anyone on the Media Team, let the ES Co-ordinator know.
- 1.4 Answer all enquiries accurately and fully. If it emerges during a telephone conversation that the enquirer does not intend to join EO, suggest that they might like to send a donation to cover the cost of material, postage and running telephone helpline.
- 1.5 All enquiries should be dealt with urgently. Be polite and helpful when dealing with the public. This may be difficult if you are under pressure yourself, but you could be the enquirer's last hope of help.

Give information about help available within EO both nationally and locally but remember that members' names and addresses are confidential. Local Contacts first names and telephone numbers may be given and also those of people who's names are in the Enquiry Directory.

- 1.6 Remember that as an organisation we offer help to empower people to help themselves. Do not offer to speak to anyone on behalf of the enquirer. Local Contacts will often accompany enquirers to potentially difficult meetings or be able to give local information which could be more pertinent. Unfortunately this has become more important in today's world of compensation claims.
- 1.7 The Enquiry Directory contains all the information you should need to carry out the job of an ES. The Directory contains the names and contact details of all EO named people and local contacts at sections 3.3 and 3.4. Give the enquirer this information and advise them that they can call back if they are unable to contact these people. If they do call back, you have the resources of the Directory to answer many of the questions they have.
- 1.8 The Enquiry Secretary Liaison (ESL) will ensure that updated telephone numbers and names are provided to all ES's as soon as possible. At intervals updated pages to the Directory will be issued and should be inserted in the appropriate place by the ES.
- 1.9 The last section of the Directory is for you to make notes. When you have a number of notes which you feel would be useful for others to be aware of, please advise the ESL who will issue it for all ES's.
- 1.10 When sending out information, send basic information pack: White membership leaflet, membership form and publications leaflet. Include any information which might be helpful, eg the addresses and telephone numbers of other support organisations, or details of someone in EO who could help. Whilst it would be financially prudent to ask callers to send an SAE, remember that some of them might be in too distressed a state to actually do this, so please don't be too rigid in this situation.
- 1.11 If someone is on a low income and cannot afford to join EO at the full rate, a reduced rate of £18 for the first year and £14 for subsequent years is available.  
**NB:** The option to pay in instalments is no longer available.
- 1.12 Stocks of stationery, membership forms and leaflets are available from the Stationery Organiser. Contact details in Section 3.3 of Directory.
- 1.13 Make every possible effort to be familiar with legal information and attend a legal workshop at a regional gathering if possible.
- 1.14 Regardless of your personal beliefs and methods, families need support and information about all the different ways in which home education can be approached, to empower them to make the choice which is right for them and their children.
- 1.15 If you are unable to deal with postal or telephone enquiries for one week or more, either for a holiday or because you need a break, please inform the Enquiries Co-ordinator as early as possible so that cover can be arranged.

## **Part 2 – Telephone Enquiries**

- 2.1 You will have a Flexitel telephone number redirected to your home telephone number once a month by the Flexitel system and you should respond to telephone enquiries. The Flexitel system is changed weekly.
- 2.2 Be prepared to telephone Local Contacts/other EO contacts as necessary to arrange local/specialist contact for enquirers.

- 2.3 Many people in desperate situations simply ask for information without giving details of their situation because they do not know anything about EO or how much they dare say. Families may be in a desperate situation; they may be threatened by the LEA, they may have children who are suicidal or suffering from severe bullying and so on. ES must be sensitive and earn the trust of enquirers on EO's behalf. The situation may be delicate, and you should always be aware that not all enquirers feel comfortable sharing their problems with a total stranger. Often, they may conceal their real anxieties or make light of them.
- 2.4 Give information over the telephone and send membership form and leaflets by second class post (first class if you feel it is urgent).
- 2.5 Some callers will ask for all the information available over the telephone. It would be an enormous task to pass on all the information you have and the enquirer is unlikely to remember it all. Try to judge whether the enquirer can wait for an enquiry pack or could get initial information from the website, and say they are welcome to phone back when they have read that if things are still unclear.
- 2.6 If asked, it is perfectly acceptable to refer to your own experience, but remember that as the answer to a desperate plea, your answer could be considered very influential so it may be necessary to choose your words carefully.
- 2.7 If you need to return messages on your answering machine you may ask them to phone you now that you have returned. Calls can be long and it is only reasonable that the enquirer should pay. However, people may be very upset and if you judge that their need is great, please do what you feel is right.

### **Part 3 – Postal Enquiries**

- 3.1 You must receive batches of post from the Central address.
- 3.2 If you receive postal enquiries send out information leaflets and membership forms to enquirers.
- 3.3 Send all general post enquiries and information by second class post unless you judge that it is important that the letter arrive as soon as possible.
- 3.4 If you receive any publications orders please forward them to the current Publications Secretary (contact details in Section 3.3 of Directory).
- 3.5 If you receive any completed membership forms with cheques or P.O.s forward them to the Membership Secretary (contact details in Section 3.3 of Directory).

### **Common Call Types**

Bullying problems - can be distressing with near suicidal teenagers.

Advice: Quite often parents just want someone to offload onto. If you spend some time listening and clarifying what they're saying to you, they'll often be able to decide what's best with very little input from you. If they want to keep the children in school but are just checking out their options, give them the phone numbers for Kidscape, ACE, Children's Legal Centre and Anti-Bullying campaign. If they want to deregister, give basic deregistration information.

LA threats.

Advice: Go through the threat very carefully with the parent. Has it been issued verbally, or in writing? Is it just a badly worded request or something more substantial? Check the legal situation if you're unsure - many threats come to nothing because LAs try to bluff their way into getting what they want but they can sound convincing if you're unsure about the law.

### Difficulties in school.

Advice: Just listen. If parents want to home ed, give the standard deregistration advice. If they have problems unrelated to HE, give phone number for Kidscape, Children's Legal Centre and/or ACE.

### People want to speak to someone locally about what local support is available

Advice: Give them the number of their local contact who can tell them about the local social and LA scene.

### **Finally...**

Remember you are not superman, superwoman. Some calls you take will be distressing. You are doing this volunteer job in addition to running your own life. Do not bottle up any fears you have. Find someone to talk to. The ES Co-ordinators, the ESL and any other ES team member will understand how you feel and may be grateful that you have spoken. None of us are an island.

## **POLICIES**

*NB. EO's existing policies and procedures are under review at present and new ones are being developed.*

### **COMPLAINTS**

EO aims to receive complaints and criticisms in a friendly, constructive manner, seeing most of them as feedback which may be useful for improving the functioning of the organisation. Even when something has obviously gone wrong, a simple acknowledgement and apology will usually suffice. No-one is expected to be perfect, and we are all allowed to be forgetful and to make mistakes. It is expected that most complaints will be dealt with informally, being raised in the first instance with local members, local contacts, the person responsible for that area of EO's activities and/or an appropriate council member. They may also be informally discussed with individual members of the Complaints Group.

If concerns cannot be resolved in this way after reasonable effort, then a formal complaint may be made via the complaints group.

#### **The complaints group**

This should be fully answerable to the Council and ideally should consist of between three and five experienced members of EO, including a Council member and one who is not on Council. CG members should be approved by Council, but may be proposed by any EO member. Members of the CG should undertake their duties with as much confidentiality as is compatible with resolution of the issues.

#### **Making a formal complaint**

A formal complaint should be made in writing to any member of the Complaints Group. This should show who and what the problem concerns, when it arose, what the complainant seeks to achieve, and what efforts have already been made to resolve the issue – with what result. Once a formal written complaint has been initiated, any public discussion of the matter (e.g. in the newsletter or on email lists) should cease until the complaints procedure has been completed. In the event of a complaint being directly concerned with a member of the CG, that member shall take no part in the procedure and another person agreed by both parties should be invited temporarily to step on to the CG.

#### **Complaints procedure**

1. On receipt of a formal written complaint, the CG will acknowledge receipt, and will seek to assure themselves that:
  - all possible efforts have been made to resolve the matter by informal negotiation

- the complaint is genuine and substantive
  - the matter is not currently under discussion on email lists, the newsletter or elsewhere
  - everyone affected by the matter is aware of the complaint
2. CG will ask anyone affected by the matter to contribute their knowledge of the situation. Written responses will be requested within a month. Thereafter the way forward may vary, and the time scale will also vary, but every effort should be made to deal with the matter as promptly as possible.
  3. CG members will communicate with all concerned to seek areas of agreement and attempt to negotiate a solution; other experienced people may be asked to help with any process of mediation and resolution which seems appropriate and is acceptable to those concerned.
  4. The complaints group should normally produce a brief report (not including names and identifying details) prior to every Council meeting. However if a complaint concerns a Council Member or if the Complaints Group need additional input, Council may be involved in the complaints procedure. In this case, the matter should be confidential to Council and should not be discussed elsewhere.
  5. Where the issue concerns a proposed change in EO's procedures or a matter deemed by Council or by the original complainant to be of serious concern to members, Council will consider what further action might be taken and whether, in line with our policy of open organisation, the matter should be reported more widely, e.g. in the Bulletin or Newsletter. In any wider reporting, anonymity will be maintained as far as possible.
  6. The Chair will not usually be part of the complaints group, and will receive any grievances and appeals, for instance about the way in which the complaint has been investigated. The Chair may review the case and bring it back to the Council for reconsideration if they have grounds for considering that this is appropriate.

*Xxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (for contact details see list of "Who Does What" or back page of newsletter) are the contacts for complaints and problems.*

## **CHILD PROTECTION: DRAFT CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Please send feedback on the child protection policy to [ name and contact details removed ]

*Although this code of practice started off as guidelines for protection against sexual abuse, a narrow focus seemed unhelpful, and we have put it in the context of providing an environment which protects children physically and emotionally as well. We believe that the best safeguards both against paedophiles and to prevent false accusations are to support children to keep control over their bodies, without the threat of smacking, bullying or any unwanted physical intrusion, as well as the obvious sexual violation; and to promote the safe practices described here.*

### **Events in places other than private homes**

#### ***Physical environment***

- Events should be held in safe venues.
- Any dangers inherent in a site, such as a cliff, river or busy road within walking distance, should be made known to parents before they attend an event, so that they have the information to decide whether the risk is acceptable.
- Any building used by groups with children should have up to date fire and health and safety checks, and owners or managers should be able to show certificates to that effect.

#### ***Fire safety***

- Fire procedures should be clear to the organiser and assistants and should be explained to families attending.

- Families should cooperate with any fire drills and should comply with any notices relating to fire procedures.
- Families should provide any information needed to allow lists of people attending to be compiled.
- For fire safety purposes, families should keep the organiser informed of any changes to sleeping arrangements.

### ***Safe behaviour***

- Families must accept any safety restrictions imposed by the management of the premises or by the organiser of the event. (Any restrictions beyond those imposed by the management will normally be negotiated with the whole group.)
- The organiser of an event may exclude from it any family of which a member refuses to behave safely.
- When this has happened, the organiser of a subsequent event may require, both from the family and from the individual concerned, a written undertaking to abide by safety agreements.
- In consultation with the Council, the organiser of an event may refuse a booking to any family of which a member has refused to behave safely at a previous event.

### ***First aid***

- Adequate first aid kits and expertise should be available at all EO events. Disposable gloves should be worn when treating cuts and grazes, and when cleaning up body fluids. Cuts should be covered with a dressing.

### ***Rubella and other infectious diseases***

- If there is the slightest possibility that a family at an event has been in contact with rubella (German measles), or if someone develops it within three weeks following an event, it is vital to let the organisers know so that women in the early stages of pregnancy can take medical advice.
- Organisers should also be notified of any other infectious diseases.

### ***Smoking***

- There is no smoking at EO events, whether within the buildings, around the doors, or in front of children playing outside.

### ***Illegal drugs***

- If anyone brings illegal drugs to an event, the family will be asked to Leave. The police may be informed.

## **All EO gatherings, meetings and activities**

### ***Publicity***

- Notices for local meetings, whether printed or electronic, should quote a contact number rather than give full details of time and venue. This makes it less likely that anyone with harmful or inappropriate intentions will be attracted to the event.

### ***Basic principles***

- Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity.
- There should be no abuse or exploitation, no scapegoating, ridiculing or bullying.

### ***Responsibility for children***

- **Children and young people under the age of 18 remain the responsibility of their parents or guardians.**
- Another adult known to the parent may act *in loco parentis* provided a written statement to that effect is accepted by the organiser of the event.
- A more informal arrangement may be made when an adult is going offsite for a few hours, or is in a meeting, but the arrangement must be clear and acceptable to the child, to the adults involved, and to the

organiser.

- In any case children should not be in the presence of a single adult who is not their parent (including, for instance, travelling in a car) unless that adult is formally acting *in loco parentis*.
- No-one should invade the privacy of anyone when they are using the toilet, showering, etc.
- If a child needs help, their parent should be called. If another adult has to help, perhaps because the parent is not nearby and the child is distressed, they should call a second adult to be present.

### **Activities for adolescents**

Some EO members may offer activities to older children unaccompanied by their parents. Whilst adolescents may benefit from such opportunities to develop independence, a number of precautions are necessary.

- Interested parents are entitled to a full description of any code of practice and/or safeguards that have been established in connection with an activity.
- Where an activity has taken place on previous occasions, the names of parents whose children have already taken part may be passed to other interested parents. Such interested parents should have access to the full list of parents of previous participants.
- The organiser of an activity should obtain certificates of enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau for themselves and all members of their team. EO may help with this (see below), but the responsibility for choosing to send young people on such activities remains with the parents.

### **Control of children**

- No-one, child or adult, should behave in a way likely to make a child feel threatened or humiliated.
- Control and discipline of children at an EO event should not include physical punishment, and this should be stated in the details of gatherings or meetings.
- An appropriate degree of physical restraint may be used only where it is immediately necessary to prevent harm to the child concerned or to other children present.
- When the need to restrain a child is more than momentary, the child's parent, or the person responsible for the child, should be called as soon as practicable.
- Non-coercion and autonomous education do not mean that everyone is allowed to do anything they like, but rather that everyone should be free to do as they wish provided it does not limit someone else's freedom and wellbeing.
- Older children developing romantic and sexual relationships should be helped to behave appropriately and non-exploitatively, and be aware of the needs of the whole group. Adults should be alert to any young person coming under sexual pressure within the group.
- If a child does not stop bullying another when asked, they should be removed from the group and kept with adults until they are ready to rejoin the group.
- Where any incident takes place which calls these principles into question, those involved should be encouraged to discuss the issues raised in a non-judgmental context.
- Nevertheless, families attending EO events who do not accept these principles (e.g. who hit children, or allow children to bully or behave dangerously) may be asked to leave.

### **Behaviour of adults**

- Aside from the *in loco parentis* arrangements described above, **adults should ensure at all times that they are not alone with a child who is not their own**. This applies both to informal situations and to organised activities such as workshops.
- Other adults should make themselves available as necessary to see that such situations do not arise. Parents are in any case encouraged to attend workshops with their children where the child is likely to need support in order to cope with the activity.
- Guidelines are for the protection of adults as well as children. It is never enough to protest that we meant no

harm, and that our actions are being misinterpreted. We each have a responsibility to act transparently and with such a margin that no error of interpretation is possible.

- Adults should abide by EO's policy of equality and diversity and help children to apply it.
- Gatherings are family events with people from a wide range of backgrounds, and we should behave sensitively and with discretion.
- If we think someone is acting unsafely or in ways which might be misconstrued, we must be prepared to speak to them or to someone responsible.

### **General Membership of, and appointments within, Education Otherwise**

- People who have been convicted of child abuse, or who have lost a job because of child abuse, will be excluded from the Association.
- EO is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau. The Council may decide which posts require the production of an enhanced certificate of disclosure. In addition, it may require any member to obtain such a certificate without giving reasons. The fact that a disclosure has been required should not in itself be taken to imply any judgement or opinion about the subject of the disclosure.

### **Tutors and youth Leaders**

- EO does not make recommendations about any tutors or youth Leaders, whether members of the Association or not.
- Use of people in any such role, whether paid or unpaid, remains the responsibility of the parent.

### **Cases of suspected abuse**

- For any allegation we must consider, in this order,
  - a. the protection of the children,
  - b. the protection of an adult who may be being falsely accused,
  - c. the rights of the parents to have information to help them safeguard their children, and
  - d. the protection of the organisation.
- Before precipitating irreversible action we should help each other explore whether an anxiety is well founded. Anyone who suspects child abuse at an EO event should discuss the matter with the organiser so as to make sure they are not misinterpreting it. Where the suspected abuse is physical rather than sexual, it may be appropriate to encourage people to discuss the issues raised in a non-judgmental context.
- **Anyone who suspects abuse should not ask the child questions about it.**
- Anyone to whom a child discloses abuse should listen supportively without actively responding, and without promising secrecy. At an EO event they should tell the organiser and the police, and not discuss it more widely.
- Anyone who has clear evidence of child abuse should report it to the police.
- Where there is no evidence of child abuse, EO members have neither the duty nor the right to intervene, or to report a family, simply because a child is being treated, within the family, in a way which they personally find unacceptable. The only effective intervention in a case which is not outside the law is to befriend the family and support them to function more lovingly.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY**

*The paragraph on equality is self-contained so it can be lifted and used in discussions with children in local groups, for instance, or on the children's pages.*

Education Otherwise is a single-issue organisation, an umbrella group to support families of children who want to be home educated. There are many reasons for home educating, and many ways of doing it. We

support each other in educating in whatever style suits a particular child: legally, parents must be able to show that for this particular child at this time, the education they are providing is suitable.

