



Exploring Homeschooling:

A Beginner's Guide to Understanding Your Options



Welcome to Oxbridge's three-part guide to homeschooling. In this handbook you will find all the **key information** regarding homeschooling for children, parents & guardians.

This guide covers various aspects of **home-based education**, including legal requirements, teaching strategies, and support for parents educating children at home. With this guide, you will be able to make a well-informed decision on homeschooling your child, being fully aware of all legalities and practicalities.

Oxbridge are an online learning platform that enables students to study courses from **anywhere** they feel comfortable. We provide an abundance of course materials, study resources and documents to help students with revision. If you wish to home educate your child, you can use our courses and structure lesson plans accordingly. We are here to ease any concerns parents have regarding home-based education.



Part One

Foundations of Homeschooling

Homeschooling is an education method that has been practiced by families for years.

You can be forgiven for not knowing entirely what homeschooling is, as there are quite a few variables and research can be daunting. But fear not, we've got you covered. If you have been considering homeschooling your child but aren't sure where to start, this guide will answer any questions you may have.

In this section we will comprehensively break down homeschooling and what you need to be aware of to get started.



What is Homeschooling?

Homeschooling is an education method where parents or guardians take primary responsibility for teaching their children at home rather than enrolling them in a traditional public or private school. This method allows for a **customised learning** experience tailored to a child's individual needs, pace, and interests. Families may choose homeschooling for various reasons, including flexibility, religious or philosophical beliefs.

What is Elective Home Education?

The official name for homeschooling is '**elective home education**' (EHE). The word 'elective' summarises everything: homeschooling is a choice. Although there are legal hoops to jump through, every parent has the right to teach their child at home.

That's because parents and carers take responsibility for their child's education. UK law says that children must be in full-time education from age 5. Most children then finish mandatory education in the school year that they turn 16 once they're past compulsory school age. These rules apply to both homeschooling and traditional schools.



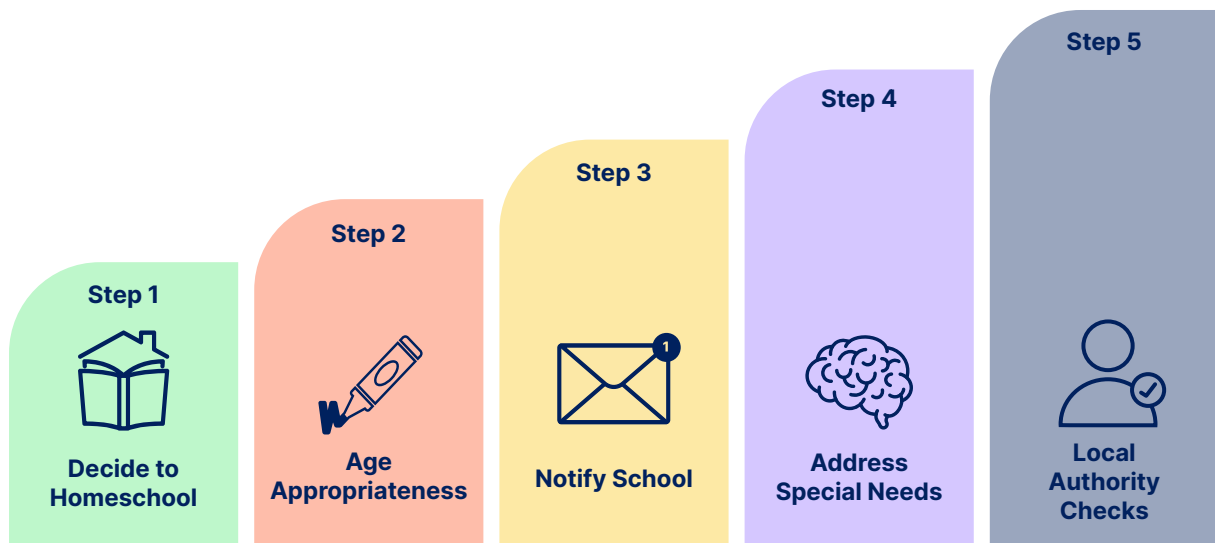


How Do I Start Home Schooling?

