



West Lothian
Council

EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

HOME EDUCATION POLICY

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Education Executive of the proposed revised Home Education Policy.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Executive approve the revised Home Education policy.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Government Guidance on Home Education (2007) Equality Relevance Assessment Completed.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Entry of home educated children and young people into specific classes or courses may have some resource implications for the authority. It should be noted, however, that should the children/young people opt to enter a local authority school full time, the authority is obliged to make provision for them.
VII Consideration at PDSP	17 May 2016.
VIII Other consultations	Legal Services, Schoolhouse.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1. Background

In November 2014 Education Services agreed to review the existing Home Education policy in consultation with Schoolhouse, Scotland's national home education support charity. The aim of the review was to ensure:

- transparent compliance with legislation
- consider line management responsibility and use of appropriate officers in implementing the policy; and more specifically,
- clarification on difference between Home School and Flexi-Schooling.

Schoolhouse is a well established and respected source of independent information for parents, carers and young people who are starting out on the home education path, families who may be thinking about educating their children outside the classroom, and those who just want to know more about how home education works. Schoolhouse provide free independent information and support to families and the wider home educating community.

Consultation with Schoolhouse is ongoing.

D2. Home Education

Every child has a right to an education and the responsibility for a child's education rests with their parent. Whilst most parents fulfil this responsibility by sending their children to school, others may choose to provide home-based education.

Education Services recognises that home education is a key aspect of parental choice and is an equally valid choice alongside the option to send a child to school.

Home education is a right conditional upon the parents providing an efficient education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child. Choosing the option of Home Education does not in itself require permission from the local authority. Permission from the local authority is required, however, to withdraw a child/young person from a local authority school.

In December 2007, after consultation with interested parties, the Scottish Government published revised statutory guidance on home education. This guidance outlines suggested good practice for local authorities in dealing with home education and Education Services is committed to the principles outlined in this document.

The Scottish Government highlights the following two main principles:

- Authorities should have regard to the views of parents and the decisions that they make in relation to their child's education; and
- Authorities should seek to build relationships with parents and children that support them in the choices that they make by offering advice, information and resources where feasible.

Appendix 1 to this report provides the proposed revised Home Education policy.

E. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the revised policy is to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of West Lothian Council and parents/carers in relation to children and young people who are Home Educated. The aim is to develop positive relationships of trust and mutual respect to ensure an educational provision which is in the best interests of the individual child/young person.

The general legislative provisions relating to this policy are contained in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Education Scotland Act 1980

Scottish Government Guidance on Home Education 2007

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 Home Education Policy

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James Cameron, Head of Service, Education Services

Date of meeting: 7 June 2016