We do not support the removal of children from school against their wishes, or for reasons of racism or homophobia, or in order to segregate them from the community. We do not support keeping a child at home without offering them alternative educational experience. But we interpret education widely, as any experience which offers the child greater understanding and knowledge of, and compassion for, themselves, other human beings and the world around them, and the means to express their experience. The paramount concern of Education Otherwise is the welfare of each child. We actively resist discrimination on any grounds.

When we tried to list these grounds - race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, educational style... we kept finding more and more labels. Eventually we realised that the list could be as long as the number of people involved, and we came up with the following statement:

### **Equality**

Everyone is equal, but everyone is different in some ways; and this variety is exciting and enriching. Some differences make life harder, for instance if we can't walk or we can't think very well. But as well as all having difficulties, we also each have individual gifts which other people may not have. Whatever our differences, we can all be fun and interesting and a good friend, unless we've been so badly treated that we're too miserable or angry - and then we have a responsibility to deal with this pain, so we don't take it out on each other. If someone is too unhappy to be friendly because they have been badly treated, we may help them become a friend by being friendly to them.

It is important to refuse to tolerate sexist, racist etc. language, jokes and behaviour, both to avoid giving offence and to train ourselves out of the prejudices we grew up with.

We do not discuss religion or politics in the newsletter; or in EO Gatherings except with mutual consent. EO is not a forum for making judgments about other people's lifestyles and lawful choices. However, we do not support people who, on religious, political or idiosyncratic grounds, believe they have an inherent right to dominate children. EO does not exist to help people oppress children.

We refuse to condone bullying between any members of the organisation, whether children or adults. It is never acceptable to put other people down, whether by intimidation and bullying, by sexual or other harassment, by sarcasm, or by any other lack of respect.

## ***NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING***

### **Guidelines for Contributions and Advertising**

The primary purpose of the Education Otherwise newsletter is to provide support and information for members. EO supports all home educators irrespective of the particular approach they might choose to take in educating their children. The editors encourage members to make their own contribution, express their opinion and initiate debate. It is important that contributions are written in the first or third person ("I think this" or "She did that") rather than in the instructional or prescriptive second person ("You should do this..." or "You are wrong to think that...").

Contributions can take many forms, for example: personal contacts, family stories, learning experiences, reflections on life as a home educator, expounding of a philosophical standpoint or resource recommendations.

The editors have a duty to produce a newsletter that is of most interest to readers, and all submissions will be subject to this principle, except Education Otherwise Council and administrative business, which must be included. Submissions may be edited for length and available space, where this does not change the message of the contributor. Articles are more likely to be included where they are concise. Where a contributor is critical of another member or group, the latter will be consulted and offered a right of reply, to be included alongside the original item if time permits, or in the following issue. Any contribution considered by the editors to be offensive to other members will be edited or not published.

It is very helpful if contributors supply their full names and contact details (including EO membership number) so that they may be contacted easily if there are any queries about their contribution; details may be withheld from publication on request. Contributions received by email will normally be acknowledged within a few days. Contributors who submit material by post are requested to include sae if confirmation of receipt is required. Although contributions are initially sent to the various section editors, any subsequent query should be addressed to the NL Co-ordinator.

## Advertising

Members may advertise small items free of charge. Members' commercial enterprises (e.g. property rental, services etc.) are subject to a charge of £25 per issue. Members are asked to quote their full name and address (or EO membership number) when sending advertisements.

Non-members may submit advertisements, subject to space and interest to members. A flat rate charge of £35 per issue (for 50 words) will be payable per 1/8 A4 (reduced to A5 on printing) page, unless the advertisement is clearly not for commercial purposes.

Advertisements should normally be limited to 1/8 A4 page (approx. 50 words) and sent to the Advertising Editor (preferably by email) by 1<sup>st</sup> of previous month. It may not be possible to reproduce illustrations or logos.

Flyers of up to A5 size may be included, where there are no more than two flyers per newsletter. (This does not include EO's flyers.) Inclusion of a flyer will be on a 'first come first served' basis. Should demand for this service increase, the editor will be responsible for restricting repeat insertions from the same individual or organisation, and for including those judged to be of most educational interest to members. The cost per issue will be:

| PLAIN/THIN PAPER                 |      | GLOSSY/THICK PAPER            |      |
|----------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|
| Single sheet A5                  | £125 | 2 page (i.e. single A5 sheet) | £300 |
| Double sheet<br>(i.e. A4 folded) | £225 | 4 page (i.e. A4 folded)       | £550 |
|                                  |      | 6 page (trifold, 3 x A5)      | £675 |

Payment for all advertisements and flyers must be made direct to the Treasurer: [name and contact details removed] by the deadline for each issue (1<sup>st</sup> of previous month). Cheques should be made payable to "Education Otherwise". Please note that we do not issue invoices for advertisements/flyers, which must be pre-paid.

In exceptional circumstances, a flyer may be included free of charge where submitted by a non-profit making educational organisation that is offering free or outstanding benefits of interest to EO members. A reciprocal arrangement may be agreed between a non-profit making home education organisation and EO on an individual basis, at the discretion of the EO council. Please note insertions of advertisements from the same organisation limited to two per year.

## Guidelines for Editing the Children's Pages

**FIRST JOB:** As soon as each contribution arrives: Check that each writer gives a surname, address and county. If not, contact them by email or telephone if possible to ask for this – we can't print anything from someone who does not give these details. Check with the database Administrator to verify their addresses and so she can check if the contributors are EO members. Do this as soon as you can, to avoid a rush at the last minute.

Make sure ALL penpals or petpals include this information - it must be printed. (Full name and address of child or family must be supplied for every contribution, though for poems, drawings, etc. it need not all be printed). If someone gives an email address in the Talking Wall, then their surname and postal address must be shown too.

**THINGS YOU MUST INCLUDE:** Again, it's a good idea to do this at the start. Copy these statements in the places indicated:

- **Include on the Front Cover:**

Children's Pages, Issue No. (number & date), Edited by (your name and address)

The Editor of the next issue is: (name, address, Tel. number and email address of next editor)  
Contributions must be received by 20th (month of your issue)

If you would like to edit the Children's Pages, contact the Newsletter Co-ordinator.

**Notes for Contributors.** Drawings should be in Black and White only. Please note that all contributions for the Children's Pages must have the full name of child or family, and address (including county). If you would like a pen-pal and are not allowed to as you have to show your address, please ask a parent/guardian to email [ Name and contact details removed ] for an alternative.

(Note to editor: it's OK to have just a name in the talking wall, but only if email/web is **not** given. If people want to put their email or website in Talking Wall, you **MUST** include a name and address too)

- Include somewhere on the Pen/pet-pals pages

*While the Children's Pages editor and NL co-ordinator take care to verify that all pet/pen-pal correspondents are EO members, it is up to parents to inform themselves of what and to whom their children reply. Children are reminded that they should consider the feelings of others when writing or responding to letters.*

Pet-pals must also include: full name and address of the owner/carer (not just the pet)

- Also include (a good place is in the Talking Wall) :

CHILDLINE 0800 1111 - KIDSCAPE 020 77303300 (London) or 01273 557133 (Brighton)

- Put this in somewhere suitable (maybe talking wall again): An email list now operates for the children of EO members. To join the list you must send an email to the address below and you will receive an automatic reply asking your parents to send an email giving their name and address so that EO membership can be checked, and giving permission for you to join the list. Once this has been done, the list moderator will approve the pending membership.

**OTHER THINGS YOU MAY INCLUDE:** Letters, articles, puzzles, poems, penpals, petpals and talking wall. (Draw your wall in any way you like, using black ink) . Please check with NL Co-ordinator before starting any new section.

- **Handwriting** should be re-typed. Please do not copy things out by hand.
- **Drawings** should be gone over in **black** ink if they are in pencil or colour. You may need to enlarge or reduce them on a photocopier.