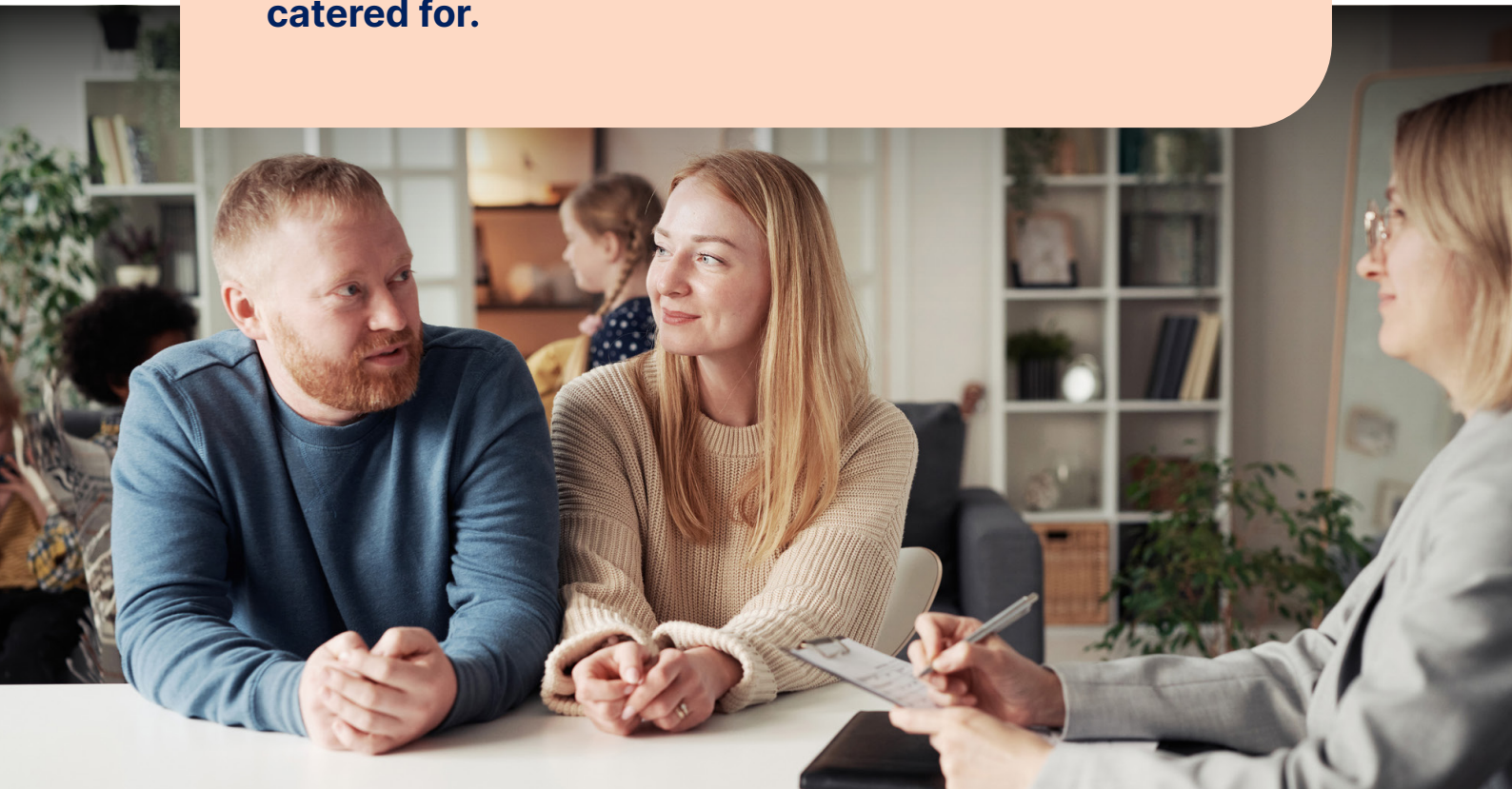
If you feel that homeschooling is the right choice for you, there are a few ways to begin:

- * If your child isn't yet five years old, you can start homeschooling when they are old enough.
- * If your child is currently enrolled in a traditional school, you should write to the headteacher telling them that you plan to home-school. They should confirm the choice and take the child off their register.
- * If your child has special educational needs, further permissions may apply – especially if they usually attend a special school.
- * There are other exceptions in certain circumstances – for example, if your child has a school attendance order, you might not be able to home-school.

Steps to Start Homeschooling

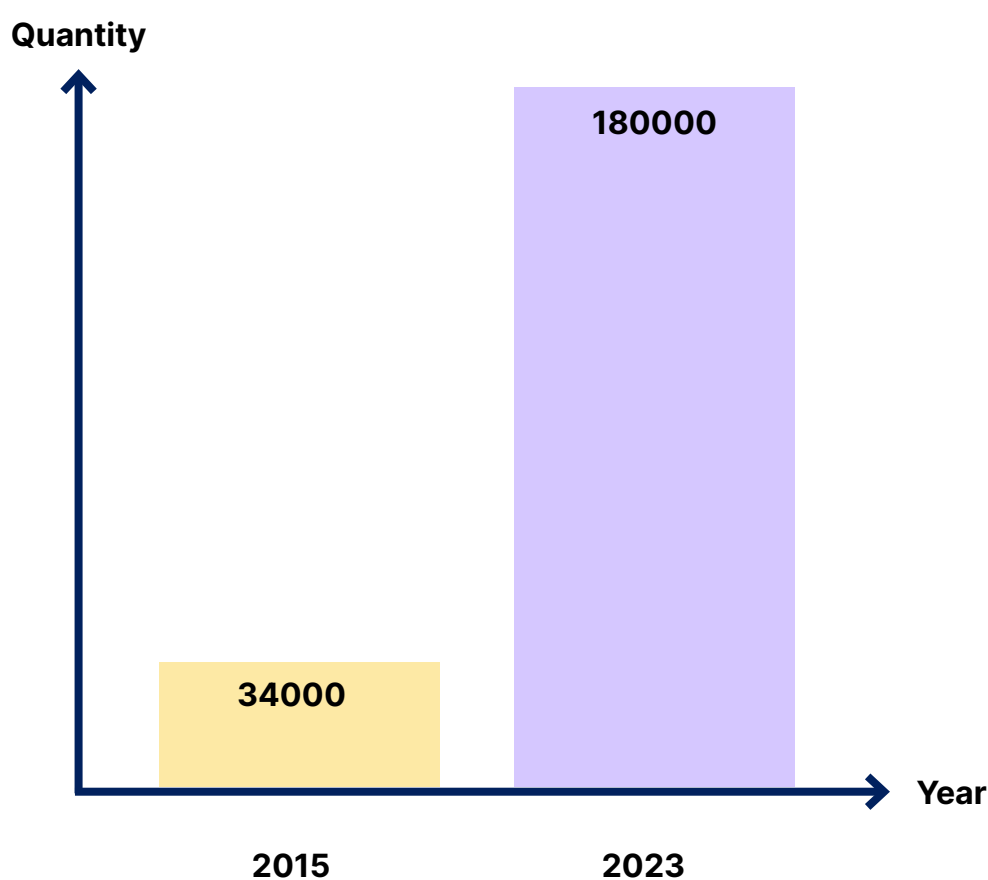


Once you begin home teaching, your local authority may make informal enquiries. These are home visits that make sure your child is getting a suitable education and that any special needs have been catered for.



