



The Home-Ed Evidence Pack

What to show your local authority.

A calm, practical guide for home-educating families in England.

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more than half of it in senior leadership.

Before you read this

This pack is practical suggestions, not legal advice. It describes what the law requires and what local authorities typically do. It is not a legal opinion, and it cannot account for the particular facts of your family's situation. If your situation has become formal or contested, section 10 lists organisations who give proper advice, free.

What it is based on, so you can check it yourself:

- Education Act 1996, sections 7, 436A and 437
- *Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities*, Department for Education, April 2019, revised 19 August 2024
- *Elective home education: departmental guidance for parents*, Department for Education, April 2019
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (c.21), which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026

This pack is dated on purpose. The law in this area is moving. Section 8 explains exactly what is changing and, honestly, what is not yet known about when. When the new duties commence, this pack will be updated and everyone who has a copy will be told.

1. Start here

A letter has arrived, or an email, or a phone call. Your local authority would like to know about your child's education. It may ask for a report. It may suggest a visit. It may include a form.

Whatever tone it is written in, the feeling it produces in most families is the same, and it is worth naming: a low, tight anxiety that says *someone is about to judge whether I am doing this properly*.

Three things are worth knowing before you do anything else.

Your child is almost certainly doing better than you think. Home education looks nothing like school from the inside, and parents routinely undercount what has happened because it did not come with a timetable and a report card. Most of what follows in this pack is a way of seeing a year of learning clearly, which turns out to be most of the work.

The person writing to you is usually not trying to catch you out. Local authority officers have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education. Most of them are carrying a caseload far larger than they would like, and most of them would be genuinely relieved to close your file with a short, clear note that everything is fine. A great many home-educating families have a perfectly decent relationship with their local officer. The system's design creates the anxiety, not, in most cases, the person.

You are not required to recreate school. This is the single most common mistake, and it is the one that makes families miserable. Nobody is expecting a National Curriculum plan, a marked exercise book, or forty weeks of lesson objectives. What is being looked for is evidence that education is happening and that it fits your child.

By the end of this pack you will have a way of gathering what you already have, a worked example of a real-shaped year written out in full, and templates you can copy.

The test I would apply to my own children. Would a reasonable person, reading this in ten minutes, come away thinking *that child is learning, and someone is paying attention*? That is the bar. It is a lower bar than most parents assume and a more human one than a checklist.

2. What the law actually says

Four points cover almost everything.

2.1 The duty is yours, and it is a duty to educate, not to school

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 says that the parent of every child of compulsory school age must cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school **or otherwise**.

Those last two words are home education. It is a lawful choice, it sits in the same sentence of the same Act as school, and for the great majority of children it requires nobody's permission. There is one significant exception that already applies today: a child registered at a special school under local authority arrangements cannot be taken off the school roll for home education without the local authority's consent. If that is your child, section 8 is the part of this pack to read first.

Notice what section 7 does not say. It does not mention the National Curriculum. It does not mention a minimum number of hours, or terms, or subjects. It does not require qualified teachers, and it does not require a broad and balanced curriculum in the sense a school would use those words. The DfE's own guidance to local authorities confirms this directly.

2.2 The local authority's duty is to identify children who appear not to be receiving suitable education

Section 436A places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to identify, so far as it is possible to do so, children in their area who are of compulsory school age but who **are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school**. Both limbs have to be met, so the duty is aimed at children who appear to be receiving no suitable education anywhere.

That is a threshold duty. It is not a general power to inspect or approve home education, and the DfE's guidance for parents puts it plainly at paragraph 5.1: your local authority *"has no formal powers or duty to monitor the provision of education at home."* The guidance to authorities is equally clear that keeping a general oversight is a legitimate part of their responsibilities, so expect contact, and expect it to be informal.

2.3 The annual enquiry is informal, and you are not legally obliged to respond

This is the part that surprises most families, and it is stated plainly in the DfE's guidance for local authorities.

The guidance recommends that authorities ordinarily make contact with home-educating families **at least annually**, so that they can reasonably inform themselves about suitability (paragraph 5.4). Where there have been no previous concerns and the family continues to do well, it says such contact would often be very brief.

Paragraph 6.5 then says something important: **parents are under no duty to respond to such enquiries**. However, and this matters just as much, it goes on to say that if a parent does not respond, or responds without providing any information about the child's education, the authority will normally be justified in concluding that the child does not appear to be receiving suitable education.

