

education otherwise



Newsletter Summer 2014

£3

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

Please mark material **'for publication'** and include your name, address, phone number and email as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (though details may be withheld from publication on request). Email contributions will normally be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement please enclose a stamped S.A.E.. If no acknowledgement is received, or in case of queries, please contact the NL co-ordinator (see below). *Please also ensure your EO membership is up to date before submission.*

Deadline for the Autumn issue is August 1st

Please send contributions via Section Editors or Newsletter Co-ordinator:

Edana Edwards (Acting) <eonews@btinternet.com>

[postal contributions to: EONL Co-ord, PO Box 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN]

~~~~~ N.B. postal system subject to forwarding delays so allow extra time ~~~~~

Section Editors

REVIEWS Tammy Dolling: bookreviews@educationotherwise.org

or EO Reviews, PO Box 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN

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All contributions have been accepted in good faith. Inclusion does not imply endorsement by Education Otherwise Association Ltd., which cannot be held responsible for the information, goods or services provided, or any consequences arising from them.

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post: Database Administrator, Education Otherwise, PO Box 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN*

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Co-ordinatorial

Hello and welcome to the Summer edition of the newsletter! Rather like this summer, it is regretfully LATE – my apologies to those of you anxiously awaiting this edition – like the summer it is I suppose, a case of 'better late than never' (yes I know I am showing foolish confidence in the British weather with that statement!)

So with the rain, rain, and more rain, combined with being woken at 3.30am by the sparrows nesting in the eaves, the days can seem very long, with children to occupy. Hopefully the newsletter's summer crossword has ALL the clues this time, and will keep them quiet for the duration of a cup of tea. The 'Makes & Bakes' section is probably not much help to anyone; it is so very long since I had a child to entertain – so if you have any favourite pastimes which you and yours enjoy, then PLEASE send or email your ideas to the newsletter co-ordinator – See inside front cover for details and deadlines. Any money-saving tips you have are also most welcome, as are any suggestions for useful websites, resources or activities. If there are any good books which you or your children have

found helpful or enjoyable, your book reviews are also much appreciated.

I would especially like to include stories from readers with grown-up children, or those readers who have seen the benefits of home education for their children. De-registering a child to educate them yourself is a very brave, optimistic thing to do – sometimes a last resort when 'the system' has failed them. It is a shot in the dark – we really have no idea how it will affect our children long-term; we just have to travel hopefully and do our best for them. What works for one child won't necessarily work for another though, as each family is unique. We all have good days and bad days, and 'just too tired' days – I know I had many 'wondering if I did the right thing' days, so it is interesting and reassuring to read about the experiences of those who have finished (or nearly finished) their home ed. journey – because we all do things differently, and yet our children turn out fine. If you want to share your 'I Did it My Way' story, then please post or email me your contribution. Don't worry if you are not 'a writer' – your contribution can be edited to your approval before going to print, and you may remain anonymous if you wish, although we will need your contact details.

Thanks for reading, and supporting Education Otherwise – I hope you have a great summer, whatever the weather decides to do!

Edana Edwards, acting newsletter co-ord.



VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

If you can commit either regular or one-off chunks of time, and are willing to check emails frequently and liaise with appropriate trustee, please contact the trustee named for more information. If you feel you could contribute but don't fancy any of these vacancies, please send your ideas to our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Wendy
vol-coordinator@educationotherwise.org

Telephone Helpline

We are always in need of volunteers for the Helpline rota, which is a vital part of EO's charitable outreach services. Volunteers answer the telephone for a week at a time (from home) as often as they wish. The number of calls varies and we have 3 lines, so you don't need to stay near the phone constantly, and support is available if you need it. We need members who have experience of home education and who can tell prospective home educators about the resources and support available and about local authority procedure. Many enquirers will just need signposting to EO's SEND, GCSE/College, Flexischooling, Anti-bullying or Single Parent Contacts. The relief some parents feel upon hearing that HE isn't as difficult as they thought, clearly shows what a worthwhile service Helpline volunteers provide. For more information, contact Edwina (Enquiries Co-ordinator) e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org Tel: 01978 661882

Local Contacts

The primary role of the LC is to welcome new HE families to EO and to provide contact with their local HE community, information about local activities and who organises them, encouragement to be confident in their ability to home educate in whatever way seems right for them, and non-judgemental listening. It's also valuable if the LC can offer information about deregistration and the usual procedures and policies of their Local Authority, with support in the family's interactions with the LA. If there is no LC in your area, and you have some experience of home education, please consider volunteering to provide this valuable connection. For more information, please contact the LC Co-ordinator, Lei Ashe <lcoordinator@educationotherwise.org>

Updating website information

We always need volunteers to keep an eye on each of the downloadable leaflets, check out that links and other contact details still work, keep up with new developments/defunct areas, etc. Have a look at the website [www.educationotherwise.net] and choose your interest – or if you notice a topic that isn't there but would be useful to other home educators, compile the information and send it in. Please contact EO Publications Secretary Anne Rix <arix@educationotherwise.org> Tel: 01760 441810

Concessions Co-ordinator/Team

We already have a Concessions Contact, but a Co-ordinator is also needed to check existing concessions and to provide an annual concessions list and quarterly updates to the Newsletter Co-ordinator. Also to update this information on the EO website whenever necessary, via its online content management system (no HTML skills required). Good IT and organisational skills are essential, but instructions on updating the website can be provided. Contact trustees@educationotherwise.org

NOTICES AND BUSINESS

NORTHERN IRELAND HOME EDUCATION CONSULTATION

Several people have contacted EO regarding the current situation in Northern Ireland. We have put them in touch with each other, and said that EO will support them. An EO response is being drafted, in conjunction with HERs in N.I., and will be posted on the website in due course.

AGM 2014 – ADVANCE NOTICE

Snibston Museum in Leicester: <http://www.snibston.com/> was the venue for the 2013 AGM and trustees are hoping to book it again for the 2014 AGM, which will be in the autumn – Saturday 18th October. All EO members are welcome to attend both the AGM and the Open Council Meeting, which is held on the same day. In addition, free entry to the museum galleries is offered to members attending the AGM. Please look out for further details and confirmation of date in the September newsletter.

SMALL SCHOOL, HARTLAND, DEVON

Need a new Head for September ... they're the kind of school where HERs feel fairly comfortable. Anyone interested can check their website: <http://www.themallschool.org.uk/index.php/jobs>

EO'S NEW POST OFFICE BOX – MISSING MAIL

The new PO Box for EO, which was set up at the end of April, has not been working properly. EO mail has gone missing, while letters intended for other PO boxes have arrived in ours! Royal Mail assured us that it was all OK at their end, and passed the complaint to the Blackpool sorting office. Blackpool has apologised, and is investigating the problem urgently – but if you have written Education Otherwise PO Box 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN and received no reply, please write again.

EO WEBSITE & FORUMS

The EO website is being upgraded, and we hope that the new version will come on line during the summer. There will be additional features, such as a Member Forum accessed directly from the website instead of separately as at present – the existing forum, will be closed once the new one is up and running. Some features that have been little used will be dropped. The system for joining or renewing membership of EO will be changed, and we hope this will make for smoother and quicker subscription processing.

EO WEBSITE: www.education-otherwise.org.uk

EO YAHOO GROUPS

EO HOME ED SUPPORT LIST:

www.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/eo-he-support/info

EO HOME ED DEBATE LIST:

www.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/eo-he-debate/info

EO SINGLE PARENT LIST:

www.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/EO-SingleParent/info

****NEW** EO FACEBOOK PAGE!**

EO FACEBOOK PAGE:

www.facebook.com/educationotherwise.org.uk

EO Trustees

Home Education Around the World – New Zealand

The home schooling of children has an official, legal status in New Zealand, and numbers of home educating families are steadily increasing. Wikipedia claims that there were 6,517 pupils registered with the Ministry of Education in the summer of 2011, with only a very small number of them belonging to the group of indigenous Maori people.

To qualify for exemption from school and thus be able to home educate, parents have a duty to prove that they will teach their children efficiently and regularly, between the ages of 6 to 16 years. However, these commitments remain vague and there is a lack of clear definition as to what they actually mean in terms of parental responsibility. This leads to frequent problems and misunderstandings, often resulting in lawsuits. Parents and organizations have accused the state of having a hidden agenda to completely institutionalize education. Last year there was a worrying bill of parliament which threatened to take away the right to home educate, from parents who received state benefits. On the other hand, there is always the worry that some parents may not take their educational duty towards their children seriously enough - in some cases this can border on neglect.

However, if parents or caretakers do qualify to home educate their children, and gain approval from their local branch of the Ministry of Education, they are then entitled to receive an educational grant per child. This is paid out twice yearly, and at a reduced rate for every additional home educated sibling.