How Popular is Homeschooling?

The numbers speak for themselves: homeschooling has experienced a significant surge in popularity. In the United Kingdom alone, the estimated number of homeschooled children has more than quadrupled from 34,000 in 2015 to a staggering 180,000 in 2023. This exponential growth demonstrates that more parents and guardians are opting for home education as an alternative approach to educating their children.



Growth in Numbers from 2015 to 2023

Finances

Understanding how homeschooling works is key. For a child to be appropriately home schooled, there is usually one stay-at-home parent. This will likely result in a two-income family household being reduced to one. In addition to this, course materials (e.g. books and stationery) **must be acquired independently**, there will be no primary or secondary school providing these resources.

Accurate budgeting is vital when making the decision to homeschool your child. Be aware of the course materials you need; how much they will cost and what adjustments need to be made to ensure homeschooling doesn't become a financial strain. Oxbridge offer [flexible payment options on our courses](#), making payments simple and affordable.



What are the benefits of homeschooling?

Homeschooling comes with several benefits, the main one being children can have a flexible and personalised education. They can learn at their own pace—no rushing through subjects or getting stuck waiting for others to catch up. It also allows for a **customised curriculum**, so students can focus on their strengths and interests. Under the national curriculum, English, Maths and Science are all mandatory subject.

During homeschooling, families get more quality time together, and there's less stress from peer pressure or school-related anxiety. Plus, learning can happen anywhere—at home, on trips, or even outdoors. With a supportive environment and fewer distractions, many kids thrive academically and emotionally in homeschooling.

Some of the benefits of homeschooling include;

Structured Curriculum – A well-organised curriculum aligned with educational standards, reducing the burden on parents to design lesson plans. If a student doesn't fare well in a typical classroom setting, being homeschooled will allow them to learn and develop at a more suitable pace.


Qualified Instructors – Certified teachers are on hand to offer expert guidance, ensuring students receive high-quality instruction. Homeschooled children will be supported throughout their studies, in an environment that they can thrive in when learning.



Interactive Learning Resources –


Digital platforms offer videos, quizzes, virtual labs, and simulations that make learning engaging and comprehensive. Of course, online learning materials can be replayed as many times as desired, ideal for visual learners.

Flexible Scheduling – Homeschooling families can customise learning schedules to fit their needs while maintaining academic progress. It is not a case of sitting inside a classroom for a scheduled number of hours per week. Students have the flexibility to learn throughout the day at different intervals and even on weekends.



Accredited Courses & Diplomas –

Whilst being homeschooled, students can still study accredited courses and diplomas. The qualifications earned are just as valid as those of any other learning institution.



Social Interaction – Virtual classrooms, discussion forums, and group projects provide opportunities for students to interact with peers. Although not rubbing elbows with fellow students physically, homeschooled students can still connect with their peers interactively and gain valuable social skills.

Specialised Subjects & Soft Courses – Home educated children are able to study unique courses which they wouldn't have if they attended a traditional school. This includes unique subjects such as CV writing, clear speaking and timekeeping.



One of the many soft skill courses we provide.



Assessment & Progress Tracking –

Regular testing, grading, and progress reports are available to help monitor student performance.

Parental Support & Training –

Some institutions offer guidance and resources to help parents become more effective educators.

College & Career Preparation –

If you wish to progress onto higher education, homeschooling and gaining accredited qualifications is an ideal way to do so.

Some of the disadvantages of homeschooling includes;

- ✱ **Takes Time and More Responsibility** – Requires significant parental involvement and planning. Personal tutors' schedules can also become complicated.
- ✱ **Socialisation Concerns** – Fewer built-in peer interactions unless actively facilitated. By being homeschooled, students are unable to re-create the authentic classroom experience.
- ✱ **Legal and Curriculum Requirements** – Vary by region and may be complex.
- ✱ **Limited Access to Extracurriculars and Facilities** – Sports, labs, and specialised courses may require extra effort to find.

Source: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/parenting-wiki/homeschooling#:~:text=Homeschooling%20is%20where%20parents%20choose,or%20elective%20home%20education>



What are the Legalities of Homeschooling?

United Kingdom

Homeschooling (or "home education") is legal in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Parents do not need permission but must ensure their child receives a suitable education. Local authorities may conduct informal checks.

Europe

Laws vary widely. Countries like the UK, France, and Belgium allow homeschooling with regulations, while Germany and Sweden have strict bans or severe restrictions. In France, parents must notify authorities and undergo inspections.

***Because laws frequently change, it is essential for homeschooling families to check their local regulations to ensure compliance.**

Source: <https://www.ivyeducation.co.uk/insights/homeschooling-requirements-uk>

Deciding If Homeschooling Is Right for Your Family

Assessing Your Family's Needs and Values

Deciding if homeschooling is your family's desired route can often be a complicated process. With so many variables, it is important to be absolutely certain that this is the path you wish to take. Every family has different priorities, such as academic goals, religious or cultural beliefs, learning styles, and scheduling preferences.

Time Considerations

Time considerations play a significant role in deciding whether homeschooling is a suitable option for your family. Homeschooling requires a substantial time commitment from parents, who often serve as primary educators or facilitators of their child's learning.

Addressing Common Concerns and Myths

When considering homeschooling, it's important to address common concerns and debunk myths that may create hesitation. One common misconception is that homeschooled children lack socialisation opportunities – however, this is not the case. Many homeschooling families engage in co-ops, extracurricular activities, and community events that provide rich social experiences.

Sadly, a lot of students who attended traditional secondary schools found their experience to be less than enjoyable. Homeschooling eliminates this possibility completely.