Paragraph 6.6 says something similar about visits, with one difference worth being clear-eyed about. Parents are under **no legal obligation to agree to a home visit** simply to satisfy the authority as to suitability. But the guidance goes on to say that a refusal to allow a visit can, in some circumstances, itself justify service of a formal notice under section 437(1). It does not say that only happens when you have also refused to provide any information. So declining a visit is your right, and it carries more weight if you are plainly providing everything else.

So what should you actually do? My honest advice, as someone who has sat on the other side of these conversations for a long time: in almost every ordinary case, respond, and respond well. Not because you are compelled to, but because a short, confident, well-organised written account is the fastest route to being left alone for another year, and because it costs you an afternoon rather than a year of correspondence. Knowing that you are not obliged is what lets you respond calmly and on your own terms, in your own format, rather than filling in somebody's form because you were afraid not to.

There are situations where a family reasonably chooses to stand on the legal position, and section 10 tells you where to get proper support if you are in one. For most families reading this, that is not the situation.

2.4 What you provide is your choice of format

There is no prescribed format for a home education report, and no statutory template exists. A local authority may send you a form, and you may use it if it suits you, but you may equally send your own written account instead. Section 6 of this pack shows what that looks like.

One forward-looking note: when the registration duties in section 8 commence, the information a parent must give for the register **will** be prescribed. That is a defined set of details about the child and their education, and it does not turn your annual account into a prescribed form. This pack will be updated when it happens.

3. What "suitable" and "efficient" actually mean

These two words carry all the weight, and they are far less frightening once you see how little they demand.

Efficient

The guidance defines an efficient education simply as **one that achieves what it sets out to achieve** (paragraph 9.7). That is the whole test. It is about internal coherence, not ambition. An education can be efficient without being suitable, and the two are judged separately.

Suitable

There is deliberately no rigid definition, because the statutory test is relative to the individual child: suitable to *their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs*. The guidance warns authorities against applying rigid criteria (paragraph 9.4). Drawing the guidance together, a suitable education broadly:

- **Enables the child to participate fully in life in the United Kingdom**, by including sufficient secular education (paragraph 9.4(a)). Worth knowing: the guidance says expressly that there is no requirement on parents to actively promote the Fundamental British Values in the way schools must (paragraph 9.4(c)).
- **Is matched to the individual child**. A suitable education for a child with significant additional needs looks different from one for a child working two years ahead, and it is supposed to.
- **Need not follow the National Curriculum**, and need not cover the same subjects a school would cover.
- **Should not leave the child in marked isolation from their peers**, though this is a factor to weigh, not a rule about how many clubs your child attends.
- **Takes account of the child's own environment and circumstances**.

What this means in practice

Two things follow, and they are liberating.

First, your child's education is judged against your child, not against a national average. A parent whose child left school two years behind in reading and has since gained eighteen months of reading age is describing a strong education, and should say so in exactly those terms.

Second, autonomous and unstructured approaches are not disqualified. A child who learns through projects, conversation, reading and doing, with no timetable at all, can be receiving an entirely suitable education. What such a family needs is not a curriculum. It is a habit of noticing and recording what actually happened, which is what section 6 demonstrates.

4. What local authorities typically ask for

Requests vary, but the underlying questions are almost always the same five. If your account answers these, it answers the letter, whatever form the letter took.

The question underneath	What it is really asking
Who is the child and what is their situation?	Name, age, when home education began, any special educational needs
What is your educational approach?	Structured, autonomous, mixed, and why that suits this child
What has actually happened this year?	Subjects, topics, activities, resources, roughly how time is used
How do you know it is working?	How you notice progress, and what progress there has been
What happens next?	Plans for the coming year, and for qualifications if relevant

A common addition: samples of the child's work. These are usually helpful and you should include a small number if you are comfortable doing so. See section 5 for how many.

A common request that is not a requirement: a home visit, or a meeting with your child alone. You are not obliged to agree to either (paragraph 6.6). Many families do agree, find it fine, and prefer it to writing a report. Others decline and offer a meeting on neutral ground, a video call, or a written account instead. All of those are reasonable positions, and offering an alternative rather than simply refusing keeps the conversation constructive.

5. Six things that make a strong return, and five you do not need

The six that do the work

1. A one-page summary at the front. If the officer reads only one page, this is it. Section 6.2 gives a worked example you can copy.