### **PRODUCTION TIPS:**

1. Use **8** sheets of good quality, white **A4** paper, typing on one side only, **in black ink**. Use a word processor, computer or typewriter with a new, black ribbon.
2. Normally, use a minimum of about Times New Roman 13 or Arial 12 (you can use larger print for special effects if you have room), in any font (style of print/typeface) you like.
3. The printer will reduce everything to fit an A5 sheet (HALF SIZE!). (If using a typewriter, normal 10-12 pitch type will be OK )
4. Leave one space after comma(,) or semicolon(;) two spaces after full stop(.) question mark (?) exclamation point(!) colon(:) – i.e. anything with a dot on the line (no space before punctuation marks, except when using a hyphen as a dash, when you Leave one space each side of it - thus)
5. Leave out apostrophes unless you are sure that they stand for something missed out ...
6. Leave a small margin (about 1.5 cm), top and bottom and on both sides of each sheet - set these from page layout (menu from "file" button). Keep everything, including drawings (which you can paste on by hand if necessary), within this area to make sure it will all print.
7. Number pages centre bottom (you can do this by hand if you like). If you are using "insert page number" you may need to change the footer margin (page layout menu).

8. You can cut-and-paste things in to fit by hand if you like. If you have too much material, put the penpals in fairly small print (e.g. 11-point) and if still too much you can send spare poems, puzzles, drawings, etc. to next Children's Pages editor.

#### **WHEN YOU HAVE TYPED EVERYTHING UP:**

- Get someone else to **proof-read** your work (read it through and point out any missing surnames, spellings, etc. which you may need to check with the original/author or a dictionary). It is very hard to proof-read one's own work!!! If you want the NL or ChP Co-ordinator to do this, please send typed copy as soon as possible (preferably before deadlines in next para.)
- Send the draft text (written words) to ChP Co-ord by Email by **5<sup>th</sup>** of the month (1<sup>st</sup> if sending paper copy by post) - this is because the publications secretary has to check everything - it gives time for changes if necessary. If you can send some of it earlier, that's even better. Because there may be queries, wait for reply before finishing off!!! You don't need to send drawings, and don't worry about formatting or layout of the pages at this stage.
- Send the completed Children's Pages, by Email or First Class post (well packed) to the Co-ordinator at the address below by 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- Expenses may be claimed for paper, photocopying, postage etc.

Teenage Editors (& parents) - if you would like to volunteer or have any queries then please contact the Children's pages coordinator.

## **LEGAL SUMMARIES**

### ***ENGLAND AND WALES***

In England and Wales parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive an effective education. Although this responsibility is usually delegated to schools some parents choose to exercise it directly by providing an education based at home. The following summarises the legal responsibilities of parents and local authorities in relation to elective home education of children of compulsory school age.

#### **Responsibility of Parents**

The responsibility of parents is clearly established in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 (previously section 36 of the Education Act 1944):

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.

#### **Definition of Suitable Education**

An interpretation of some terminology used in the Education Act 1944 (replaced by the 1996 Act) was provided by an appeal case which was brought at Worcester Crown Court in 1981 (Harrison & Harrison v Stevenson). In this case, the judge defined a 'suitable education' as one which was such as:

1. to prepare the children for life in modern civilised society, and
2. to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The diversity of modern society and styles of education give parents considerable freedom of choice in enabling children to achieve their potential. In the case of R v Secretary of State for Education and Science,

ex parte Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School Trust (1985) (Times, 12 April 1985) Mr Justice Woolf held that:

education is 'suitable' if it primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so.

Examining the meaning of the expression *full-time* shows the hours spent on teaching in schools are not relevant to home education, which generally takes place on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, in very different conditions. Provided the child is not a registered pupil at a school, the parent is not required to provide any particular type of education, and is under no obligation to

- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- have any specific qualifications
- cover the same syllabus as any school
- adopt the National Curriculum
- make detailed plans in advance
- observe school hours, days or terms
- have a fixed timetable
- give formal lessons
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation
- match school, age-specific standards
- seek permission to educate 'otherwise'
- take the initiative in informing the local authority
- have regular contact with the local authority

### **Duty of Local Authorities**

Sections 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 place a duty upon local education authorities to take certain actions if it appears that a child is not being properly educated.

If it appears to a local education 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. (s 437 (1))

The local authority's legal duty is concerned solely with children who appear not to be receiving suitable education. Beyond this, nothing in the Act requires a local authority to carry out regular monitoring of provision where a child is receiving education otherwise than at school. However, case law (Phillips v Brown, Divisional Court [20 June 1980, unreported]) has established that a local authority may initially ask parents who are educating their children at home for information in order to assess whether it appears to the local authority that no suitable education is being provided.

In Phillips v Brown, Lord Donaldson said:

Of course such a request is not the same as a notice under s 37 (1) of the Education Act 1944 [now s 437 (1) of the Education Act 1996] and the parents will be under no duty to comply. However it would be sensible for them to do so. If parents give no information or adopt the course ... of merely stating that they are discharging their duty without giving any details of how they are doing so, the LEA will have to consider and decide whether it 'appears' to it that the parents are in breach of s 36 [now s 7 of the Education Act 1996].

If a local authority chooses to approach a family and informally ask for information, parents may establish that a child is receiving an efficient and suitable education in a number of ways. Parents might, for example, offer either

- a written report,
- samples of work,
- a meeting at their home, with or without the child being present,
- a meeting elsewhere, with or without the child,
- an endorsement of the educational provision by a recognised third party, or
- information in any other appropriate form

The DfES make it clear that parents have a choice about how they provide information about their educational provision:

LAs have no automatic right of access to parents' homes. Parents may wish to offer an alternative way of demonstrating that they are providing suitable education, for example through showing examples of work and agreeing to a meeting at another venue.

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/educationandlearning/whatchildrenlearn/learningathomeoutsideschool/electivehomeeducation/>

Occasionally, after examining all the information provided by the parents, a local authority may have genuine concerns about a child's education, but the way that information is presented should not form the basis for these concerns. Parents need only present information that would, on the balance of probabilities, convince a reasonable person that a suitable education was being provided.

### **Disputes Between Parents and Local Authorities**

It should be possible to resolve most disputes without recourse to formal statutory procedures. However, where children of compulsory school age are not being educated at school and the local authority has serious doubts about the parents' educational provision, the following scenario will apply.

Initially, the local authority asks informally for information and gives the parents reasonable time to provide it. Then in the light of any response it considers whether it appears that the child is not receiving suitable education. Unless at this point the answer is 'Yes, it does appear that the child is not receiving suitable education,' no further steps should be taken.

If, after considering all the information provided by the parents, the local authority is concerned that the child may not be receiving suitable education, it should explain this to the family and give them further time and opportunity to explain or improve their arrangements.

Only after this, if it still appears to the local authority that the child is not receiving suitable education, should it take the first step towards a school attendance order. This step will be to serve a formal notice giving the parents two weeks to satisfy it about the suitability of their provision.

The local authority should bear in mind, however, that should the case proceed to court the action will fail if the parents can satisfy the court that they are providing a suitable education. The court will accept evidence in a number of forms and will be looking for evidence that would convince a reasonable person on the balance of probabilities (rather than beyond all reasonable doubt) that a suitable education is being provided. At any stage during this process the parents may present evidence that they are now providing a suitable education and apply to have the order revoked.

### **Deregistration in England**

In England the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 set out the conditions under which a pupil's name must be removed from the admission register of a school. Under Regulation 8(1)(d), the name of a school-age pupil is to be deleted from the admission register if:

he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.

Parents of children who have been registered at a school and who begin home education need to inform the school that they are providing education otherwise than at school so that the child's name can be removed from the register. Parents do not need to ask permission from the local authority to begin home education and they are under no obligation to inform the local authority of their intention. Under Regulation 12(3), however, the proprietor of the school must report the deletion of the pupil's name from the admission register to the local authority immediately. Guidance on the Regulations allows schools to delay the removal of the child's name from the register for a maximum of two days to allow notification to reach the local authority.

Parents seeking to home educate children registered at a special school, however, must obtain the consent of the local authority to withdraw their child from the school (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 8(2), 2006). Consent is required in these cases only to smooth the transition to home education for children with complex special needs. The regulations are not intended to be a hindrance to these children being educated at home and any such suggestion would be discriminatory. See P13 for sample de-registration letter.

### **Deregistration in Wales**

In Wales the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations, 1995 set out the conditions under which a pupil's name must be removed from the admission register of a school. Under Regulation 9(1)(c), the name of a school-age pupil is to be deleted immediately from the admission register if:

he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.