Another concern is that parents may not be qualified to teach; however, with Oxbridge, you have access to structured curricula, online courses, and educational resources. Parents can effectively guide their children's learning. Additionally, some worry that homeschooled students may struggle with college admissions or career readiness, but many universities and employers recognise homeschooling as a legitimate and often highly effective educational path. Don't let homeschooling myths affect your decision making.



Part Two

Designing Your Homeschool Program

Understanding your child's needs is vital when it comes to homeschooling.

Everybody is different, a method that works effectively for your child may not be the same for another and vice versa. For example, if your child has special education needs (SEN), your homeschool program will differ from children who do not. In addition to this, you will need the [council's permission to educate them at home.](#)



Choosing a Homeschooling Style

One of the most important decisions you will make is the style of homeschooling for your child. Home education allows you to choose between different styles – unlike more traditional schools where they follow a stricter method of teaching.

Traditional School-at-Home

Traditional School-at-Home refers to a homeschooling approach that closely mirrors the structure and curriculum of conventional schools. This method typically involves a set schedule, formal lesson plans, textbooks, and assessments like those found in public or private schools.



Unschooling and Child-Led Learning

Unschooling and Child-Led Learning is a homeschooling approach that prioritises a child's natural curiosity and interests rather than following a structured curriculum. Now, admittedly, this is a lesser tried approach. But the benefits for the child, particularly if they are displaying early signs of a creative mind, can be phenomenal.

Classical Education

Classical Education is a time-tested homeschooling approach based on the trivium, a three-stage model of learning that aligns with a child's cognitive development. The trivium consists of the Grammar Stage (early years), where children focus on memorising, foundational knowledge, and language skills; the Logic Stage, placing more of an emphasis on critical thinking, reasoning, and analytical skills; and the Rhetoric Stage (secondary school years), where students refine their communication, debate, and persuasive writing abilities.

Montessori and Charlotte Mason Approaches

Montessori, Charlotte Mason, and other approaches offer unique homeschooling philosophies that emphasise hands-on learning, creativity, and a love for knowledge.

- * Montessori Education focuses on self-directed learning, hands-on activities, and a prepared environment where children explore at their own pace. It encourages independence, practical life skills, and sensory-based learning, making it ideal for young learners. Oxbridge offers a [level 3 course in Montessori Pedagogy](#) for those interested in this approach.
- * Charlotte Mason Education emphasises living books (engaging literature instead of dry textbooks), nature study, narration, and short but focused lessons. This approach nurtures a child's curiosity and appreciation for beauty, art, and the natural world.

What Curriculum Should I Use When Home Schooling?

Researching curricula options is an essential step in designing a successful homeschooling experience, as it ensures that the chosen program aligns with your child's learning style, educational goals, and family values. There are many curriculum options available, ranging from structured, pre-packaged programs to flexible, interest-based learning approaches.

You can follow the national curriculum in England, which is the government's standard outline of subjects (e.g- maths, English and science.)

This option is best if you want your child to learn the same things they would in school. Alternatively, you can choose your own way of educating, as long as it is deemed suitable enough by your local authority. Suitable and effective education will allow your child to reach their full potential.

For families seeking a rigorous, well-rounded education, Oxbridge offers accredited courses ideal for homeschooling. These programs emphasise critical thinking, independent study, and in-depth exploration of subjects.

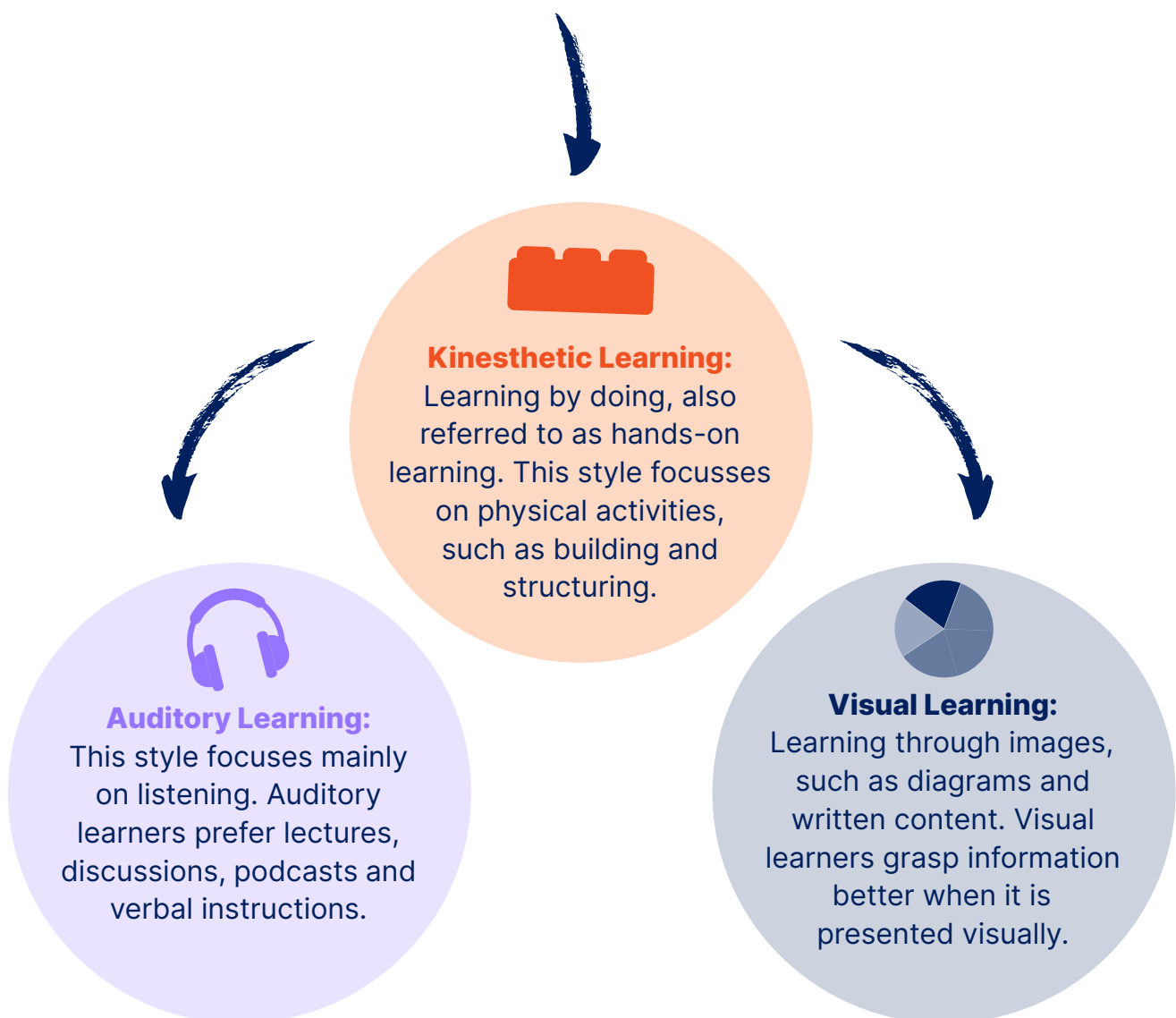
Other options include traditional curricula, which follow standard grade-level expectations, online schools, which provide structured virtual learning experiences, and customised eclectic approaches, where parents mix different resources to create a personalised education plan. When researching curricula, consider factors like accreditation, teaching methods, assessment styles, and flexibility to find the best fit for your child's needs.