2. Dated evidence rather than undated evidence. A date is what turns a nice photograph into a record. This is the highest-value habit in the whole pack, and it costs nothing.

3. Your child's own voice somewhere. A sentence in their handwriting, a paragraph they wrote about a project, a list of books they chose. It answers the suitability question in a way no parental report can.

4. Breadth shown honestly, including the informal. Cooking, budgeting, travel, caring for an animal, a job, volunteering, a sport, a long conversation about something difficult. These are education. Name them as such and explain what was learned.

5. Progress, described in your child's own terms. Not grades. Sentences like *"In September she could not start a piece of writing without help. She now plans and drafts independently, and asks for help with punctuation rather than with getting started."* That is stronger than any percentage.

6. A plan for next year, briefly. Two or three sentences. It signals that this is a considered education rather than an accident.

The five you do not need

- 1. A National Curriculum plan.** Not required, and providing one invites you to be judged against it.
- 2. Every piece of work your child has produced.** Six to ten well-chosen dated samples across the year are more persuasive than a box file. A large volume of undifferentiated work reads as anxiety.
- 3. Formal test results.** Optional. Include them if you have them and they help. Their absence proves nothing.
- 4. A timetable, or a precise hour count.** There is no legal definition of "full-time" for home education (paragraph 9.8), and the guidance accepts that home education need not look anything like a school day. One caution, because it is the exception to this section: paragraph 9.9 does expect an authority to be able to form a view of the overall time devoted to education. So do not send a timetable, but do describe your weekly rhythm in a sentence or two, as the worked example does, rather than leaving it out entirely.
- 5. Anything that makes your child anxious.** If preparing evidence is upsetting your child, you are preparing too much. The purpose is to describe an education, not to stage one.

The single most useful habit. Keep one notebook, or one folder on your phone, and put something in it once a week. Two lines and a photograph. Ten minutes a week for a year produces everything in section 6 without a single evening of panic.

6. A worked example, written out in full

This is a composite family, not a real one. Nothing here is drawn from an identifiable child.

The situation. Sam is twelve, in what would be Year 8, and was deregistered from school last October after eighteen months of increasing anxiety about attending. Sam has no formal diagnosis and no EHC plan. The family does some structured work in maths and English, and the rest of the year is built around projects, reading and being out of the house. They use free resources, the library, and a lot of conversation. They do not use any paid platform or tutor.

The local authority wrote in June asking for information about Sam's education. Here is exactly what the family sent.

6.1 The covering note

Dear [Officer],

Thank you for your letter of 14 June about Sam's education.

I have set out below a summary of Sam's education since he was deregistered in October, together with a learning diary, a reading list, a note of work samples and some photographs of project work. I hope this gives you what you need. I am happy to answer any questions in writing, or to arrange a phone call if that would be easier.

Sam has found the last two years difficult and is only recently settled, so I would prefer not to arrange a meeting involving him at this stage. If at some point that becomes necessary I would want to talk it through with you first.

With best wishes, [Parent]

Why this note works. It is warm, it is organised, it answers the question, and it sets one clear boundary with a reason rather than a refusal. It assumes the officer is reasonable, which makes it much more likely they will be.

6.2 The one-page summary

This is the page that does most of the work. Copy the shape of it.

Education summary for Sam [Surname], age 12

Prepared by [Parent], June 2026 • Home educated since 21 October 2025

Our approach. Sam left school after a long period of anxiety about attending. Our first priority was that he recovered his confidence and his willingness to try things, because without that nothing else was going to work. We use short, structured sessions for maths and English four mornings a week, and build the rest of his learning around projects he chooses, reading, and time outside the house. This suits Sam because he engages deeply when he has chosen the subject and shuts down when he feels tested.

This year in outline.

- **Maths.** Working through a structured course covering fractions, decimals, percentages, ratio, negative numbers, basic algebra, area and perimeter. Roughly four sessions a week of thirty to forty minutes.
- **English.** Reading daily. Seventeen books completed since October, listed separately. Weekly extended writing, plus spelling and punctuation work arising from his own writing rather than taught separately.
- **Science.** A project on the human circulatory system, a project on renewable energy including building a small wind turbine, and regular use of a home chemistry set with adult supervision.
- **History and geography.** A ten-week project on the Second World War home front, including two museum visits and an interview with his great-grandmother. Map work and route planning on family walks.
- **Art and design technology.** Weekly. Currently woodwork, having built a bird box and a set of shelves.
- **Physical activity.** Swimming twice a week, and a weekly climbing session at an indoor centre since February.
- **Life skills.** Cooking two family meals a week from January. Managing a small monthly budget. Looking after the family's two rabbits, including their feeding and veterinary appointments.
- **Social.** A weekly home education group of about fifteen children. Climbing. Regular contact with two friends from his old school.