Parents of children who have been registered at a school and who begin home education need to inform the school that they are providing education otherwise than at school so that the child's name can be removed from the register. Parents do not need to ask permission from the local authority to begin home education and, they are under no obligation to inform the local authority of their intention. Under Regulation 13(3), however, the proprietor of the school must report the deletion of the pupil's name from the admission register to the local authority within ten school days.

Parents seeking to home educate children registered at a special school, however, must obtain the consent of the local authority to withdraw their child from the school (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 9(2), 1995). Consent is required in these cases only to smooth the transition to home education for children with complex special needs. The regulations are not intended to be a hindrance to these children being educated at home and any such suggestion would be discriminatory. See P13 for sample de-registration letter.

### **Flexi-Schooling**

An increasing number of parents are requesting a more flexible use of schools, and head teachers have the authority to agree flexi-schooling to accommodate their wishes. In a flexi-schooling arrangement children are registered as pupils at the school and attend part-time, but spend other parts of the week being educated off site by their parents. This arrangement is a matter for the head teacher, rather than the local authority, to negotiate with parents.

In England flexi-schooling is covered by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Regulation 6(1)(a)(iii) instructs schools to indicate on the register when children are attending an approved educational activity off site. Regulation 6(4) defines an approved educational activity as an activity which takes place outside the school premises and which is approved by a person authorised by the proprietor of the school. It must be of an educational nature, including work experience and sporting activities, and must be supervised by a person authorised by the proprietor or the head teacher of the school. Part time education provided at home in agreement with the head teacher of the school meets these criteria.

In Wales flexi-schooling is covered by the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 1997. Regulation 7(1)(a) instructs schools to indicate on the register when children are attending an approved educational activity. Regulation 7(4A)(a) defines an approved educational activity as an activity which takes place outside the school premises and which is approved by a person authorised by the proprietor of the school. It must be of an educational nature, including work experience and sporting activities, and must be supervised by a person authorised by the proprietor or the head teacher of the school. Part time education provided at home in agreement with the head teacher of the school meets these criteria

Children being educated within a flexi-schooling arrangement are in the same position as any registered pupil as regards insurance coverage and also attract full funding for the school.

### **Home Educating Children with Special Educational Needs**

The right to home educate a child with special educational needs (SEN) is stated in section 7 of the Education Act 1996:

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.

The responsibilities of parents who are home educating a child with special educational needs are the same as those of any other parents, whether or not the child has a statement. The government has made it clear that parents of children with statements do not need to arrange the provision specified in the statement but need only make suitable provision under s 7 of the Act, and it encourages local authorities to recognise that provision at home will be different from provision at school. Baroness Ashton of Upholland stated in the Lords on October 29<sup>th</sup> 2001 (Hansard Column 1261):

However, we do not suggest that parents must carry out exactly what is written within the statement. It is for the LEAs and the parents to work together to ensure that the child receives suitable provision, recognising that provision within a school is different to that provided at home.

Where a child does have a statement of special educational needs and begins home education, the local authority's statutory duty to undertake an annual review continues. This review includes assessing whether the statement is still appropriate and it may be possible to alter or even cease to maintain the statement depending on the child's current circumstances. Should it be necessary for the statement to remain in force, the parents continue to have responsibility for the education provided and the local authority has a duty to act if it appears that the child is not receiving a suitable education under s 7.

At times there may be disagreements between parents and the local authority about how a child's special educational needs should be met. There are some situations in which parents can appeal to the independent Special Educational Needs Tribunal. However where this is the case, then the local authority would have a legal duty to inform the parent of their right of appeal.

Parents of children with special educational needs do not need to have any special qualifications or training to assume direct responsibility for their children's education. Furthermore, they do not need to inform the local authority of their intention to home-educate unless the child is registered at a special school when the consent of the local authority is necessary to withdraw the child from the school. Consent is required in these cases only to smooth the transition to home education for children with complex special needs and it would be discriminatory for a local authority to withhold consent where a parent wishes to home educate a child who is registered at a special school.

## **SCOTLAND**

Please check EO website for updates on the Statutory Guidance Review. The consultation was closed in February 2007 and the results will come out in due course. This may include some revision of the Statutory Guidance referred to here. EO's response to the review can be found at:

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/legal/consultations/scottish/EOScotlandReviewResponse.htm>

### **Parental Choice and Responsibilities**

Section 14 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (asp 6) provides for guidance to be issued 'as to the circumstances in which parents may choose to educate their children at home', and requires education authorities to 'have regard to any such guidance'. This Statutory Guidance was issued on March 12, 2004. It can be found on the Scottish Executive website at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/gcech-00.asp>

and on the EO website at

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/ScottishHE/ndxlglbscot.htm>.

The key statutory provisions relating to the rights and duties of parents in Scotland are contained in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. These and other relevant statutes and conventions are laid out clearly and accurately at the start of the Statutory Guidance. They are:

***UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 12***

***UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 28***

***Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000 – Sections 1 and 2***

***European Convention on Human Rights - Article 2 of Protocol 1***

***Education (Scotland) Act 1980 - Section 30***

***Education (Scotland) Act 1980 - Section 135 (1)***

***Education (Scotland) Act 1980 - Section 28(1)***

***Education (Scotland) Act 1980 - Section 35***

***Education (Scotland) Act 1980 - Section 37(1)***

***Education (Scotland) Act 1980 - Section 37(2)***

The guidance was drawn up primarily to assist education authorities in the carrying out of their duties in compliance with statute and to improve the relationship between education authorities and home educators. It is the result of a lengthy consultation between the Scottish Executive and home educators, local authorities and others and the context it sets is one of encouraging cooperation between education authorities and home educators and of acknowledging diversity in the choices families make. It is strongly recommended that the Statutory Guidance be read alongside this summary of the law and parents' practical guide.

The Guidance is to be reviewed by the Scottish Executive in spring 2006, and they are happy to receive feedback during that time. (You can comment via EO, or contact the Scottish Executive directly on [ceu@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:ceu@scotland.gov.uk))

The general principle of parental choice is set out in s 28(1) of the 1980 Act:

In the exercise and performance of their powers and duties under this Act the Secretary of State and education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

### **The duty of the parent**

The right to educate otherwise than at school is contained in s 30(1):

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide efficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by causing him to attend a public school regularly or by other means.

This means:

- If you have a *school-age* child, you must see that (s)he *is provided with education*.
- You can do this either by sending the child to a state school or by other means.
- In any case, the education provided must be *efficient*.
- It must also be *suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude*.

The main thing to note is how *little* the law says *about* your duty. *Provided your child is not receiving their education provision at school* you are bound by no other constraints than those broadly outlined above. In the Statutory Guidance education authorities are advised that they 'should assume that efficient educational provision is taking place, which is suitable for the child, unless there is evidence to the contrary.' This correctly supports the theory and practice of home education in that it can take many forms and can vary greatly to suit the individual.

Although s 1 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 affirms the right of children to be provided with school education by education authorities, this has no bearing on the right to home education. The same Act (s 60 and Schedule 2, para 3(5)) amends the 1980 Act by the addition of s 30(2). This subsection explicitly states that the right to school education is without prejudice to the choice afforded a parent by s 30(1) of the 1980 Act.

### **The role of the education authority**

*Unless you are taking your child out of a state school* (see below), you don't have to tell the education authority you are educating 'by other means'; but once they know about you they are entitled to investigate. Usually this should just be a matter of checking up informally on your arrangements.

Many people educate their children at home with the full cooperation of the education authority. But sometimes conflicts develop. The authority have a duty to take action if they are 'not satisfied' that you are educating your 'school age' child properly. The formal steps they should take are laid down in s 3741 of the 1980 Act, summarised here for reference and also in the Statutory Guidance.

1. They serve you with a notice giving you at least a week to provide whatever information they ask for about your arrangements. You can choose whether to do this in person (with or without the child) or in writing.
2. If you fail to satisfy them either that you are educating properly or that you have 'reasonable excuse' for not doing, they must make an 'attendance order'. But before they do this they must consider any views you have expressed about the school you want your child to go to.
3. They serve you with an attendance order requiring you to send your child to the school named in it.
4. Once the order is served, you have two weeks to appeal to the sheriff, who may confirm, vary or annul it.
5. You can ask the education authority to revoke the order because you have made alternative arrangements (including arrangements for home education). (Alternatively you can ask them to amend it by substituting another school which has agreed to accept your child.)
6. If they won't do this, or if they fail to decide within a month, you can appeal to the sheriff.
7. If you don't comply with the order you can be taken to court, but you won't be guilty if you can show that you have a 'reasonable excuse'. (Under s 44(1), whether it convicts you or not, if the court finds that there was irregular attendance without reasonable excuse it can refer the case to the local authority Reporter. See below.)