Adapting Materials to Fit Learning Styles

Adapting materials to fit learning styles is key to creating an effective and engaging homeschooling experience. Every child learns differently, and customising educational resources ensures better comprehension and retention.

The three main learning styles are:





Creating a Homeschool Teaching Schedule

Structuring a typical day, week, or year in homeschooling helps provide balance and consistency, ensuring that learning remains effective and enjoyable. It's important to establish a flexible framework that suits your child's needs while maintaining structure to keep progress on track.

Daily Structure

A typical homeschooling day might begin with a morning routine that includes review or planning. For example, you could start with a short, focused lesson (30–60 minutes) on a core subject like math or language arts. Breaks, lunch times, and movement activities should be incorporated to keep energy levels up.

After the first lesson, you might move on to project-based or creative subjects (art, science, etc.), followed by an afternoon session of independent work or reading. Depending on your approach, you could schedule time for hands-on activities, field trips, or educational games. Flexibility is key to accommodating your child's focus and interests.



Weekly Structure

During the week, you could rotate subjects so that each day has a mix of different activities. For example, Monday might focus on language arts and math, Tuesday on history and science, and Wednesday on arts and physical activities. You could also build in time for co-op classes, group learning, or extracurricular activities that complement your curriculum.

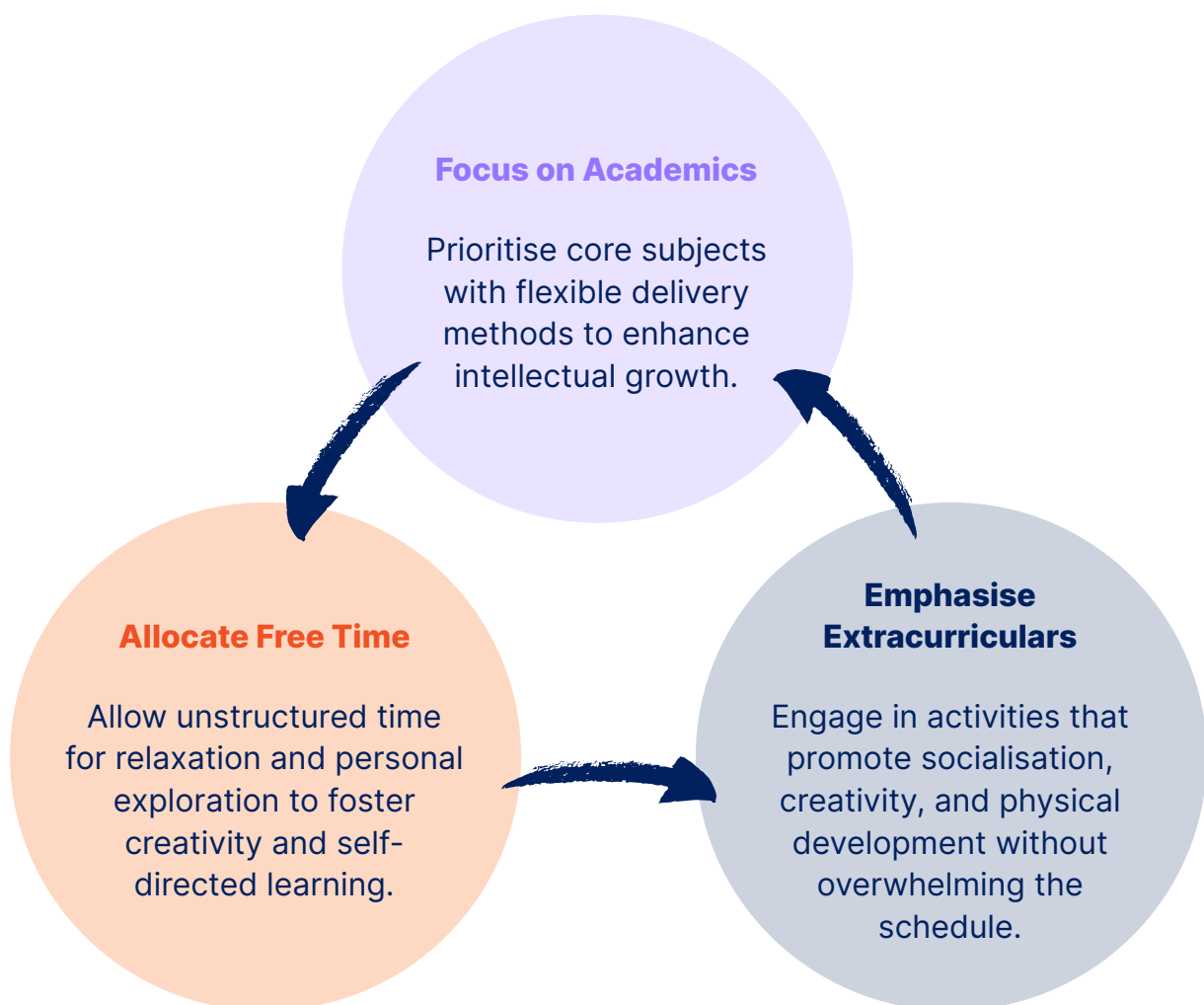
Yearly Structure

The school year can be structured around the seasons or the child's interest, with breaks in between for vacations or family time. Some families choose to take a more year-round approach, with flexible breaks rather than the traditional summer off. Planning out long-term goals, such as completing specific projects or reaching milestones in each subject, helps keep the year organised.