Links:

- general overview;
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling_international_status_and_statistics
- for New Zealand, specifically:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling_in_New_Zealand
- comprehensive NZ website (foundation since 1886): <http://hef.org.nz/>
- HSDLA, a Christian website that looks into home ed law world-wide and supports parents with legal issues: <http://www.hslda.org/hs/international/NewZealand/default.asp>
- comprehensive site, running since 1997: <http://www.home.school.nz/>
- also, their list of weblinks is very impressive: <http://www.home.school.nz/other-internet-resources>
- another long-established site, a charitable Christian trust:
<http://www.homeschoolingnz.org/>
- specifically non-Christian Yahoo group, provides a great list of other groups:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/HENC/info>
- some statistics:
<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/homeschooling>

by Corinna Spellerberg

I Did it My Way

For over 20 gloriously happy years my family educated at home. As far as I was able to, I respected my children's right to grow free-range, whilst encouraging and facilitating their education and social lives. I think back to when I was a young mum, and that letter came through the door, inviting us to join the village school....when all the other mums thought I was crazy; that I was jeopardising my children's entire lives.....when my husband agreed with them; these were hard times to do what I just knew was right. "How will they ever learn to get up in the morning for work?" asked my husband.

"You will turn them in to recluses," said the other mums. "They won't be able to talk to people!"

Now, sitting on the other side of time looking back, I can cock a snook at all my critics! Not only have my own children been a success story but I have been privileged to watch their community of friends access the world too. How I would have loved to have known this at the start! How reassuring it would have been to have one glimpse into the future! How much stress would have been lifted and doubts allayed! It occurred to me that if I couldn't help my younger self, I could maybe help others by letting them know how these children found their place in the world.

So I set up a Facebook page and invited these young people to write about what they were up to. Of 40 young people (over the age of 16) who responded, 55% had been to, or are currently at university; all the rest had been or currently are in further education. 2 people did 'A' levels at home and then went to university/dance school, but the rest took 'A' levels or Diplomas in 6th forms or Further Education colleges. There are no NEEPS! All those who contacted me were in education, employed or self-employed. A few of the young people offered their comments on their educational and social experiences. These are the voices of children who have experienced home education first-hand; they are the real experts:

'K' had no formal qualifications before studying Music Technology at a College of F.E. He said: "*My personal experience of home education has definitely been a positive one*" but that he believes "*social interaction is a necessity*" and that his experience may not have been so positive if he had not had so many chances to socialise. He added that, when he started college, he "*quickly made friends*" and "*never once felt excluded or found them difficult to interact with*".

'C' joined a 6th form having done 7 GCSEs at home and is now studying CGI and Digital Effects at university. He says that home education is a "*life-style that requires by default a great deal of attention to your children, without becoming helicopter parents, an interest in their social and educational development, time to learn and teach, willingness to try new things, awareness that your children will develop at their own pace, draw on expert knowledge when you are inexperienced, an understanding family and supportive friends.*"

'O' took 4 GCSE/IGCSE at home before joining a 6th form. He is now studying for a Masters degree in Maths. He says: "*being home educated gave me the freedom and time to do a lot of things I would never have had the opportunity to do had I been in full-time education all my life*". He again tempers the benefits of home education with the need for parents to be proactive in fulfilling their children's educational and social needs, and notes that it is "*difficult when you don't have a group of people to measure yourself against every day.*" This can lead to a loss of self-confidence; an assumption that you don't know enough. He says: "*Far and away the top piece of advice I would give to any current home educator is: Do not just assume everyone else is cleverer than you, just because they go to school every day!*" He also says that "*Self-studying provides you with the most important skill you will ever need in your academic life; problem-solving.*" And that it is "*the number one positive differentiator for home-educators. Employers and universities like to see it.*"

'J' took 5 GCSE/IGCSE at home before going to college to do 'A' levels and Accountancy. He then went to university to study Business Management and is currently employed on a graduate scheme. He says: *"on a dyslexic chart of 1-10, I'm a solid 5"* and that, had he been at school, he believes he would have had a *"feeling of stupidity and a serious lack of confidence"*. Instead he started university a year ahead of his age group, and achieved a 1st class degree.

'H' says that her education at home *"may have left some gaps"* but that she *"learnt to ask questions"* and *"being curious"* was an important life skill. She wanted to be a dancer, so took dance classes and then went to college with no formal qualifications. She currently studies Performing Arts. She admits to finding the academic work hard because she had no *"background of doing formal essays"* but that she soon mastered this. The social side too she found difficult as she felt that *"the other people on the course were being exaggerated forms of themselves to make friends with the 'cool' people."* She also found classes frustrating as *"a lot of class time was wasted with people not paying attention"* and *"people not caring"*. Her own closeness with adults as she was growing up meant that she and the tutors had a *"mutual respect"* for each other. Her intention is to study contemporary dance and choreography at a vocational school.

'J' took 5 GCSEs at home and then went to college to study Photography. She currently works on an organic farm and intends to study for a Foundation Degree in Horticulture. She does admit that *"occasionally when I am around young adults who did (go to school) I can feel a bit 'out of the loop'". This is largely when they are talking about fashion, music or popular trends."* She adds that she feels *"comfortable, rather than feeling I have to take part in what is seen as 'normal'"*.

'X' did 2 GCSEs at home and 3 more at college. He is currently at university studying English Literature and Language, but says that after he finishes his degree he intends to return to his passion, and work with horses again. He says: *"I think differences are more respected in the home education community. I was very shy, and this was respected."* Interestingly he says that, at university, *"I befriend the 'alternative' people – often those that have been bullied at school for being different. I am also able to drift between groups – I am outside the social structure. There is bullying at university but I seem to be above it and able to cope with it. Everyone tells me the gossip or they talk about people in other groups, but they know that I will never spread gossip or cause disharmony. I don't remember any pettiness in the home education group. Everyone seemed more mature – perhaps because we had lots of interaction with adults."*

There are many other stories - many other destinations that these young people found; one who is reading Education with French at university but who also had an Erasmus year, studying History of Art at the Sorbonne in Paris; one who is training to be a pilot, and 2 who won scholarships to vocational dance schools. I must thank the young people who contributed their stories; I offer them to you because it would have been so reassuring for me to hear them when one of my children decided to dress in black and not talk to adults, and the other couldn't even list the days of the week! Relax - the children running around your feet will have similar success stories to tell one day!

Sharri McGarry - Bury St Edmunds
The Facebook page is open to any teenager who would like to join this community of "old" home educators. Just send me a quick message on Facebook. I am the one holding a leprechaun!

Children's Page

*If you are under 16yrs of age and want to write something for the newsletter, please send your contribution to the newsletter co-ordinator by 15th of August 2014
Parental permission is needed if you want your full name published with your work.*

BECAUSE I AM A GIRL

(by Eva, 12yrs old)

My name is Nari, I have five brothers
I went to school with them.
I left school, not like the others
And went to work for them.

Because I am a girl.

I went to work for someone
Who grew a lot of wheat.
He said I would be well paid
But he's a liar and a cheat.

He says I'll get 11.49 a day
I only get half; (that's 50p a day)
I still have to work though
Because I am a girl.

I try to learn as much as I can
But it's really hard you see
Because my mother's found someone
Who wants to marry me.

I am only 14 years old
But tomorrow I will wed
A man 3 times my age
For some loaves of bread.

Because... I am a girl.



Learning to Read



Children learn to read in many different ways, at different times and different ages. Research into children *learning* to read, rather than being taught to read, shows that each child's route is different. (1) My experience with my two girls, and seeing how other children around us are learning to read, demonstrates this clearly. Even though both my daughters are autonomously educated, learning to read has been very different for each of them.

My eldest E (now 11yrs old) was highly motivated to learn to read. She loves books, and stories. She learnt early, aged five or six, simply by being read to. I say 'simply' but it was often for three hours a day. Any attempt at teaching, asking questions, or anything that interrupted the flow of the story shut her down. It turns out that she doesn't process phonics. She read fluently out loud from the start, but only later started tackling writing. E taught me a lot about learning to read. After this experience I saw no place for phonics, and was relieved that she hadn't struggled through learning to read using phonics.

Then my youngest daughter, T (now 7yrs old) made me throw away everything which I thought I had learned about learning to read, and start again from scratch. T has far less interest in books and stories. She has never wanted to be read to for hours a day, has always been more interested in the illustrations, and prefers non-fiction picture books. But she does love letters and sounds for their own sake, and is drawn to phonics. We have been using Reading Eggs, a website where she can play games which use phonics to teach reading. She is now starting to read simple words, and progressing slowly with both reading and writing.

Both routes to learning to read have been very different. My role has been to observe, listen to what they want, and help them with that. What both children do have in common is a need to control their own learning, and learn to read by themselves, rather than by being taught by me. We have friends with children who haven't started reading independently until nine or ten. One thing that reassured me was hearing other stories about children learning to read, aged from 4 to 14. It seems that older children often learn more quickly, when they are ready. Indeed, for me these basics are too important to push until the child is ready. My attempts at trying too early, or not following their direction have only resulted in frustration for all concerned.

Although reading (and indeed writing and maths) are important, once you leave school behind, they lose their urgency. Reading and writing early in school is a cultural thing (many countries manage more successfully with later reading) and it is a tool used to teach and assess a whole group of children. This isn't necessary in home education because our children can be read to, hold a conversation, play and have real world experiences all without being able to read themselves. Although I've only really talked about books, we are surrounded by words and these are helpful too - everything from stickers on cars, to shop signs, recipes, phones, computer games and websites - all play a part in the process of learning to read.