Progress this year.

- In October Sam could not begin a piece of writing without sitting with me. He now plans and drafts independently, and asks for help with punctuation rather than with starting.
- He has moved from struggling with equivalent fractions to working confidently with percentage change.
- He has read seventeen books, having read almost nothing voluntarily in his last year at school.
- Most significantly, he now suggests things he wants to learn about, which he had entirely stopped doing.

Areas we are working on. His handwriting stamina is still limited, so longer pieces are typed. Formal spelling remains a weakness and we are working on it through his own writing. He is not yet confident with written methods for long division.

Next year. We will continue this approach, add a modern foreign language at his request, which he has asked for after the museum trips, and begin looking at the practicalities of IGCSE entry as a private candidate for a small number of subjects at sixteen. I expect to keep the same structured-plus-project balance because it is working.

Why this page works. It is honest about weaknesses, which is what makes the strengths believable. It describes progress in terms of Sam rather than in terms of a year group. It names the informal learning as learning. And it closes with a plan, so the whole thing reads as deliberate.

6.3 The learning diary

Two lines a week. Here are four consecutive weeks, exactly as they were kept.

w/c 20 April Maths: fractions to decimals, four sessions. Getting quicker. English: finished *Holes*, started a book review. Science: wind turbine build, blades cut and mounted. Trip: Thinktank, energy gallery. Cooking: chilli, weighed and converted the recipe for six people. Swimming Tue and Thu. Home ed group Wed.

w/c 27 April Maths: percentages, including percentage of amount. Struggled Monday, secure by Thursday. English: book review drafted and typed, 380 words. Science: turbine wired to a small motor, lit an LED. Long conversation about where our electricity comes from. History: began home front project, chose rationing and evacuation. Climbing Fri.

w/c 4 May Maths: percentage increase and decrease. Real examples using supermarket prices. English: started *Private Peaceful*, linked to the history project. Handwriting practice, ten minutes daily. History: interviewed Great-Grandma Joan about rationing, recorded on my phone, Sam wrote up six paragraphs. Woodwork: bird box started.

w/c 11 May Maths: ratio, and a lot of cooking-based practice. English: *Private Peaceful* finished, talked about how it made him feel. Wrote a letter in role as an evacuee. History: visited the local archive, looked at wartime newspapers. Bird box finished and mounted. Rabbits to the vet, Sam asked the questions himself.

Why this works. It is unglamorous, it took about four minutes a week to write, and it is completely convincing. Nobody reading this doubts that education is happening. Notice how much of it is dated, specific and cross-referenced between subjects.

6.4 The work samples log

Ten samples, each with one line of context. The context is what turns a piece of paper into evidence.

Date	Sample	What it shows
4 Nov 2025	Half a page of writing about a walk	Starting point for writing. Needed prompting for every sentence
12 Jan 2026	Fractions worksheet, self-marked	Working with equivalent fractions. Errors corrected in a different colour
3 Feb 2026	Photograph of the labelled circulatory system model	Science project, made from tubing and card
28 Feb 2026	Typed book review of <i>Wonder</i> , 260 words	First independently planned piece
17 Mar 2026	Budget spreadsheet for the month	Life skills, and applied percentages
21 Apr 2026	Percentage change questions, timed	Compare with January for pace and accuracy
30 Apr 2026	Typed book review of <i>Holes</i> , 380 words	Longer, with paragraphs, and an opinion defended with evidence
8 May 2026	Six paragraphs written up from the interview with his great-grandmother	Handwritten. Note the handwriting stamina compared with November
15 May 2026	Letter written in role as an evacuee	Empathy, historical detail, sustained voice
2 Jun 2026	Long division practice, worked in full	Current area of difficulty, included deliberately

Why this works. It shows a trajectory, because the first and last samples of the same kind of task are both there. It includes something Sam finds hard, which is the mark of an honest account and reads far better than ten perfect pieces.

6.5 The reading list

Read independently since October: *Wonder*, *Holes*, *Private Peaceful*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, *Percy Jackson and the Sea of Monsters*, *Skellig*, *The Explorer*, *Kensuke's Kingdom*, *Goodnight Mister Tom*, *The Hobbit* (in progress), plus four Horrible Histories titles and three graphic novels.