How to Balance Academics, Extracurriculars and Free Time

Balancing academics, extracurriculars, and free time in homeschooling requires thoughtful planning to ensure that children have a well-rounded experience that promotes intellectual growth, personal development, and relaxation. Finding the right balance helps prevent burnout while ensuring that children remain engaged and motivated.



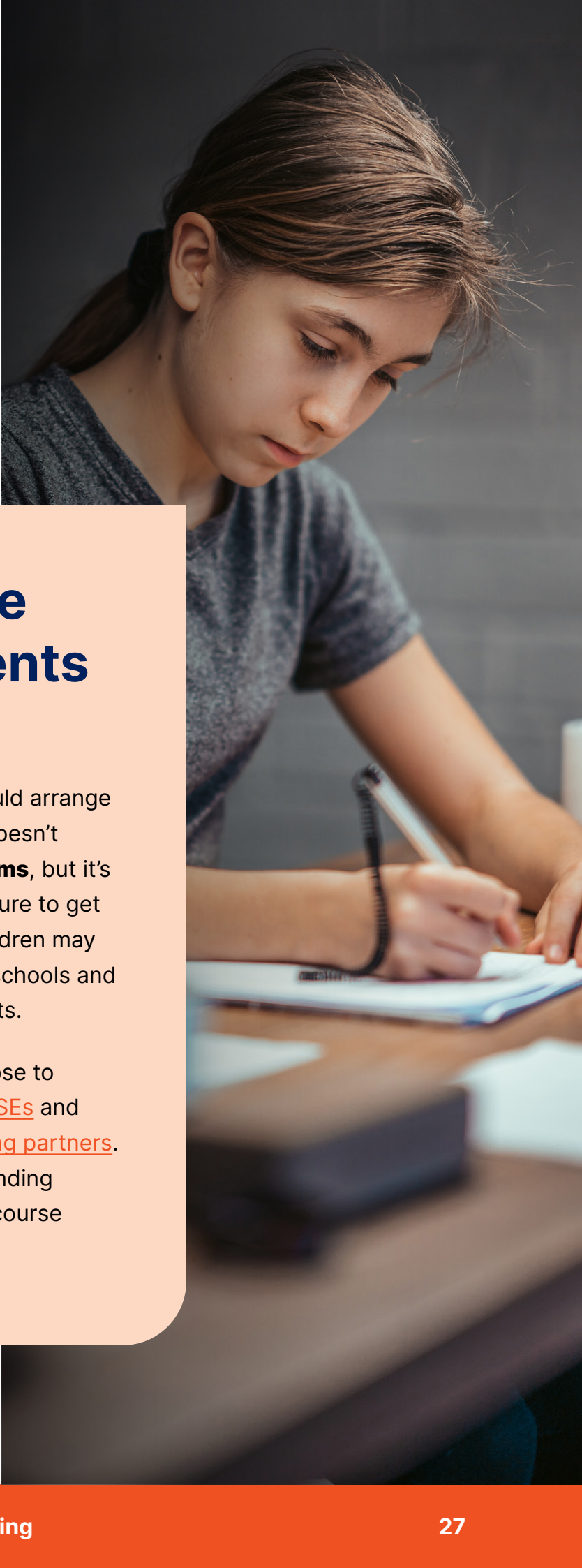
How to Adapt Homeschool Studies for Flexibility and Growth

Adapting Schedules for Flexibility and Growth is essential in homeschooling to ensure that learning remains enjoyable, effective, and aligned with your child's evolving needs.

Flexibility in your schedule allows for adjustments based on your child's pace, interests, and life circumstances, while also encouraging a growth-oriented approach to education.



- * **Personalised Pacing:** One of the key advantages of homeschooling is the ability to tailor the pace to your child's learning style and comprehension level. If a child grasps a concept quickly, you can move ahead, allowing for more advanced material or new activities. If they need more time, you can slow down without the pressure of keeping up with classmates.
- * **Incorporating Breaks and Downtime:** Flexibility also means knowing when to step back and allow for breaks. Some days might need more downtime due to fatigue, stress, or outside factors (like personal issues or weather-related activities).
- * **Adjusting to Changing Interests:** As your child's interests grow and shift, your schedule should reflect those changes. For example, if your child develops a keen interest in a subject like history or nature, you might adjust the week to allow for more in-depth exploration in that area.