Katherine - <http://katherine.teknohippy.net/>

References:

- (1) Alan Thomas. Talk at Little Conference (2011) <http://www.lttl.org.uk/>
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201002/children-teach-themselves-read>

My eldest daughter learns to read:

<http://katherine.teknohippy.net/e-learnt-to-read/>

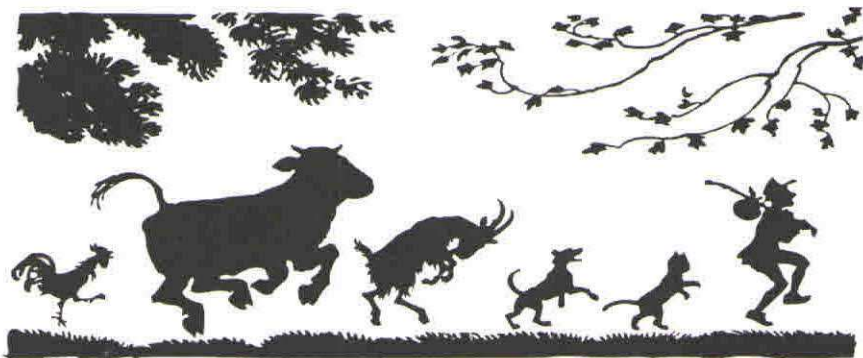
Lots of learning to read experiences:

<http://winging-it.me/learn-to-read-homeschool-blog-hop-linky/>

<http://liveotherwise.co.uk/makingitup/2011/04/20/by-popular-request-its-a-carnival/>

<http://www.ohed.org.uk/6.html>

* * * * *



What are your experiences of teaching your child to read? Or was it a case of watching them teach themselves to read? What did you find particularly helpful or unhelpful? We would love to hear as many different stories as possible from home educating parents, as every child is different, and it can be very reassuring to hear about the experiences of others.

Penny Pinchers

Tips for Life on a Budget

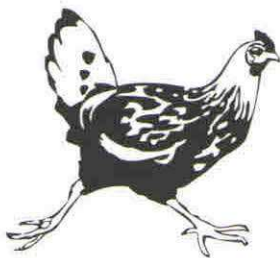
Summer Clothes ~ For all that hot weather we will no doubt have any minute.... If they're not going to fit your children next winter, cut the legs off trousers to make summer shorts. For chilly days, a waistcoat or gilet can easily be made by cutting the sleeves off a too-small coat. Stretch jersey teeshirt fabric doesn't fray, so no sewing is needed, but other fabrics will need turning under and sewing to a neat, washable finish. A light, summer cardigan can be made by simply cutting up the centre front of a long-sleeved teeshirt – no sewing needed!

Nectar Points ~ A nectar card is a great way to save money whilst spending it. Each nectar point is worth half a pence (0.5p) so they soon add up, if you collect them every time you do the weekly shopping. To find out more about ways to collect or spend nectar points, visit www.nectar.com

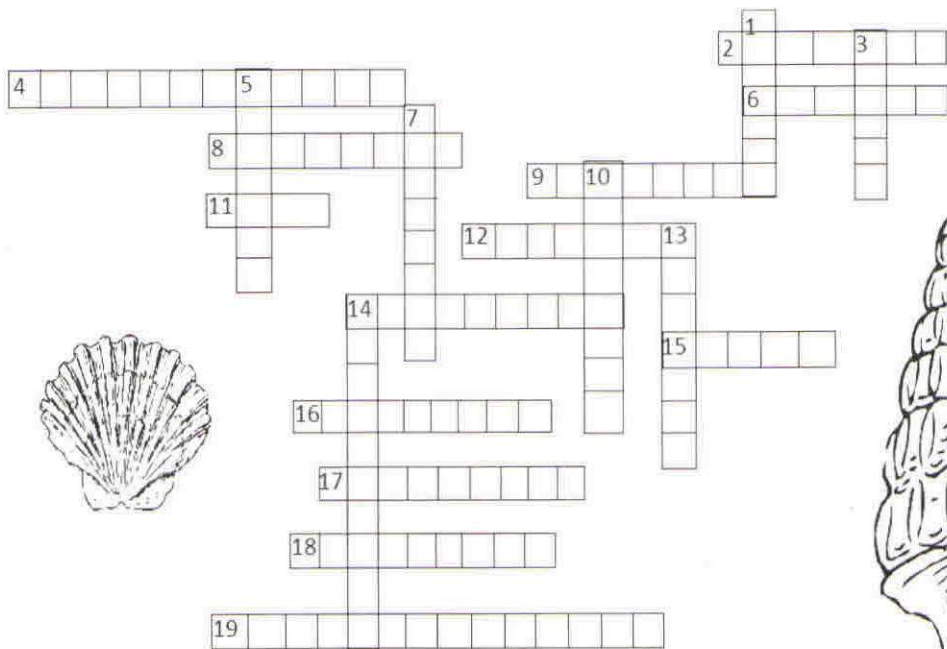
More Basics ~ My taste-testing of Sainsbury Basics range continues – I am dedicated to the cause! I'll have to let somebody else test the basic ranges of other supermarkets, as I paid £60 for a year's unlimited delivery, last December. Always check the regular 'own brand' isn't on special offer – sometimes this works out cheaper than basics, and is better quality.

So far I can recommend Basics mayonnaise (surprisingly good!), jam, marmalade, ketchup (love it!), sparkling water (great mixed with hi-juice squash for a fizzy, summery drink) stock cubes (a bit fiddly to dissolve first, but so cheap), dried milk powder (handy for pancakes), cheese (very mild and soft textured, like processed cheese – I actually prefer it to normal cheese – GM rennet though), tinned kidney beans, raisin slab cake, swiss roll, drop scones (sadly though, I am now on another diet), antiperspirant (better than nothing!) cream cleaner (I hate cleaning, but if you must...)

What are your top tips for saving money? Please send them in!



*** Summer Crossword Puzzle ***



*** Clues ***

Across

2. Sunshade umbrella.
4. Often with lightning.
6. A meal eaten outdoors.
8. To cook food outside over hot coals.
9. Moving through water.
11. We hope the skies are this colour.
12. Brightly coloured blooms.
14. Tall, yellow flower.
15. Thread this flower into a chain.
16. The summer solstice.
17. Grass cutter.
18. Large, often colourful insect.
19. Essential seaside equipment (3 words).

Down

1. Living in a tent.
3. Protects your head from sunshine.
5. A blue bird visitor.
7. We enjoy this when the clouds vanish.
10. Eating this keeps us cool (2 words).
13. Cool, summer footwear.
14. Royal residence built on the beach.

Project Gutenberg offers over 45,000 free books to read, print or download online. Their titles are all in the public domain, copyright free, so they are from a bygone era, and all the more charming for it I think (but I am also from a bygone era!) www.gutenberg.org survives on donations and volunteers to do the techie stuff. It's a truly marvellous resource – the following poems are from the book category: Children's Bookshelf – Children's Anthologies – Boy's & Girl's Bookshelf; A Practical Plan of Character Building Vol I

THREE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM

Three wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl,
And if the bowl had been stronger
My song would be longer.



Makes and Bakes

To Alleviate Boredom, Hunger....Or Both!

Miniature Gardens - Use a large dinner plate or tray as the base for this. Cut a piece of card from a cereal box into a small 'pond' shape, and cover with aluminium foil, or use a small, round mirror. Place in the middle of your tray, and surround it with pebbles, moss, leafy twigs and tiny plants, to resemble bushes and grass. Use your imagination and make or find little things to add to your miniature garden. It won't last for long, so take a photo and admire it while you can!

Painted Pebbles - Gather smooth, medium-sized pebbles from the beach or garden - wash and dry if dirty. For younger children, paint the pebbles first with white household emulsion paint. Children's washable poster paints should then stick better to the surface. Older children can use household emulsion tester pots, gouache or acrylic paints. Paint the pebbles to look like ladybirds, beetles, flowers or monsters - You could even stick on some googly eyes!

Memory Jars - Large, clean pickle jars are ideal for this, but any clean, lidded jam jar will do. Assemble your small mementoes, along with photos or prints, and bits of gift wrap, fabric, ribbon and buttons which fit with the chosen theme of your memory jar. Roll a jar-sized photo and drop it into the jar as a backdrop to your mementoes, or cut a piece of colored craft paper to fit, and cover with a collage of photos, tickets, stickers etc. and leave to dry. Then add all the other little keepsakes you have to the jar. Paint the jar lid with household emulsion paint, and decorate with a circle of fabric or paper, using double sided tape. If you have a glue-gun, glue small decorations and keepsakes to the lid. Finally tie some ribbons or raffia around the neck of the jar, threading beads or sewing buttons onto the ends.

Strawberry Meringue Nests - (serves 4) Hull, wash and slice a punnet of strawberries, reserving 4 whole ones for decoration. Make up a packet of strawberry instant whip. Put some purchased meringue nests onto plates or dishes. Share the sliced strawberries between the nests. Top with the instant whip, squirty cream and a whole strawberry.