### **Withdrawing your child from school**

Please see the EO information article "Withdrawing children from school in Scotland" which is on the EO website at: <http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/ScottishHE/WthdrngChSchScot06-06NL.pdf> Check the website for updates to the Statutory Guidance Review happening in 2007. See page 13 for sample withdrawal letter.

How do you go about withdrawing your child from school? Section 35(1) of the Act provides that:

Where a child of school age who has attended a public school on one or more occasions fails without reasonable excuse to attend regularly at the said school, then, unless the education authority have consented to the withdrawal of the child from the school (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), his parent shall be guilty of an offence against this section.

This suggests that the safest course of action is to seek the education authority's consent while your child is still going to school. Sometimes, however families find that this is not reasonably practical (for example if the child is suffering badly and finding attending school intolerable) and parents may wish to begin home education immediately. In the past some authorities have been slow or reluctant to give their consent whether or not the child was still at school and families have been kept waiting unreasonably. The 2004 Statutory Guidance encourages education authorities to grant consent immediately in almost all circumstances, and advises that 'previous irregular attendance is not of itself a sufficient reason for refusing consent.' Again, it is recommended that the guidance is read in full. Section 3 also includes guidance to authorities with regard to refusing consent, and to procedures for both granting and refusing consent. It is hoped that the guidance will promote consistency of policy and procedure across education authorities but at the time of writing procedures among the Scottish education authorities vary, and it will take time for them to revise them.

So can you remove your child from school and begin to educate at home in the meantime?

A senior Scottish QC, now a judge, was asked on behalf of EO whether the intention to educate by other means could count in itself as 'reasonable excuse' (see below) for irregular attendance. He felt this was unlikely, but went on to say that

while I am of opinion that a bare declaration of intention to educate the child at home would not be reasonable excuse, the fact that the child was being afforded at home an education which was efficient and suitable to his age, ability and aptitude would, if established, in my opinion constitute reasonable excuse.

In other words a court would probably not think it was reasonable to keep your child away from school simply because you *wished* to home educate, but it might well conclude that you had behaved reasonably if you could show that you *had been* educating appropriately.

If you *decide* to take your child out of school before obtaining the authority's consent, it is advisable to write to them immediately to explain what you are doing. Otherwise they will be more likely to embark on the formal truancy procedure or refer your child to the Children's Reporter (see below). But if they do start this procedure, they may still accept evidence of suitable ongoing home education as sufficient explanation of the child's absence. You are advised to not delay in your response or correspondence.

If they don't accept your explanation they can take you to court for irregular attendance. You will then need to convince the court in turn that:

1. you were providing suitable education for your child; and
2. this constitutes reasonable excuse for irregular attendance.

### **Irregular attendance**

If the education authority think you have failed to see that your child attends regularly, they are required by s 36 of the Act to serve you with a notice giving you at least 48 hours to explain the child's absence in person (with or without the child). If you are unable to satisfy them that you have a reasonable excuse, they may either prosecute you straight away or warn you and wait for up to six weeks before deciding whether to prosecute or not. In the latter case they can make an attendance order. (Before they do this they must consider any views you have expressed about the school you want your child to go to. The rest of the procedure is set out in points 3-7 above, under 'The role of the education authority'.)

Whether they prosecute you or not, the education authority may refer your child to the local authority Children's Reporter (see below) *at any stage in the proceedings*. Likewise (under s 44), if you are taken to court, and if the court finds there was irregular attendance without reasonable excuse, it may refer the case to the Reporter regardless of whether it convicts you as well. Alternatively the court may itself make an attendance order.

## **'Reasonable excuse'**

This concept appears in the Act in connection with both failure to educate and irregular attendance. 'Reasonable excuse' can be any of the following (s 42):

- No school within 'walking distance' will educate the child free of charge, and the education authority have made no arrangements for travel, boarding or tutoring.
- The child is ill. (In this case the education authority have the right to insist on medical examination.)
- There are other circumstances constituting a reasonable excuse in the opinion of the education authority or the court.

If you have applied for an attendance order to be revoked or amended, this is not in itself a reasonable excuse for failing to attend the school named in it.

## **Children's hearings**

As a parent you can be prosecuted for two offences under the 1980 Act. One is failing to comply with an attendance order (s 41); the other is failing to secure regular attendance (s 35). But whether they prosecute you for irregular attendance or not, the *education authority* may refer your child to the local authority Children's Reporter. And whether or not it convicts you of either offence, if a *court* finds that there was irregular attendance without reasonable excuse it can also refer the case to the Children's Reporter. This is because 'irregular attendance without a reasonable excuse' is a 'ground for referral' to the Children's Reporter. The Reporter must investigate any referrals received. Sometimes talking directly to the Reporter at an early stage can clear up misunderstandings on statute and on correct procedures which may have occurred on the part of either the education authority or new home educators. The following brief summary is given for reference. If your child is referred to the local authority Children's Reporter you may wish to seek legal advice if you have not done so already.

Under s 39 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, the Reporter may

1. decide that no further action is needed; or
2. refer the child and family to the local authority for advice, guidance and assistance; or
3. conclude that conditions are met whereby your child seems to need compulsory care. (One of these conditions is irregular school attendance without reasonable excuse.)

In the third of these cases the Reporter must get a report from the local authority and convene a hearing before the children's panel, which you and your child must normally both attend (s 40-41).

The procedure at children's hearings is set out in s 42-44 of the Act. The chairman starts by explaining the grounds for referral. (If you or your child do not accept them, the Reporter must apply to the sheriff for a decision on whether they exist. The chairman must tell you about this.) After considering the report and any other evidence, the panel can decide

1. that no further action is needed; or
2. to adjourn pending further investigation (- this could entail taking the child away for assessment); or
3. to make a supervision requirement (i.e. a residential or non-residential care order).

Under s 48-50 you have three weeks to appeal to the sheriff against the panel's decision, and where a supervision requirement has been made you can apply to the panel for the requirement to be suspended pending your appeal. After that you have a further four weeks to appeal against the sheriff's decision to the Court of Session on a point of law. Supervision requirements must be reviewed at least once a year, and may be reviewed after a shorter period if you or your child ask for it.

## **Additional support needs**

The expression 'additional support needs' was introduced by the Education (Additional Support for learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 to replace the earlier phrase 'special educational needs'. The new Act is due to come into force in autumn 2005, and an associated code of practice is scheduled for publication in the meantime. Under the Act, children or young people have additional support needs if they need (or are likely to need) additional support in order to benefit from school education provided (or to be provided) for them. Education authorities have a duty to identify and address those needs in respect of children for whose school education

they are responsible. In some circumstances the authority are required to prepare a 'co-ordinated support plan'. (This replaces the earlier 'record of needs'.)

This legislation is concerned primarily with children who are at school. Where a child is being withdrawn from school, the existence of additional support needs may be a complicating factor, but it does not negate the right to make suitable educational provision by other means.

For the full text of the Act, see

<http://www.scotland-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004/20040004.htm>

For a useful summary, see

<http://www.childpolicy.org.uk/legislation/index.cfm?ccs=267&cs=6176>

See also section 6 of the Statutory Guidance. Whilst this is written in terms of the earlier legislation, it still provides a useful indication of the official attitude to home education and special educational needs.

## **CHANNEL ISLANDS**

### **Guernsey**

The law relating to Home Education is broadly similar to that of England and Wales. The Education (Guernsey) Law of 1970 is equivalent to Section 7(a) of the Education Act 1996, and the Education (Amendment)(Guernsey) Law of 1987 adds the words 'to any special educational needs he may have' as found in Section 7(b) of the Education Act 1996. (See Summary of the Law in England and Wales).

It has not been possible to find either of these Laws on the internet but for anyone wishing to obtain a copy, they are available for a nominal sum from The Greffe located at the Royal Court in Guernsey.

The main differences are:

- LEAs in Guernsey are called the State Education departments.
- To deregister your child, you would need to write to the Head of the School stating that you are educating your child otherwise than at school.
- If your child is in a Special School, you need permission from the States Education Department to deregister the child.
- If your child has special needs, there are caveats in the law which allow the State Education Department to call in the Medical Officer to determine whether or not the home education is in the best interests of the child. However, if the decision from the authorities was that the child was better off in school, the same procedure as English law applies and a School Attendance Order would be issued. Parents have the right of appeal to the decision.
- Compulsory School Age is from 5-15 in Guernsey but this is due to change to 5-16 in the academic year 2008/2009.
- There is no such thing as a Statement of Special Educational Needs on Guernsey so the problems that sometimes occur with Statemented Children in England and Wales do not arise.
- There is a draft policy on home education on Guernsey which actually states that home visits are required twice a year, but this draft policy has not been implemented and there is no set date for this at this time.
- Flexi schooling is not recognised on the island, but it has been known for individual schools to accommodate a child in special circumstances.
- Schools on Guernsey are not bound by law to follow the national curriculum but have voted that they wish to do so. Therefore, if you are only temporarily home educating, as with English and Welsh home education, it may be advisable to consider the contents of the national curriculum.