How Do Home School Students Sit Exams?

When homeschooling, you should arrange exams in advance. Your child doesn't have to take **standardised exams**, but it's usually a good idea for their future to get some formal [qualifications](#). Children may be able to take exams at local schools and colleges with prior arrangements.

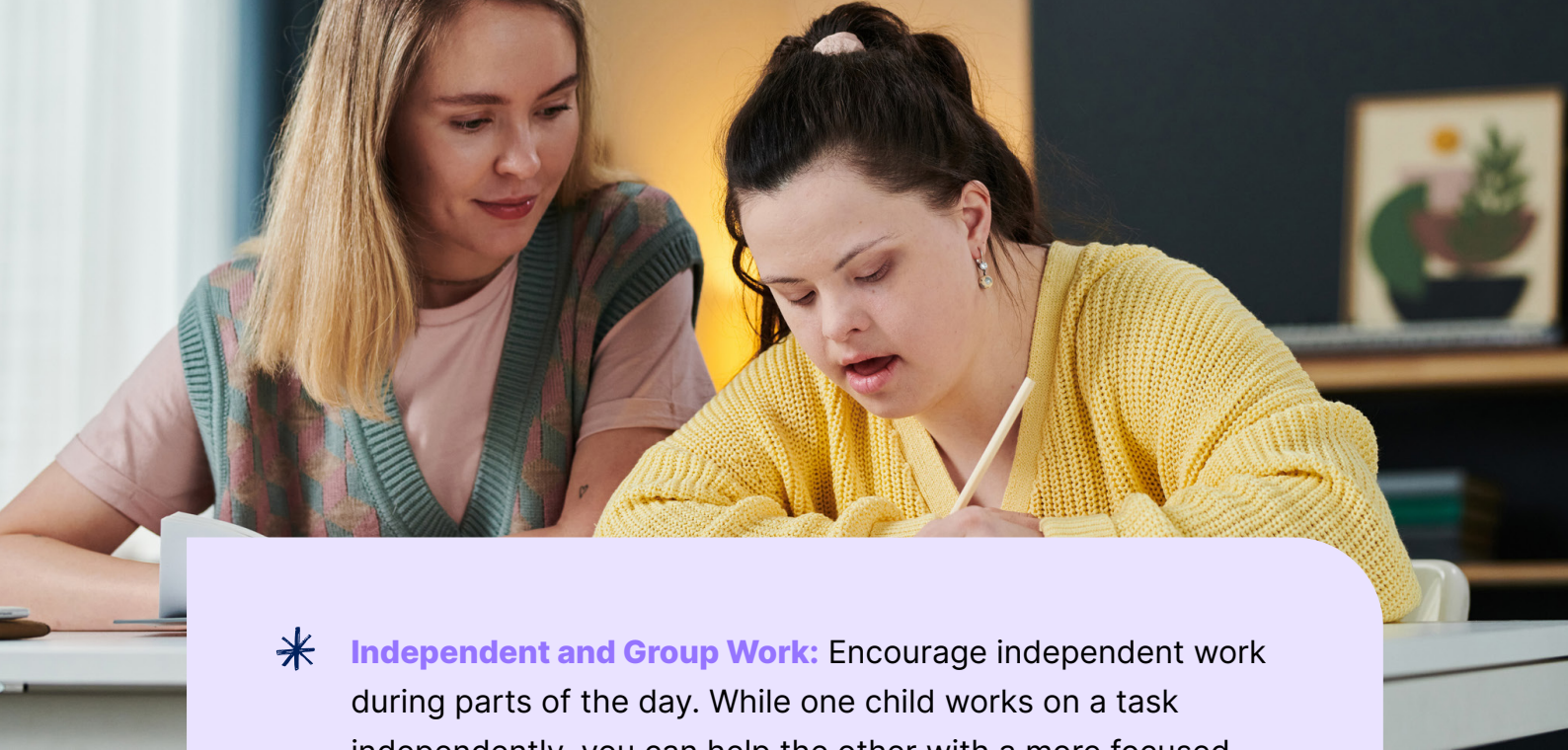
Many homeschoolers also choose to take formal exams, such as [GCSEs](#) and [A-Levels](#), through [online learning partners](#). This saves both the stress of finding an exam centre and arranging course teaching materials.