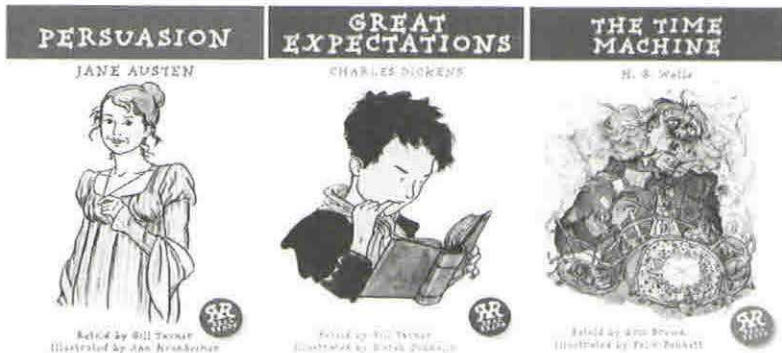
Ice Cream Floats - Serve one of these in a tall glass, with straws and a spoon.

- 1) Cola, vanilla ice cream, squirty cream, glace cherries, grated chocolate.
- 2) Lemonade, strawberry ice cream, chocolate syrup.
- 3) 1 tbspd undiluted summer fruits squash, dry ginger ale, strawberry ice cream.

Book Reviews

by Tamatha Dolling

We would love to hear about the books which you and your family have read and enjoyed, so please send us your reviews for the newsletter! The email address for submissions is bookreviews@educationotherwise.org. Also, don't forget that the EO Amazon store has a wide range of books on offer, and by using the store you not only get Amazon's great prices, but you also help EO to raise funds. The store can be accessed via the main EO website.



Series Title: Real Reads

Author: Varied

Price: Varies but most titles are £4.99 or less

Website: www.realreads.co.uk - Also available on amazon

Condensed novels are not a new concept but what makes these adaptations stand out from the rest is not only the quality of the writing but also the 'Taking Things Further' section at the back of each book. This section helps to explain the book, giving the reader background information about the story and the author. It also provides links to websites that will help readers learn more about the author, their works and the time in which they lived, or the period in which the story is set. It strongly encourages the reader to read the book in the original form, especially if they have enjoyed the shortened version. The books are beautifully illustrated in colour, which helps bring the story to life. The series has been designed to make great literature accessible to everyone, especially younger readers. It is also ideal for those learning English, and for adults wanting to revisit a story without reading the full version. Covering a range of categories, Real Reads publish condensed versions over 80 titles, from the classics to modern literature, religious stories and biographies.

The publishers have generously given us 5 copies of some of their titles to give away! If you would like the chance to win one of 5 Real Reads books, please email your contact details by **July 15th**, stating your preference from the titles listed below:

Persuasion by Jane Austen

The Time Machine by H.G. Wells

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

The Iliad by Homer

Journey to the West by Wu Cheng'en

EO SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) News

More changes to come with the code of practice, due to a further revised draft, which may not be published until June 2014. Feedback from home educators indicates some of their main concerns with the new draft to be:

The Local Education Authority may now need to have proof that home educating parents have tried all options before being considered for an EHEC plan (9.52, 9.53, 5.35, 6.40, 10.43).

Where a meeting is deemed necessary with the LEA, health representatives and social services may now also attend. (10.32).

There are reservations regarding monitoring and pressure, with compulsory home visits being likely, after an EHE application (9.173).

Home education (EHE) and home education organised by the LEA, are seen to be the same (9.173).

A BBC news article also recently highlighted concerns:

Special needs changes are being made 'too fast'. Changes to special needs education (SEN) in England are being implemented too quickly, say charities. From September special needs statements will be replaced by 'Education, Health and Care Statements' which aim to give more holistic support. Mark Lever of the National Autistic Society said details of 'the biggest reform of the SEN system in 30 years' had not yet been finalised. The government said the system would allow change to 'take place gradually'. Mr Lever said he was particularly concerned that important details, such as how families would challenge decisions about support for their children, remained under review. He told BBC Radio 5 Live Breakfast that the changes could be undermined by the government's failure to provide a joined-up system of appeal. 'Too many families of children with autism will continue to battle for support on multiple fronts,' he said.

The learning disability charity Mencap also voiced concerns about the time frame:

'The finer details of the changes are yet to be published, which means that professionals who work with children and young people with SEN have just a few months notice of their new obligations, before they are expected to meet them.' said Dan Scorer, Mencap's head of policy and public affairs. 'This is a matter of urgency as the reforms are due to be implemented from September this year. Families of people with a learning disability have waited many years for the serious failings in the current SEN system to be addressed and, unless local authorities, schools and colleges are fully prepared, the impact of these important changes could be seriously undermined.' said Mr Scorer. Particular areas of concern, he said, include a lack of clarification as to whether children and young people's eligibility for SEN statements, and the new education health and care plans will be the same. 'This should mean that no-one will lose support unless their needs actually change.' he said.

Single System

The changes are set out in the Children and Families Act, which became law last month. A new Special Needs code of practice will set out much of the detail but the definitive version is not due to be published until the summer.

The government says the intention is to give children and young people with special educational needs, and their parents, 'greater control and choice over the services they receive, so their needs are properly met'. The new system will incorporate health and care needs alongside educational ones, with an individual worker and single budget for each family. A single system will offer educational support up to the age of 25.

A spokesman for the Department for Education said: 'We have put in place significant support for local areas to prepare for the Special Educational Needs and Disability reforms. This includes a £70m grant for local authorities, and £30m to recruit and train 1,800 'champions' to support parents as the new reforms are implemented. We have also increased funding for Parent Carer Forums from £10,000 to £15,000. We know the majority of local authorities are confident they will be ready to make the new system available to new entrants from 1st September, and the changes will take place gradually, allowing the new arrangements to develop locally.'

A Dr recently implied that 'saving money' is a factor with the reforms:

SEN is 'too bureaucratic, too complex' The government is setting out plans to LOWER the number of children classified as having special educational needs. Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) told Today presenter Sarah Montague that she welcomed moves to make the system less bureaucratic, but warned that a less complex system would not make up for the fact that spending cuts meant that services supporting children with SEN were being 'decimated'. The reform, she said, was 'an unholy alliance' between saving money and improving services.

Professor Sonia Blandford, director of SEN pilot scheme Achievement for All, said that the reform would enable 'capacity building' within the service, as energy saved on bureaucracy could be channelled into front line services. 'We've had 40 years of codes of practice; we've had 40 years of labelling children; we've had 40 years of building up service upon service upon service,' she said, adding that bringing together the services under one document was 'common sense' that would allow SEN provision to focus more on both the needs of the children and their education.

IPSEA have expressed their concerns with the revised draft and have asked for a delay so that the code may be implemented to a workable conclusion:

If implementation of this legislation is to be September 2014, this will not be possible. We therefore ask for delay in the implementation to get the Code right and to allow all concerned preparation time. While we welcome the further public consultation, at 12 working days the consultation period has been wholly inadequate and unreasonable for the length, complexity and importance of the Code. This is exacerbated by the brevity of the previous consultation (which was 9 weeks rather than the usual 12 weeks). It is also unreasonable, in our view, for this very brief second consultation to coincide largely with school holidays. It is difficult for parents to respond when they are providing full-time care for their children. We have been unable to confer with many education colleagues about how realistic these proposals are. Along with the issue of timing, there are two other barriers to proper scrutiny of this draft of the Code: first, the revised draft regulations have not been released publicly for further consultation alongside the draft Code. And secondly, without a published response from the government to the previous consultation on the draft regulations, it is impossible to tell how far they address the cogent concerns raised by parents and young people and the organisations which represent them. In short this does not feel like a bona fide consultation – this is not 'co-production'.

How far does this draft respond to previous criticisms?

The draft SEN Code of Practice is not fit for purpose. It does not, even at a basic level, provide practical guidance on how to apply the law in schools and by local authorities. Its structure and language are unclear. Definitions are inadequate or missing. Case law is omitted. These inadequacies will not be remedied by amending the current draft. It needs to be totally rewritten and then there needs to be re-consultation. This will take time. Insufficient improvements have been made to the April 2014 draft.

- Definitions, especially on thresholds/triggers, are still contradictory or missing.
- The Code does not make clear when it quotes as opposed to paraphrasing or interpreting the law.

- It contains thresholds which are higher than those in law, but which are not clearly stated as such - for initial identification of SEN; for schools and other settings involvement of external specialists; and for statutory assessment and Plans. These thresholds may act as perverse incentives not to respond promptly and appropriately to emerging problems.

- Precautionary and preventative work is encouraged in a minority of places: mainly in the early years chapter (but even there, alongside conflicting guidance) once in the schools chapter, and is entirely absent from further education advice. The Code does not explain how the advice to delay action until after a 'sustained period' in which a child/young person fails to make progress (paras 5.43 and 6.53) marries with the Equality Act's requirement on all settings to put reasonable adjustments into place in anticipation of problems.

- The potential for confusion is still huge over informal assessments and plans, versus formal and statutory ones. The majority of children with SEN, who will not have an EHC plan, will be worse off. The draft Code omits guidance to schools on implementing a standard system to identify their difficulties, and to respond to them in a graduated way. Clear accountability will be removed.

The Code's 'system' still has no distinct formal steps, thresholds or time scales within its so-called 'graduated approach'.

Currently parents can understand and participate in the clear framework of School Action and School Action Plus, with accompanying clarity on documentation via IEPs and reviews at least twice a year - and clarity also on what to do if these stages are not appropriate or are ineffective.