### **Jersey**

Jersey Education law is set out in EDUCATION (JERSEY) LAW 1999 and uses exactly the same wording as English law in that:

A parent of a child of compulsory school age shall ensure that he receives full-time education appropriate to his age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at a school at which he is a pupil or otherwise, in accordance with Article 13.

For the purposes of this Law, a child is of compulsory school age throughout the period beginning on the first day of the school term in which his fifth birthday falls and ending on the thirtieth day of June in the school year in which he attains the age of sixteen years.

Article 13 states that:

(1) A child of compulsory school age shall not receive full-time education otherwise than by regular attendance at school unless the arrangements made for his education have been approved by the Committee.

(2) The Committee shall approve arrangements made for the education of a child otherwise than at school if it is satisfied that the instruction to be received by the child is at least equal to the instruction that a child of the same age would receive in a provided school.

(3) Any approval may be given subject to such conditions as the Committee thinks fit and shall be withdrawn at any time when the Committee ceases to be satisfied as to the arrangements made for the child's education.

(4) The Committee may cause a child educated otherwise than at school to be examined and his educational progress assessed from time to time.

## Isle of Man

The law relating to Home Education is broadly similar to that of England and Wales. The primary legislation can be found in the [Education Act 2001](#).

Section 24 of the Act allows education otherwise than at school and states:

1. It is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
2. The Department shall enforce the duty imposed by subsection (1).
3. In this part "school", in relation to a child of compulsory school age who has attained the age of 14 years and for whom education is provided at a college, includes a college; "suitable education", in relation to a child, means efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have.

Therefore, it is also legal to home educate a child with special educational needs unless attending a special school as stated in Section 16.

Compulsory school age is between the ages of 5 and 16 on the Isle of Man.

Section 16 (2) states that children may be withdrawn from school and that the Head Teacher is responsible for deleting the child's name from the register. It also states in this section that a child in a special school requires permission from the Department of Education before he/she can be deregistered.

There is nothing in the legislation which demands a particular type of evidence or education, so any form of education from autonomous to 'school at home' should be acceptable.

If it appears to the Education Department that the child is not receiving a suitable education they do, under Section 25, have the right to require a child be submitted for examination or assessment; this is different from the law in England and Wales.

1. If it appears to the Department that a child of compulsory school age in the Island is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, it shall serve a notice in writing on a parent of the child requiring him to satisfy it within the period specified in the notice (not being less than 15 days beginning with the day on which the notice is served) that the child is receiving such education.
2. A notice under subsection (1) may require the parent on whom it is served to submit the child for examination or assessment for the purpose of the notice.
3. If - a) a parent on whom a notice has been served under subsection (1) fails to satisfy the Department, within the period specified in the notice, that the child is receiving suitable education, and  
b) in the opinion of the Department it is expedient that the child should attend school,

If, after various giving the parents a chance to submit evidence of a suitable education and/or not being satisfied with the results of an examination or assessment, the Department may issue a School Attendance Order.

The issuing of a School Attendance Order does not stop the parent from applying to the Department for the Order to be revoked because education is being provided otherwise (Section 27). If the evidence of provision is satisfactory, the SAO should be revoked.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

In Northern Ireland parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive an effective education. Although this responsibility is usually delegated to schools, some parents choose to exercise it directly by providing an education based at home.

The following summarises the legal responsibilities of parents and local education authorities in relation to elective home education of children of compulsory school age. *However, it should be noted that there is no case law known to us about home education in Northern Ireland, and it is assumed that, should a case arise, England and Wales case law would be considered.*

### **Parental Responsibilities**

#### ***Responsibility to Ensure a Suitable Education***

The responsibility of parents is clearly established in section 45(1) of the Education and Libraries Northern Ireland Order 1986 SI 1986/594

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

### **Definition of Suitable Education**

***The following again assumes that England and Wales case law would be relevant in Northern Ireland should a case come before the courts.***

An interpretation of some terminology used in the Education Act 1944 (replaced by the 1996 Act) was provided by an appeal case which was brought at Worcester Crown Court in 1981 (Harrison & Harrison v Stevenson). In this case, the judge defined a 'suitable education' as one which was such as

1. to prepare the children for life in modern civilised society, and
2. to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The diversity of modern society and styles of education give parents considerable freedom of choice in enabling children to achieve their potential. In the case of R v Secretary of State for Education and Science, *ex parte* Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School Trust (1985) (Times, 12 April 1985) Mr Justice Woolf held that:

education is 'suitable' if it primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so.

Examining the meaning of the expression full-time shows the hours spent on teaching in schools are not relevant to home education, which generally takes place on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, in very different conditions.

Provided the child is not a registered pupil at a school, the parent is not required to provide any particular type of education, and is under no obligation to

- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- have any specific qualifications
- cover the same syllabus as any school
- adopt the National Curriculum

- make detailed plans in advance
- observe school hours, days or terms
- have a fixed timetable
- give formal lessons
- reproduce school type peer group socialization
- match school, age-specific standards
- seek permission to educate 'otherwise'
- take the initiative in informing the Board
- have regular contact with the Board

## **Education and Library Board Duties**

### ***Enquiries about Educational Provision***

Schedule 13 Enforcement of duty imposed by article 45 place a duty upon the board to take certain actions if it appears that a child is not being properly educated.

#### Part 1

1(1) Where it appears to a board that a parent of a child of compulsory school age in its area is failing to perform the duty imposed on him by article 45(1), the board shall serve on the parent a notice requiring him, within such period not being less than fourteen days from the service of the notice, to satisfy the board that the child is, by regular attendance or otherwise, receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Board's legal duty is concerned solely with children who appear not to be receiving suitable education. There is no implication that a Board should be active where it appears that a child is receiving suitable education at home. Nowhere in the act is it stated that regular monitoring of suitable education is a legal responsibility of the Board.

### ***Evidence of Suitable Education***

Although the legal duty of Boards is concerned only with children who appear not to be receiving a suitable education, case law in England and Wales (Phillips v Brown, Divisional Court [20 June 1980, unreported]) has established that an LEA (Local Education Authority, equivalent of Northern Ireland Board) may make informal enquiries of parents who are educating their children at home to establish that a suitable education is being provided. In Phillips v Brown, Lord Donaldson said:

*Of course such a request is not the same as a notice under s 37 (1) of the Education Act 1944 [now s 437 (1) of the Education Act 1996] and the parents will be under no duty to comply. However it would be sensible for them to do so. If parents give no information or adopt the course ... of merely stating that they are discharging their duty without giving any details of how they are doing so, the LEA will have to consider and decide whether it 'appears' to it that the parents are in breach of s 36 [now s 7 of the Education Act 1996].* If a Board chooses to approach a family and informally ask for information, parents can provide evidence that a child is receiving an efficient and suitable education in a number of ways. Parents might, for example

- write a report
- provide samples of work
- invite an inspector to their home, with or without the child being present
- meet an inspector elsewhere, with or without the child
- have the educational provision endorsed by a recognized third party
- provide evidence in any other appropriate form

In their leaflet, "Educating Children at Home, England and Wales" (received June 1998), the DfEE state:

3. LEAs, however, have no automatic right of access to the parent's home. Parents may refuse

a meeting in the home, if they can offer an alternative way of demonstrating that they are providing a suitable education, for example, through showing examples of work and agreeing to a meeting at another venue.

It is assumed that the same would apply to Northern Ireland.

Occasionally, after examining the evidence, a Board may have genuine concerns about a child's education, but the way the evidence is presented should not form the basis for these concerns. Parents need only present evidence that would, on the balance of probabilities, convince a reasonable person that a suitable education was being provided.

### **Disputes Between Parents and Boards**

It should be possible to resolve most disputes without recourse to formal statutory procedures. However, where children of compulsory school age are not being educated at school and the Board has serious doubts about the parents' educational provision, the following scenario will apply. Initially the Board may make an informal request for information. If the parents provide such information and the Board is satisfied that it appears that a suitable education is being provided no further steps should be taken.