Part Three

Teaching and Learning

Teaching Multiple Ages

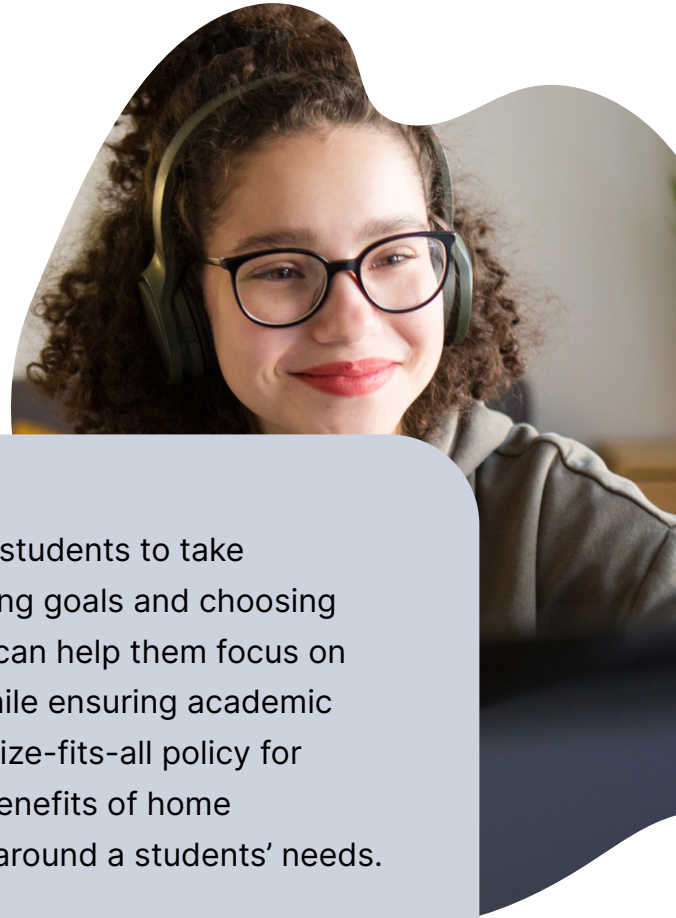
- * **Use Unit Studies:** Unit studies allow you to focus on a common theme or topic (like animals, space, or history) that can be explored at different levels. For example, a younger child might engage in hands-on activities or listen to simpler explanations, while an older sibling delves deeper into research or complex discussions. This approach fosters collaborative learning while meeting each child's individual needs.
- * **Differentiated Instruction:** Tailor the content and teaching methods to each child's developmental level within the same subject. For instance, in a history lesson, a younger child might focus on memorising basic facts, while an older sibling could be writing reports, analysing primary sources, or engaging in discussions. This strategy ensures that each child is challenged appropriately, but still involved in the same subject matter.



- * **Independent and Group Work:** Encourage independent work during parts of the day. While one child works on a task independently, you can help the other with a more focused lesson. Then, come together for group activities like reading aloud, discussing a topic, or completing a hands-on project. This balance allows siblings to learn the importance of teamwork.
- * **Peer Teaching:** Allow older siblings to teach or help their younger siblings in certain areas. Peer teaching not only reinforces the older child's knowledge but also builds leadership skills and confidence. For example, an older child could explain a math concept to a younger sibling or read a story aloud to them.
- * **Flexible Scheduling:** When teaching siblings of different ages, it's important to remain flexible with your schedule. Set aside specific times for one-on-one lessons with each child, but also carve out moments when everyone can learn together. A one-size-fits-all method is not conducive to successful homeschooling.
- * **Incorporating Projects:** Group projects can be a fun and effective way to bring siblings together. Whether it's building a model, creating a timeline, or researching a topic, collaborative projects allow siblings to combine their strengths and learn from each other.

Independent Learning for Older Students

Independent learning for older students is a crucial aspect of homeschooling that fosters self-motivation, responsibility, and critical thinking. Here are some strategies to encourage independence in older students:



- * **Personalised Learning Plans:** Allow students to take ownership of their education by setting goals and choosing areas of interest. A customised plan can help them focus on subjects they're passionate about while ensuring academic standards are met. There is no one-size-fits-all policy for homeschooling, one of the biggest benefits of home education is tailoring learning styles around a students' needs.
- * **Online Courses and Resources:** Encourage the use of online platforms like Oxbridge, which offer structured yet flexible courses that promote independent study. These platforms help students learn at their own pace, manage deadlines, and engage in self-directed learning.
- * **Project-Based Learning:** Assign long-term projects or research assignments that require students to plan, execute, and assess their work. This develops skills like time management, problem-solving, and self-discipline.
- * **Self-Assessment and Reflection:** Teach students how to evaluate their own work, set goals for improvement, and reflect on their learning. This process encourages a deeper understanding of their strengths and areas for growth.

- * **Minimal Supervision:** Allow older students to take on more responsibility by giving them room to work independently. Check in periodically to provide guidance or clarify questions, but avoid micromanaging.
- * **Incorporate Real-World Learning:** Encourage older students to apply their knowledge in real-life situations, like internships, volunteering, or hands-on projects. This makes learning more relevant and promotes practical skill development.

By nurturing independent learning, older students gain the confidence and skills they need to succeed academically and in life.



Learning From Home

More parents than ever are choosing to home-school. There are several benefits, but parents should take care to follow a quality curriculum and book exams early. In many cases, it's beneficial to work with an online teaching provider. At Oxbridge, we offer internationally recognised qualifications with comprehensive course materials. [Check our courses](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

FAQs

1. At what age can I start homeschooling my child?

You can start homeschooling as early as preschool, but compulsory education laws vary by country (e.g., age 5 in the UK).

2. Can I homeschool part-time?

Yes! Some families choose flexi-schooling, where children attend school part-time and homeschool for the rest.

3. Can a child with special needs be homeschooled?

Absolutely! Homeschooling allows for customised learning tailored to their pace and needs. Additional support may be available through local education authorities.

Legal & Administrative

4. Do I need to register my child as homeschooled?

This depends on your location. In the UK, you only need to inform the school if your child is already enrolled.

5. Can I get financial support for homeschooling?

In most cases, homeschooling is privately funded, but some regions offer support for special needs children or specific courses.

Teaching & Learning

6. How do I ensure my child is learning effectively?

Regular assessments, progress tracking, and adapting teaching methods based on learning styles can help.

7. What if I'm not confident teaching certain subjects?

You can use online courses, tutors, co-op groups, or educational apps to supplement learning.

8. Can homeschooling work for gifted children?

Yes! Homeschooling allows gifted students to move ahead at their own pace without being held back by a fixed curriculum.

Socialisation & Activities

9. Do homeschooled children miss out on social experiences?

Not necessarily! Many homeschoolers join co-ops, sports teams, music lessons, and community events.

10. Can homeschooled children participate in standardised tests like SATs or GCSEs?

Yes, they can register as private candidates at testing centers.

11. Can homeschoolers go on educational field trips?

Absolutely! Homeschooling provides more flexibility for real-world learning experiences like museums, science centers, and nature outings.

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