The replacement of this by a single category with no formality around the stages within it will not improve accountability to children and young people, to parents, or to public funds. The 'graduated approach' essentially sets up an eternal cycle of trial and error termed: 'assess; plan; do; review.' There is no clear sign-posting of an exit by which pupils and staff can escape the loop to access additional help, or guidance on how to immediately access additional resources when necessary.

Additionally, the disincentives to identify SEN, and to call in outside help and to request assessment for an EHC Plan for these children and young people, will give rise to many potential points for confusion, delay, and conflict about the support they need. This is against the spirit of the Green Paper and the declared intentions of the Government in introducing the Children and Family Act. Schools and teachers may be unfairly criticised when they do identify SEN as 'higher quality teaching' is apparently meant to reduce SEN numbers.

This group of children will also lose protection against being placed inappropriately in special schools. It will now be possible for a child to be placed permanently in such a school without having their needs assessed, and therefore properly identified by a local authority, or having the right educational provision to support them specified. In the revised draft there is *one* paragraph of guidance (1.30) on this new power. It appears in the chapter on principles (not where you would expect to find it, we think it should appear in the 'Schools' chapter) addressing questions which arise concerning:

- How children will be assessed to match their needs with the provision the school can make.
- How they will be supported and funded.
- How their placement might affect the support and funding of the other children for whom the school is intended.
- How their interests might be safeguarded in this anomalous position.

In addition, much of the current guidance on the right to inclusive schooling is not in the draft Code. IPSEA are concerned that the Department for Education may be in breach of International treaty obligations and UK equalities legislation by failing to advance an inclusive education system. There are improvements, but not enough. The precautionary/anticipatory spirit of the current inclusive schooling guidance chimes with the Equality Act requirements referred to above, but has not been integrated, with the reluctant approach to identifying and responding to need which is evident in much of the guidance. The draft still reduces the 'reasonable steps' guidance, all of which we have found to be necessary and useful. Separate paragraphs dropped in here and there on Equality Act duties are not yet sufficient.

The Regulations do not provide a clear, detailed and unambiguous framework for the replacement to statements - the EHC Plan. Local councils will be able to do their own thing, leading to an increase in the postcode lottery when it comes to supporting vulnerable children and young adults. Localism in this area is not beneficial to people who need the clarity of nationally set standards. We are concerned that:

- *The vital section on outcomes may not be amenable to amendment via appeal by parents and young people. We hope the Regulations which are not yet available may correct this anomaly.*
- *There is a missing minimum time for consultation within settings after a parental request.*
- *The legally defined maximum period of time for the issue of a draft Plan, and time from that point to the final Plan has been lost. This will be of significance when, for example, the overall 20 week period is interrupted by an appeal. After a successful appeal against a refusal to make a plan, it will not be clear how many weeks remain for its completion. We would hope this could still be dealt with in regulations.*

It is a serious omission that the issue of mental capacity has not been clarified in Regulations.

As drafted, legal rights to engage and challenge Local Authorities will automatically transfer from parents to the young person at 16 years old. The potential for parents to be barred from continuing to act as advocates for their child is real and needs addressing now.

As drafted, legal rights to engage and challenge LAs will automatically transfer from parents to the young person at 16 years old. The draft Code is inconsistent about the effect of this. It states in the opening chapter that the views of the child aged over 16 will prevail over those of their parents, while a new Annex at the back is more accommodating of parental rights. The Code fails to address the very real issues which will face parents, young people, schools/colleges and LAs, about who will be responsible for assessing mental capacity, and how such decisions can be challenged. It is not good enough to say it is all in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 - practical guidance is needed.

References:

Latest draft code of practice:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304534/Code_of_Practice_Draft.pdf

Council For Disabled Children notes and links on the draft:

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/news/january-june-2014/revised-code-of-practice-released>

Charities response to the SEN reforms: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-27072335>

Dr Mary Bousted views on the SEN reforms:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9419000/9419481.stm

Response from IPSEA: <http://www.ipsea.org.uk/News/Changes-to-SEN-Law/IPSEA-Response-to-the-revised-draft-SEN-Code-of-Practice-May-2014.aspx>

CRITERIA for LOCAL GROUP LISTING on EO WEBSITE

Is your Local Home Education Group listed on the EO website? If so, PLEASE READ ...

While we welcome the increasing diversity of HE groups and other alternative education resources, this has meant that some anomalies have crept in to the EO website listing of HE groups, and we feel that clarification is needed.

Inclusion in the list is dependant upon the group being organised in accordance with the general understanding of a Home Education Group, that is:

- A group of home educating families providing mutual support, sharing information and resources, whether by electronic means or by meeting for social and educational activities.
- Activities are free (or at small contribution to cover costs); parents attend with their children, who are of mixed ages.
- Usually, activities take place at a variety of venues, are organised by different parents and open to all local HE families.

These are essential criteria for the EO website Local Group listing.

Please note, we do require two named contact people for the group, with email and/or phone details, to ensure we can keep in touch with you, though these do not need to be shown in the public entry (the email contact form is directed to one of the given email addresses).

Further information about your Home Ed group should give an indication of what kind of activities take place and how it is organised, so that potential members can make an informed choice as to whether they wish to join your group. Where Facebook or other social media are mentioned, this should be part of the general group description and not as a replacement for Yahoo group/email/phone/website.

PLEASE NOTE – alternative/small/free schools/learning centres (e.g. where activities are organised only at a specified venue, requiring fees with a fixed course commitment/timetable, and children are left without parents) do NOT qualify for HE group listing. Nor do websites, Facebook pages etc. that simply list books/resources/equipment/etc. If you are unsure, please email the Local Groups Co-ordinator with a full description.

Organisers of Local HE Groups are asked to check their entries on the EO website AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, to ensure that they conform to the above criteria and that the contact information is up to date and accessible. If you find that amendments are required, please email the Local Groups Co-ordinator as soon as possible: EO Local Groups eolg@educationotherwise.org

GROUPS THAT DO NOT SUPPLY THE REQUESTED INFORMATION, OR APPEAR NOT TO FIT THE DESCRIPTION ABOVE, WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE EO LISTING BY 31st July 2014.

(though of course you are free to re-apply if you missed the deadline!)

Do you run a local group with other home educating families? If so and you'd like an entry on the local groups list on the website (and in the newsletter), please complete the application form on the website by choosing 'HE Groups [Area]' from the left hand menu at: <http://www.educationotherwise.net>

LOCAL HOME EDUCATION GROUPS

HERs – Please contact the group organiser for full details and to check that activities are ongoing. Note also that groups are not always run by EO members. Further information on the groups listed below is available via the Local HE Groups area of the EO website. If you know of a group that's not listed, please ask the organiser to enter it at www.educationotherwise.net

Group organisers – please remember when giving details of events, that this list (both in Newsletter and on main area of website) may be seen by people who are not members of Education Otherwise, and adjust your information accordingly. Please also notify us promptly of contact & other changes via the Local Groups Co-ordinator: eolg@educationotherwise.org

England

Bedfordshire

Christian Home Ed – Scott and Rachel, scottandrachel@ntlworld.com

Busy B-Hes – Weekly drop-in offering chats and support; activities.

Pauline 01234 720819 / 07976 026167 p.curl28@btinternet.com

BedHed – An informal group of home educating families in and around Bedford <http://bedhed.org.uk>

Berkshire

Berkshire Home Educators – for HE families in & adjoining Berkshire

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/groups/berkshirehomeeducators/>

Expanding Horizons – trips, activities, regular meet ups and information

for other Local groups. www.expandinghorizonsuk.com; Rebecca

01494 882484, expandinghorizonsuk@gmail.com

Heroes-HE – weekly Home Education Club at animal farm, with workshops, etc. www.heroesberkshire.co.uk/homeeducators.html

Bristol

Bristol Home Education – A local support group Bristol area.

<http://www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk/>

Bristol Home Education Learn Place (HELP) Carla 01179 354389

carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk

Bristol Home Education Co-op – contact point for HE activities in

Bristol. E.g. music, Spanish, English and art classes, climbing sessions,

special workshops, days out, and a FREE weekly Co-op meet up with

crafts, activities & socialising. Yahoo group for event details,

information & support: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BristolHEC/>

Contact: BristolHEC-owner@yahoo.com Or 0117 9553582

Home Education in Bristol and the South West – local website with

information and links for groups, events and activities in Bristol and the

surrounding areas + national info & resources.

<http://alternative-education-bristol.moonfruit.com/>

Contact: Therese, alternativeeducation.bristol@gmail.com

Buckinghamshire

Free Range Education – range of educational events and activities in

Milton Keynes & North Bucks Sarah: 07725 039981

www.freerangeeducation.org

Home Education Milton Keynes – informal non-hierarchical group for

HERs in Milton Keynes & surrounding areas. <http://www.he-mk.org.uk>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MadCows-MK/join>

Milton Keynes Home Educators Network (MKHEN) – Educational and

social activities and events, online support groups, mentoring and an

active relationship with the LA. <http://www.mkhen.org.uk>

Georgianne 01908 662256 sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk

MK-CHEF – HE support group for Milton Keynes. Affiliated to Home

Service but you do not need to be a Christian to join.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mk-chef>

South Bucks Home Educators – (& surrounding areas)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/southbuckshomeed>

Expanding Horizons, (see Berkshire).

Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire Home Educators – A website all about home educating

in Cambridgeshire including local groups and how to contact them.

www.cambshomeed.co.uk Jane: cambshomeed@gmail.com

Cambridge Home Educating Families (CHEF) – for parents/carers who

HE or considering HE. <http://www.cambridgehomeeducators.org.uk/>

Morag: 01223 464918 morag2000@hotmail.com

Cambridge Home Educating Community Activity List – summary of

sessions and regular groups in Cambridge www.educationchoice.org.uk

Karen: 01223 573220 karen@karenrodgers.co.uk

Cheshire

Mid Cheshire Home Educators – Bi-monthly meetings and regular

outings. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mche>

South Cheshire Home Educators – Jacqui, southcheshirehe@gmail.com

<http://www.southcheshirehe.btck.co.uk/>

Cornwall

Home Grown – S E Cornwall HEGroup – Alternate Mondays in Liskeard;

classes in drawing & draughtsmanship / drama For ages 8-15. E6 per

session. : Kath 01579 340591

Lostwithiel area H.E. group – New group just starting up – come along

and help! Contact: Craig, hyrax@hotmail.co.uk

Cumbria

West Cumbria Home Education Group – friendly group members from

all over W. Cumbria – Structured or Free-range – All welcome!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WestCumbriaHE/> Contact: Tallie,

metallienat@aol.com

Cumbria Home Educators – Meets fortnightly near Kendal and in

Pennine. Trips and interesting activities around Cumbria and further

afield <http://www.communigate.co.uk/lakes/cumbriahomeed/>

West Cumbria Home Educators – (including Keswick). Mutual support

for HERs in West Cumbria : WestCumbriaHomeEd@gmail.com

Derbyshire

Derby Home Education Group (DHEG) – Weekly. Gym Club at sports

centre with instructor. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/derbyhe/>

Home Ed Buxton Area – Local meetings/activities for HERs and those

considering HE <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeedbuxtonarea>

Devon

Buckfastleigh Wildspace – Nature study and gardening group based at

Buckfastleigh Town hall. Welcomes HE families.

<http://www.hogco-devonrcc.org.uk/index.asp?pageid=279900>

Dart Valley Home Ed Network – Out and about visits: natural history

history photography and more. Members-only internet group. Hannah

and Gordon 01803 762788 lindnich@tesco.net

Exeter Home Education Community Wednesday drop-in; GCSE; green

woodwork permaculture pottery & more. nbedford@btinternet.com

<http://exeterhomeeducationcommunity.co.uk> Neil 01363 82314

Freedom Fields EHE – Weekly social group, for accompanied children.

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/PlymouthUK_HomeEd/

Stover HE Group – Stover/ Newton Abbot. Informal educational and

social meets in local and surrounding areas.

stoverhegroup@gmail.com

Teignbridge and Torbay Home Educators – Social events and

educational visits. <http://www.teignbridgeandtorbayhe.co.uk>

Julia 07905 293223 julia@classroomfree.co.uk

Dartmoor and SW Home Education Group. Based in S Dartmoor,

local and area groups & resources, plus promotion of your groups.

<http://dartmoor-sw-he-group.yolasite.com/>

Contact: dartmoor.sw.he.group@gmail.com

South Devon Home Education Group –

<http://www.southdevonhomeeducation.co.uk/>

Helen 01803 390639 heleenlloyd-hoare@blueyonder.co.uk

FLAGS Home Education Group – Exeter, every Friday - A friendly group

for children of all ages. Contact: Lisa 07969299543 or Sue

su.gold777@yahoo.co.uk

<http://www.homeeducationexeter.com/>

Dorset

HEoND, Home Educators of North Dorset, friendly group meeting on a regular basis in Sturminster Newton.
www.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/HeoND/info

Bournemouth HEED – Weekly Monday meetings Carol 01202 677066
carolstone@yahoo.co.uk

HERA – friendly group meets in Poole weekly, providing support for HE families/prospective HE. Contact Tracey scallieuk@hotmail.co.uk

Bournemouth and Poole Home Educators – Bournemouth/Poole area for play dates and visits to places of interest/museums/etc.
http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Bournemouth_and_PooleHomeEducators/?yguid=419936795. Emma: bmth.home.ed@gmail.com

Durham

Durham HE – Yahoo group. Get-togethers arranged between members in various areas of County
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/County-durham-homeed>

Essex

A Different Class Home Education Group – Southend-on-Sea. Non-profit weekly meetings regular outings. www.adifferentclass.org

Haverhill HE group – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex.
Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 wixde@yahoo.co.uk

WIGWAM Epping Forest – A weekly informal drop-in group. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442 elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk

Southend HE Group – Meets weekly. Lots of outings and activities.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southendhomeeducation/southendhomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk>

Gloucestershire

Glosh. HE.org.uk – HE links and local resources in and around Gloucestershire. <http://www.glosh.org.uk/>

Glas Otherwise Club Fiona 01684 290087 brookesfam@tiscali.co.uk

Forest of Dean HE group – Bridge and dam building river clearance fire building woodland walks etc. Roxy cdsnhf@googlemail.com

Stroud email list Nick 01453 840036 nick.weir@localfood.org.uk

Cirencester and Cotswold group – Meetings plus will answer HE queries. Pam 01285 721008 pamela.perryman@gmail.com

Hampshire

Hampshire FRHEBEES – Free Range & Home Educated Bees. West Hampshire area and borders to arrange meet ups and activities.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FRHEBees/>

North Hampshire HE Group – Regular activities and meetings organised suitable for all ages <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NH-HE/>

Jaki 07731 805323 jakimpersons@gmail.com

Portsmouth Home Education Group – HE or interested in HE
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/portsmouthhomeed/>

SEEDS – Meets every term time afternoon for sports/play + weekly full day activity. Southampton. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1/>

Herefordshire

Hereford Home Education – Indoor and outdoor facilities ages 3-15.
herefordhe@gmail.com

Manmouth and Herefordshire Home Educators – Local meets and events Yahoo! group. Roxy 07765 058 777
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HerefordshireHE/>

Hertfordshire

Herts Home Educators – Yahoo! group for Hertfordshire home educators. newhomeeducators@gmail.com

Isle of Wight

Isle of Wight Learning Zone – A network of HE families
<http://www.iwlearningzone.co.uk/>

IW Home Ed – Facebook group & yahoo group for any and all home educators on IoW. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWHomeEd/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IWHomeEd/>
Karen: Karen@curvespace.com or 01983 568516

Kent

Rochester Group – Weekly meetings Tues. afternoon Contact: Sally: sally_wilson@lineone.net

Dragonfly Kidz HE Group – (Canterbury & Thanet) meets socially for learning activities swimming bowling days out etc. in a wide range of locations around Canterbury Thanet Whitstable etc. All Welcome!
Steph for more info: stephgate@rocketmail.com 01304 814362.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dragonflykidzhomeducationgroup/>

Kent ASD Home Ed – For parents/carers of ASD/Aspergers children who are educating them 'otherwise'. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/asd-home-ed-medway>

Medway and Maidstone HE activity group - HE OMEGA – A group of home educating families in Medway and Kent.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-omega/>
Contact Esther: e_selhi@yahoo.co.uk

SATHE Supporting Autism Through Home Education – West Kent group open to all parents/carers HE/flexi-schooling or considering EO for children with autism/ sensitivities or learning difficulties.