Read together or listened to: *Northern Lights* (audiobook on car journeys), *Carrie's War*, *The Machine Gunners*.

Non-fiction and reference used regularly: a children's atlas, an illustrated encyclopaedia of the human body, two RSPB bird guides, wartime newspaper archives at the library.

In Sam's words, on his favourite: *"Private Peaceful was the best one because it was sad but it made sense, and it was the same time as my project so I already knew about the war and I could picture it."*

Why this works. The final line is Sam's own voice, unedited. It demonstrates comprehension, engagement and the connection between two parts of his education, in twenty-eight words. Include your child's voice somewhere.

6.6 The photographs and projects log

Six photographs, each with a caption. Captions are what make photographs count.

1. **12 Nov 2025.** The circulatory system model in progress, showing the labelling.
2. **9 Feb 2026.** Sam at Thinktank in the energy gallery, with the notes he made.
3. **28 Apr 2026.** The completed wind turbine, connected to a motor and lighting an LED.
4. **8 May 2026.** Sam interviewing his great-grandmother, with his written questions on the table.
5. **15 May 2026.** The finished bird box, mounted in the garden.
6. **6 Jun 2026.** Two family meals Sam cooked unaided, with the recipes he scaled up.

A note on photographs of your child. You do not have to include any. A photograph of the work alone is just as good, and some families prefer it. If you do include them, six is plenty.

6.7 What the family did not do

Worth stating plainly, because this is the part that saves you a fortnight.

They did not produce a curriculum plan. They did not count hours. They did not sit any formal tests. They did not fill in the local authority's form, and sent their own account instead. They did not include every piece of work. They

did not agree to a home visit, and said so kindly and with a reason. The whole thing took one Sunday afternoon to assemble, because the learning diary already existed.

7. Templates you can copy

7.1 The one-page summary

Education summary for [name], age [] Prepared by [], [month year] • Home educated since [date]

Our approach. [Two to four sentences: what you do, and why it suits this child.]

This year in outline. [One bullet per area. Include the informal: cooking, animals, travel, work, volunteering, sport, clubs.]

Progress this year. [Three to five bullets. Describe the change, not a grade. "In September he could not... He now..."]

Areas we are working on. [Two or three. Be honest. This is what makes the rest credible.]

Next year. [Two or three sentences, including any qualification plans.]

7.2 The weekly learning diary

w/c [date] [Two to four lines. Subjects touched, anything finished, anywhere you went, anything they chose themselves, anything they found hard.]

Keep it in one notebook or one phone note. Once a week. Ten minutes.

7.3 The work samples log

Date	Sample	What it shows

Aim for six to ten across the year. Include at least one early and one late example of the same kind of task, and at least one thing they find difficult.

7.4 The covering note

Dear [Officer],

Thank you for your letter of [date] about [child]'s education.

I have set out below a summary of [child]'s education [since / this year], together with [list what you are enclosing]. I hope this gives you what you need. I am happy to answer any questions in writing, or to arrange [a phone call / a video call] if that would be easier.

[Optional, if you are declining something: one sentence saying what you would prefer, and why, followed by an alternative you are offering.]

With best wishes, [Name]

8. What is changing, and when

The law in this area has changed on paper, and has not yet changed in practice. Both halves of that sentence matter.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026. Among many other things, it creates a compulsory register of children not in school in England, held by local authorities.

The home education provisions are not yet in force. Of the children not in school sections, only the parts allowing the government to make regulations commenced at Royal Assent. Other, unrelated parts of the Act have since been brought into force by commencement regulations, but **none of sections 37 to 42**, which are the home education sections. The duties on parents described below therefore do not yet apply to anybody.