If, after making informal enquiries, and then giving the family reasonable time and opportunity to explain or improve on their arrangements, it still appears to a Board that a child is not receiving a suitable education, then it may decide to serve a school attendance order. The Board should bear in mind, however, that should the case proceed to court the action will fail if the parents can satisfy the court that they are providing a suitable education. The court will accept evidence in a number of forms and will be looking for evidence that would convince a reasonable person on the balance of probabilities (rather than beyond all reasonable doubt) that a suitable education is being provided.

#### **Schedule 13 Enforcement of duty imposed by article 45 2(1)**

Where, at any time whilst a school attendance order is in force with respect to a child, the parent of the child makes an application to the board by whom the order was made requesting ... that the order be revoked on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive otherwise than at school education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, the board shall amend or revoke the order in compliance with the request unless it is of the opinion that - ...

(d) no satisfactory arrangements have been made for the education of the child otherwise than at school.

### **De-registration**

There are no known cases where parents have had difficulty deregistering a child from school. The parent does not need to ask permission from the Board to begin home education and, as long as the parent has notified the governing body of the school, usually through the head teacher, of the intention to home educate, the parent is under no obligation to inform the Board of their intention. Parents seeking to home educate children registered at a special school, however, must obtain the consent of the Board to withdraw their child from the school. Again, there is no case law to indicate that consent has been with-held.

### **Home Educating Children with Special Educational Needs**

The right to home educate a child with special educational needs is also given in section 45(1) of the Education and Libraries Northern Ireland Order 1986 SI 1986/594 The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and **to any special educational needs** he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Parents of children with special educational needs do not need to have any special qualifications or training to assume direct responsibility for their children's education. Furthermore, they do not need to inform the

Board of their intention to home-educate unless the child is registered at a special school when the consent of the Board is necessary to withdraw the child from the school.

## **WHO DOES WHAT IN EO**

This List is maintained and updated regularly by Xxxxxxx Xxxxxxx. If you need a current copy please contact Xxxxxxx at: xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx – [ address and phone no. removed ] Please inform Xxxxxxx immediately if you become aware of any errors or changes. Changes to some sections are also shown at the back of the bi-monthly newsletter. (N.B. VOLUNTARY LOCAL CONTACTS for each county are listed in the separate Contact List)

### ***COUNCIL MEMBERS*** (and their areas of responsibility)

[ list of 14 names with contact details removed – named posts as below, plus 5 others ]

(Chair)

(Treasurer)

(Enquiries)

(Membership & Stationery)

(Company Secretary)

(Publications secretary)

(Vice Chair/Government Policy)

(Scotland)

(Local Contacts Co-ordinator)

**COMPANY SECRETARY** xxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxx (see above for contact details)

**STEERING GROUP** - To be confirmed

### **ENQUIRIES – COUNCIL LINK**

[Name and contact details removed ]

### ***ENQUIRIES PERSONNEL***

### **COORDINATORS**

[ Two names with full contact details removed ]

## **TELEPHONE - ENGLAND**

[ 13 Names with full contact details removed ]

## **TELEPHONE FOR WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND**

[ Two names with full contact details removed ]

## **TELEPHONE FOR SCOTLAND**

[ Name and contact details removed ]

## **POSTAL ENQUIRIES**

[ Name and contact details removed ]

## **EMAIL ENQUIRIES**

[ Name and contact details removed ]

## **TEENAGE SUPPORT**

[ List of 4 names with full contact details removed ]

## ***NEWSLETTER TEAM***

*Co-ordinator* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Letters and Articles* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Book and Software Reviews* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Home Education in the News* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Archive Selections* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Children's Pages* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Regional Diary* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Adverts (Acting)* [ Name and contact details removed ]

*Backup: xxxxxxxxxxxx (see Council Members List)*

*Competition* [ Name and contact details removed ]

## ***MEDIA TEAM***

*Coordinator* [ Name and contact details removed ]

Scotland and Northern Ireland and North West *Vacant*

North East [ Name and contact details removed ]

Midlands [ Name and contact details removed ]

Wales [1] [ Name and contact details removed ]

[2] [ Name and contact details removed ]

East Anglia [ Name and contact details removed ]

South West (*Acting*) [ Name and contact details removed ]

South East (*Acting*) [ Name and contact details removed ]

London (1) [ Name and contact details removed ]

London (2) *Vacant*

Isle of Wight [ Name and contact details removed ]

## ***EO TRADING***

Education Otherwise Association Ltd has a subsidiary company called Education Otherwise Trading Ltd.  
The members currently consist of:

– Director & Secretary [ Name and contact details removed ]

– Director & Treasurer [ Name and contact details removed ]

– Director [ Name and contact details removed ]

– Director [ Name and contact details removed ]

– Sells T-shirts [ Name and contact details removed ]

– Receiving Online Orders [ Name and contact details removed ]

– Publications [ Name and contact details removed ]

[ Name and contact details removed ]

[ Name and contact details removed ]

[ Name and contact details removed ]

## ***SMALL GROUPS***

### **Finance**

[ list of 5 names (one of Convenor) with full contact details removed ]

### **Enquiries**

[ list of 4 names with full contact details removed ]

### **Publications**

[ list of 5 names with full contact details removed ]

**Scotland**

ScotlandGovernmentPolicy@education-otherwise.org

[ list of 4 names with full contact details removed ]

**Government Policy - Core Group**

[ list of 5 names with full contact details removed ]

**Local Authority**

[ list of 2 names with full contact details removed ]

**Complaints**

[ list of 3 names with full contact details removed ]

## **Strategic Planning**

[ list of 11 names with full contact details removed ]

## **Child protection**

[ list of 5 names with full contact details removed ]

## ***OTHER NAMED POSTS:***

**Autonomous Education Support** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**College Contact** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**Concessions for EO Card Holders** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**Curriculum Information** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**Database/Membership Services** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**Enquiry Line Answer Machine** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**EO Email Lists, Forum & EO** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**GCSE Contacts** [ Name and contact details removed ]

**Fundraising** *Vacant*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Internal Communications Bulletin</b> | (see EO Email lists)[ Name and contact details removed ]  |
| <b>Learnpremium Administration</b>      | (see Database) [ Name and contact details removed ]       |
| <b>Local Contact Coordinator</b>        | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Newsletter Coordinator</b>           | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Post Opening / PO Box</b>            | (see Database) [ Name and contact details removed ]       |
| <b>Research Contact</b>                 | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>School Phobia</b>                    | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Single Parent Family Contact</b>     | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Small Jobs Coordinator</b>           | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Special Needs</b>                    | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Stationery</b>                       | [ Name and contact details removed ]                      |
| <b>Web Site</b>                         | (See EO Email lists) [ Name and contact details removed ] |



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## SIGNED-UP MEMBERS FORM (EO Membership Declaration)

I (Print Name) .....

wish to become a member of Education Otherwise Association Ltd.

In the event of the Association being wound up I agree to contribute

up to £10 in payment of any debts and liabilities it may have incurred.

Signature of Member .....

Date .....

Address (print in full) .....

.....

.....

.....

**This form may be completed by current members who have paid their annual**

**subscription, and should be returned to:**

**EO Company Secretary,** [ Name and contact details removed ]

### **Business Meetings**

EO business is dealt with at Council Meetings and at General Meetings. Council meetings, which can be quite informal, cater for the routine running of the organisation. General meetings, which have to be conducted in a much more formal way by company law, allow signed up members

- a) to appoint council members,
- b) to consider the accounts, and
- c) occasionally to vote on special resolutions and formal issues.

Special resolutions have to be put in the newsletter, or posted out to all guarantors, along with statutory notice of General Meetings.

Signed up members are members who have guaranteed to pay £10 in the event of EO going bankrupt, thus 'acquiring an interest in the company' and becoming eligible to vote at general meetings.

### Gift Aid Declaration

Name of Charity: Education Otherwise Association Limited

Details of donor: Title ..... Forename(s) .....

Surname .....

Address: .....

..... Post Code .....

I want the charity to treat

\*the enclosed donation of £ ..... as a Gift Aid donation

\*the donation(s) of £ ..... which I made on ...../...../..... as (a) Gift Aid donation (s)

\*all donations that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations

\*all donations I have made for the six years prior to this year, (but no earlier than 6/4/2000) **and** all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

**\*delete as appropriate**

**You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).**

**Please return this form and any future change of address to:  
Education Otherwise Database, [ Contact details removed ]**

Date: ...../...../.....

#### Notes:

1. You can cancel this Declaration at any time by notifying Education Otherwise (address above). Also, please notify us if you change your name or address.
2. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
3. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.

4. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or, refer to help sheet IR65 on <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/home.htm>