Denice 07554 386844 S-A-T-H-E@yahoogroups.co.uk
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/S-A-T-H-E/>

South East Home Educators – (Kent/Sussex) Meet regularly for trips, hall meets, swimming etc. To join Yahoo! group email:

southeasthomeeducators-subscribe@yahoo.com

Or contact: Lesley Herriot lesley294@aol.com or 07828193668
<http://www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk>

Wealden Home Educators' Network – active network of home educating families in SE England. We offer help and support, information, activities, events and camps for home educators.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork/>

Lancashire

LEAD Home Education – swap ideas, share stories and arrange local social gatherings. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lead_he/

Boneheds – Help support advice and friendship to all families who are home educating (or considering HE) in Bolton Lancashire and surrounding districts. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/boneheds/>

Home Ed Leyland – Friendship help support and advice for all families who are home-educating (or considering HE) in Leyland and surrounding districts <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/he-lia/>

Leicestershire Christian Home Educators – monthly meet up every 3rd Tuesday 10am-3pm at Oak Farm Park CV13 0JD. Free play opportunity in a safe and fun place. Home Ed Off-Peak Pass available: £1.50 per child £5 per family free drinks. All welcome! Anne-Marie Marshall: mrsamarshall@googlemail.com

Charnwood & Melton Yahoo Group – many home ed groups, gatherings and Events. Vikki, vikkiandmartin@googlemail.com

HE-AL message board – details of HE Events in Leicestershire. Site run by local HE groups, but open to all HERS in the Leicestershire area <http://he-al.weebly.com/index.html>

Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire HE – <http://www.home-ed.ukf.net/index.htm>

Home Ed Lincs – Yahoo newsgroup coordinating HE activities in Lincolnshire. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/home_ed_lincs/

North Hykeham HE Group – Thurs 10-11.30ish. Primarily for toddlers. 07870 787328 debi-crow@googlemail.com

Homeschool Lincolnshire – active and supportive group, 40+ families incl. plenty of teenagers. Monthly events and activities list: Elaine 01507 328688, homeschool.lincolnshire@outlook.com

London

South London Home Education Googlegroup – email group for HE activities in S London area. <http://groups.google.com/group/slhe>
Contact Angela: mastweiler@gmail.com

Markfield - Portland H.E. Group For children under 12yrs. Contact: Shelly : Shellydonaci@gmail.com

The Otherwise Club (NW) – A community centre for HE families. Leslie 0208 969 0893

Brandram Roaders – Weekly meetings in term time. rubyradburn@hotmail.com

Haringey Home Education Club – meetings and other events <http://www.hhec.org.uk/> @hhec.org.uk

Maggie Home Educators (East London) – Phil 0208 500 1053

Home Study Groups – small group of HE families pooling resources for tutored home study groups. Ingie 0203 566 8706 iberitt@gmail.com

WIGWAM Jubilee Park N9 . Informal drop-in group for families with children of any age. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442
elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk

Norfolk

Home Education in Norfolk (HENS) – A group for HE families in Norfolk. Those on the borders also welcome.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeeducatorsnorfolk/>

West Norfolk Home Educators – A meeting place for home educators and families interested in home educating.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/WestNorfolkHomeEducators/>

The Barefoot Learners – Games and activities for all ages. Be Coffin 07814 592 290 or 01263 73 99 83

Northamptonshire

Northants HE – Informal group meets regularly for various activities <http://www.northantshe.org.uk/>

iFlow – weekly HE community group in NW Northants. Aiming to provide continuity of support and friendships parent and professionally led educational activities. A wide range of resources in a large community space with sports facilities and outdoor play www.iflow-he.org Email: welcometoflow@gmail.com

Nottinghamshire

Notts Sheep Special – Online support group for HE parents of special needs/differently-abled children in Nottinghamshire & bordering counties. http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Notts_Sheep-Special/

Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Home Educators – A group for all home educators living in Oxfordshire but those in neighbouring counties also welcome to join.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OxonHE/>

OHED – Website with information about HE in Oxfordshire

www.ohed.org.uk Louisa: louisa.southey@gmail.com or 01865 735705
Expanding Horizons (See Berkshire).

Shropshire

Rushbury/Stretton HE Group – Parent and child-led activities as well as people from the wider community Beverley 01743 718429

Telford area HE – activities For times and dates of skating football and drama sessions. Denise 07866 888879

Shropshire Home Education – For HErs in Shropshire area to chat arrange meets etc. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/shed>

Otherwise Engaged – Online diary of group activities cultural events workshops resources and projects for Shrops and West Mids based HE families. <http://www.otherwise-engaged.org.uk/home-education.html>

Somerset

Taunton Home Education Group – Free play, arts & crafts, games , etc. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tauntonhomeeducation/>

tauntonhomeeducation@yahoo.com <http://tauntonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

HEY Yeovil – All HE families welcome. Lyn Crocker 01963 23669

heyevail@hotmail.com

Wells Swimming Group – Weekly swimming Wells Leisure Centre term time only. Lesley 01749 689241 mumfordturner@hotmail.com

Oake HE Group – Monthly meetings and regular outings.

Maggie 01984 624651

North Somerset HE Group – Weekly children's gym walks outings etc. Yahoo! group for members. Vicky 01275 848425

victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk

Bath HE Yahoo! Group –

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/BathHomeEducation/>

FAB Home Ed Group – Meets fortnightly at Shepton Mallet Scout Hut.

Contact: AJ . 01761 413316 ajlewisatwell@hotmail.com

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Mendihomeed/info>

Suffolk

Dennington HE Group – Wide range of activities all ages welcome.

Janet 01728 638795 janetlomas@ymail.com

Haverhill HE group – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex.

Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 widke@yahoo.co.uk

Ipswich Wednesdays - Shared lunch and activities. £3.50 per family.

Contact Helen: helen@design256.com

Ipswich town centre group + Book Club – Lisa 07538 102322

llw_llg@yahoo.co.uk

Tastock HE Group – All families welcome to this very friendly group. Jan 01359 251184 angusto@btinternet.com

Surrey

Dorking Home Educators - Meet fortnightly in Dorking. Social and pre-booked activities. Regular outings and trips. Contact: Amanda:

schrodingerscat81@hotmail.com

www.facebook.com/groups/113572308842436

<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/DorkingHomeEducators/>

SW Surrey Home Ed – Weekly gatherings Farnham or Godalming.

<http://www.swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk/index.php>

Sutton/Epsom HE group – Meets weekly and also monthly for outings.

Paul 07506 781796 pauldmsn@hotmail.com

<http://epsomandsuttonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

Leatherhead Home Education Group – Leatherhead and surrounding

area regular day trips and activities. Chrissie Thorpe 07840285703

christabelthorpe@hotmail.com

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/313168112059023/>

Home Educators Learning Project – Aims to bring together Surrey

based home educators for educational support social and educational

outings. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/HELearningProject/>

Godalming HE Group – A group for HE families based in South West

Surrey and surrounding area. <http://swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk>

Surbiton Home Ed Group (SHEd) – parent-led clubs, professionally led

educational workshops (local flora & fauna; archaeology; ICT). children

aged 0-16 regularly attending. Contact Ingrid: ingrid.meaker@mac.com

Sussex

ActiveEO HE Group W Sussex and Hants (see Hampshire)

HEDGE Home Ed Group – Hastings/St. Leonards weekly social meetings + trips etc. www.hedge-education.btck.co.uk Beshlie 01424 812870

South Eastern Home Educators – (Kent/Sussex) See Kent for details.

Forest Row HE Group – regular monthly meetings + many other fun &

learning <http://www.facebook.com/groups/forestrowhomeeducators>

Eastbourne EO Group – Regular gatherings & activities.

<http://www.shinies.org.uk/>

Brighton and Hove Home Educators – Information on HE events and

groups in the area. <http://bhhe.wordpress.com/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bhhe/>

Hastings & Rother Home Educators (HARHE) – small number of

families; activities include Forest School, cycling, daytrips, bowling and

swimming. Check out our website and us or come along to an activity

www.harhe.btck.co.uk Catherine: 01424 812213

Wealden Home Educators' Network (WHEN) (SE England) see Kent.

Warwickshire

Creative Youth Adventure Club (Coventry) – For over 11s working towards Arts Awards. Sarah sarah@nellyb.co.uk

Worcestershire Home Educators Network – Meetings usually at least weekly throughout term time at various locations round the county. <http://www.worcestershire-home-educators.co.uk/>

Warwick District HE Primarily for children 0-11 though all welcome. Warwick and Learnington, Alison 07782 299181 <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/warwickhe>

Wiltshire

Chapmanslade H E group. For anyone Home Educating (or considering it) in town and surrounding area. Meetings twice monthly - Facebook: Chapmanslade Home Education Group. Or Contact: Maria, maria@trivialbusiness.co.uk

Salisbury Plain Home Education Circle – Parents who use the National Curriculum as guidance, but believe that best education comes from experience. Dee: dee.dilloway@yahoo.com, 07753 260317

Worcestershire

Bewdley HE Group – Weekly meetings, social/activities etc. all welcome. Sophie 01299 405669, sophiebutcher29@yahoo.co.uk
Worcestershire Home Ed Yahoo Group Email list for Worcs HEs <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/worcestershirehome-ed/>

Yorkshire

HEDG – Home Education Doncaster Group. Regular H.E. meetups and outings Doncaster & surrounding area. See our Facebook or <http://www.homeeducationdoncaster.co.uk/>, or contact: Gillian, gillycooper@hotmail.com 07938 007 306

DHE Doncaster home educators Yahoo group for families in the Doncaster and surrounding areas. Cheryl Moy on 07825 914340 cheryl0407@aol.com <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/DHE/>

HENNEY (Home Education Network North East Yorkshire) Regular meet ups around the Scarborough and East coast area. Lisa Riley lisa_riley@tiscali.co.uk henney-owner@yahoo.com

Huddersfield Art Workshops – Monthly Byrs plus. Jane 01484 645034

Huddersfield Book Group Monthly Marsden library. Jane 01484 645034
Huddersfield Home Educators – Monthly themed meetings. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wyhec/> Mandy 01484 460026 meandchi7@yahoo.co.uk

Yorkshire Home Edders Yahoo! group – A friendly & active group with visits & workshops for children 8-16. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/yorkshirehomedders/>

NYHEC (group for HE parents) – for parents HEing in North Yorkshire. nyhecowner@yahoo.com

North + West HE Group – Meets Skipton monthly and Bradford Gym Club weekly. Regular meetings and outings. Judith 01756 791356

Rotherham Home Education – friendly informal group for HEs in & around S Yorkshire. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RothHE/> Pauline 077764 06409 colliecanandog123@yahoo.co.uk

SYHEC – Yahoo! group for parents HEing in South Yorkshire. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/syhec/>

Wakefield District Home Education Group – New Group 2013. Currently regular Bowling & Ice skating. Will be organising more trips and visits as numbers increase. Contact Tracey: wakefieldHE-owner@yahoo.com

Regional – East of England

East Anglian Home Ed Network – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/East-Anglian-Home-Ed-Network/>

Regional – East Midlands

East Midlands Home Ed – forum to help inform and support HE families in the East Midlands. <http://groups.yahoo.com/oup/emhe>

Regional – South East

FLAGS (Kent/Surrey/Sussex) – Active group (Kent/Surrey/Sussex) meeting weekly during term time <http://www.flags-education.org>
Karen 01732 864524 karenlow@uwclub.net

ActiveO HE Group based in West Sussex and Hampshire

Contact number 01243 552780 <http://www.activeo.co.uk/index.html>

South Hants Home Ed – A support group for home educators

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southhantshomeed/>

FAREGOS Home Education Group – HE group/email list covering

Fareham Gosport and South Hants. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FareGosHE/>

Home-EASE (Home Education for all South East) – Group of HE families in

South-East England 0753 1677 083

homeeducatingmum@yahoo.co.uk

South East Home Educators – (Kent/Sussex) See Kent for details.