Nobody currently knows when they will start. As at the date of this pack, no commencement date has been announced, and the House of Commons Library's briefing on home education records no implementation timetable. You will see confident dates circulating in home education discussions, some as early as next year and some several years out. Treat all of them as guesses, because that is what they are. **This pack will be updated when a date is announced, and again when the duties commence.**

What the Act will require, once it is in force:

- **Registration.** Parents of eligible children will have to give their local authority the required information within **15 days** of the child becoming eligible for registration, and will have to notify changes within 15 days of becoming aware of them.
- **Ongoing information.** Authorities will be able to ask for updated information, no more often than once every three months, and will have to ask at least once a year.
- **Consent to withdraw, for some children.** This is the change most likely to affect families directly, and it is the one least often mentioned. For certain children, parents will need the local authority's **consent** before withdrawing them from school to home educate. It covers a child registered at a special school under local authority arrangements, which is already the position today, and extends it to a child who is the subject of a child protection enquiry under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, which is new. Read the wording carefully: the authority will have to decide without undue delay, and it **must refuse** consent if it considers that attending school would be in the child's best interests, or that no suitable arrangements have been made. Otherwise it must grant consent. That is a duty to refuse in defined circumstances rather than a general discretion, and it is the sharpest edge in the Act for families.
- **A pilot scheme** requiring a meeting between parents and the authority before withdrawal, to run in a limited number of local authority areas.

What has not changed. Section 7 is untouched. Home education remains a lawful choice that requires no permission for the great majority of children. The definition of a suitable education is unchanged. And the DfE guidance described throughout this pack, published in April 2019 and last revised in August 2024, remains the current guidance. A revised version was consulted on some time ago and the government has not published its response, so nothing has replaced it.

What this means for you today. Nothing in this pack needs changing yet. Keep your records, respond well to the annual enquiry, and watch for the commencement announcement.

9. If it becomes difficult

Most families never reach this section. It is here so that you know what the actual process is, rather than imagining something worse.

Step one: a formal notice under section 437(1). If it appears to the local authority that a child is not receiving suitable education, it must serve a written notice requiring the parent to satisfy it, within a specified period of **not less than 15 days**, that the child is receiving suitable education. This is a formal document and it will say so. An informal enquiry letter is not this.

What to do if you receive one. Do not ignore it, and do not panic. Reply in writing within the period given, providing the kind of account set out in section 6 of this pack. In the great majority of cases that is the end of the matter. If you need more time than the notice allows, ask for it in writing and explain why.

Step two: a school attendance order. If the parent does not satisfy the authority within the period, and the authority considers it expedient that the child should attend school, the authority **must** serve a school attendance order naming a school. The discretion sits in the judgement about whether school is expedient, not in whether to serve the order once that judgement is made. There is a process before it happens, including a notice naming the school the authority proposes and an opportunity for you to respond, again with at least 15 days.

The key point. The trigger is that the child does not **appear to be receiving** suitable education. A family that provides a clear, honest, organised account of what their child is doing is in an entirely different position from a family that has provided nothing, because the authority now has something to be satisfied by. Suitability itself can still be argued about, which is exactly why the account is worth doing well.

If you are already at this stage, get proper advice. Not from a Facebook thread, however well meant, and not from this pack. The next section says where.

10. Where to get proper help

These organisations give information and advice on home education and education law. None of them are connected to Latitude, and this pack earns nothing from listing them.

- **Education Otherwise.** A long-established home education charity offering information and support to families. educationotherwise.org
- **IPSEA (Independent Provider of Special Education Advice).** Free, legally based advice on special educational needs and disability law in England, including home education where a child has SEN or an EHC plan. ipsea.org.uk
- **Your local home education group.** Often the fastest source of practical, area-specific knowledge about how your own authority actually works. Ask what other families in your area have sent, and what happened.
- **A solicitor specialising in education law**, if matters have become formal or you are facing a school attendance order. Some offer free initial conversations, and legal aid is available in limited circumstances.

- **The primary sources themselves.** The DfE guidance for parents is 24 pages and readable, and is free on gov.uk. Reading it is worth an hour of anybody's time.

11. Who wrote this, and why

I am David Bailey. I spent over 20 years in education, more than half of it in senior leadership, including several years as a headteacher. I left education in the summer of 2026 to build Latitude Learning Platform full time.

I spent a lot of those years watching children who were perfectly capable fall through gaps that had nothing to do with them, and watching families try to work out what they were entitled to ask for. Home-educating families in particular are expected to understand a legal framework that is barely explained anywhere, and to prove themselves against a standard nobody defines for them. That seems to me an unnecessary weight to place on people who are already doing the hardest job going.

So I wrote this. It is free, there is nothing to buy in it, and you are welcome to send it to anyone who needs it.

Latitude Learning Platform is a GCSE and IGCSE curriculum with a life skills programme, built for children learning outside school. If you would like to know when it opens, latitudelearningplatform.co.uk has the details. That is the entire pitch, and it is the last you will hear of it in this document.

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