Wealden Home Educators' Network (WHEN) (SE England) see Kent.

Regional – South West

Home Education Centre (Devon/Dorset/Somerset) – Meets two days a week. Workshops sports activities and support.

<http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk>

HERs and Events SW – network to support new HEs or those new to the area. New input welcomed. southdevonic@gmail.com

<http://hecontactssandeventssw.yolasite.com>

HE in Bristol and SW – see Bristol

Regional – West Midlands

Mercia Education Group – Regular, structured meetings – various venues Lichfield and surrounding area. Academic base – many activities

– wide age range. <http://merciaeducationgroup.yolasite.com/>

Isle of Man

Home Educating Network - Isle of Man – informal group of parents HEing on the Isle of Man. Yvonne, isleofmanic@educationotherwise.org

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/hen-iom/>

Wales

Carmarthenshire

Carmarthen HE Group – Regular meetings in Johnstown Carmarthen caroline.milburn@yahoo.com

North Carmarthen HE Group – meetings for friendship & play.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ncarmarthenhomeed>

Denbighshire

Froncysyllte HE group – Fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. vivodsam@gmail.com

Flintshire

Flintshire Home Education – Regular meet ups activities & support.

flintshirehomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk

Glamorgan

Cardiff Home Education Group – Meets Mondays during term time, in Pontcanna. Social group children all ages, everyone welcome. Contact:

Sarah – cardiffhomeeducationgroup@gmail.com website

www.cardiffhomeeducationgroup.wordpress.com

New Foundations HE – Meets Cardiff Thursdays 10-4. All activities free.

<http://www.newfoundationshe.com> 02920216502

newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com

Bridgend Home Educators, free play, GCSE classes, Arts Award, outside speakers, activities, etc. See www.bridgendhomeeducators.org or

email.info@bridgendhomeeducators.org

Gwynedd

Langower HE Group – Weekly meetings. rowenna73@hotmail.com

Creative Learning and Support – Now meet every Wed. pm in Bangor. Julie on 01286 678181 or Sarah on 01248 355182

<http://www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk>

Monmouthshire

South Wales Home Educators Network – Email list for Home Educators in and around S Wales to arrange get-togethers /event, share ideas & news and offer support. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/when/>

Usk Home Education – Monthly (Thurs) meet other HEs in the area for fun and games and cups of tea. Roxy: cdsnhf@gmail.com or 01989 768

128 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HerefordshireHE/>

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Montgomeryshire

Shiny Happy Children – Regular meetings in Llanfyllin and surrounding areas. Katie llanfyllinHE@gmail.com

Neath Port Talbot

Wise Up Community HE Group (Port Talbot) – Support and information for home educating families and those considering home education. <http://www.zoneseven.co.uk> ianna.violet@hotmail.com

Powys

New Leaf HE Group (Newtown) – Occasional meetings for varied activities all ages. siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

Wrexham and Surrounds Home Education (WASHE) – Activities around Wrexham area. <http://washe.co.uk/>

Regional

Elective Home Education Wales – Linking HE families across Wales. <http://www.ehew.co.uk>

Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester – for information about group activities in the Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester area local EO member Roxy 01989 768128 cdsnhf@googlemail.com

New Foundations – HE group and charity offering social & educational activities and support in Cardiff and South Wales. Every Mon 10am - 3pm. All HE families welcome. www.newfoundationshe.com
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/329840653796249/>
Jayne: newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com Or 02920216502

Channel Islands

Home Education Jersey – New home education group. Jess: homeeducationjersey@gmail.com

Guernsey Home Educators – Fledgling group of home educators and those sympathetic to home education in Guernsey. Yvonne Burford on 01481 264776 or Atp1ir@hotmail.com

International (UK based)

HE-DS (Home Educating a child with Down's syndrome) – Linking families who are home educating a child with Down's syndrome. <http://www.oakwellbarns.co.uk> Yahoo group (private, by invitation)
Anita Kolaczynska 01686 413502 anitakolaczynska@yahoo.co.uk

REMINDER

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR LOCAL GROUPS 2014/15

This benefit for Local Groups run by EO members will be continued for the coming year, and the cost is likely to be held at £10 per year or part year from 1st September. This is excellent value compared with insurance arranged by individual HE groups. As it's subsidised from EO funds (which means from the subscriptions EO members pay) there are some terms and conditions – for example, we ask for 3 EO family members to sign up to take responsibility for the group and to keep in contact with us.

Please don't leave it till the last minute to look at the policy documents and guidance for the EO insurance. We have found that groups take some time to digest the information, and then may have queries. Getting the required three EO member signatures also seems to cause delays.

Detailed guidance and an application form are available to download from the Member Home area of the EO website. These are for the current year (up to 31st August 2014) but we anticipate that the terms and conditions will be very similar for the coming year. To minimise work for volunteers, we would prefer members to obtain these from the website, but in case of difficulty you may request details by email from the Local Groups Insurance Co-ordinator (Anne Rix is still acting): [<lgic@educationotherwise.org>](mailto:lgic@educationotherwise.org)



Who does What in EO

Current Trustees [Council Members]

Julie Arnold jarnold@educationotherwise.org

Lei Ashe (Local Contacts Co-ord)

lashe@educationotherwise.org

Shena Deuchars (Membership Sec.)

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N.B. Email to

trustees@educationotherwise.org

goes to all trustees

Address for correspondence by letter:

Education Otherwise

P.O. Box 1309

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AND WEBSITE:

www.educationotherwise.org.uk

Membership

Membership enquiries, address changes, membership cards, new member admin: please contact the Membership Secretary:

membership@educationotherwise.org

or PO Box 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN

Other Useful Contacts

Anti-Bullying Contact: **Kathleen Thompson**

01942 89 77 79

College/GCSE Contact: **Roger Scaife** 08445 003 708

GCSEs at Home: **Louise** 08445 003 688

OU GCSE equivalents: **Wendy** 08445 003 691

GCSE/Exams email list:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-Exams-GCSE-A_AS_Levels-OU-Others/

Concessions Contact: **Lynsey Scott**

concessions@educationotherwise.org

Concessions Co-ordinator: **Vacant**

Enquiries Secretary: **Edwina Theunissen**

01978 661 882 e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org

Flexi-schooling: **Alison Sauer**

Alison@sauer.demon.co.uk 01282 854719

Local Contacts Co-ordinator: **Lei Ashe**

lcco-ordinator@educationotherwise.org

Local Group Insurance: **Anne Rix**

lgic@educationotherwise.org

Local Groups Listings: **Kennell Family**

eolg@educationotherwise.org

Newsletter Coordinator: **Edana Edwards**

[<eeonews@btinternet.com>](mailto:eeonews@btinternet.com)

Publications Secretary: **Anne Rix**

[<arix@educationotherwise.org>](mailto:arix@educationotherwise.org) 01760 44 18 10

School Anxiety Support: **Jayne Owen** 08445 008469

Single Parent Contact: **Sam Kruger** 08445 003794

denbighshire-ic@educationotherwise.org

Special Needs: **Denice** send@educationotherwise.org

Alisa: 01749 830034 / 07707 060973

SEND email list via: <http://www.he-special.org.uk/>

Volunteer Co-ordinator: **Wendy Knight**

vol-coordinator@educationotherwise.org

Webmasters: **Louisa and Charles (retiring)**

webmaster@educationotherwise.org

education otherwise

Education Otherwise 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.

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- reaffirm that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school;
- establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education;
- promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

For further information send a stamped, A5 S.A.E. to:

P.O. BOX 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN

Helpline 0845 4786 345

Web Site: <http://www.educationotherwise.net>

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