

Home Access aggregation for schools



Home Access is.....

The government's Home Access programme provides grant funding to families from low-income families to purchase a computer and internet access to support their children's learning from home. Families are likely to be eligible for a Home Access Grant if they are eligible for free school meals (whether they actually claim them or not). N.B. Where authorities are operating free school meals pilot across the authority, only pupils who would have been eligible under normal assessment criteria will be eligible. Initially the programme will target learners in years 3 to 9 inclusive.

Aggregation – what is it? Why you might want to do it and how.

The Home Access programme normally provides a grant directly to parents who have successfully applied which they can then use to purchase a compliant computer and internet package from a range of approved suppliers. Aggregation by a school is optional, but means that individual parents can opt to let the school order the package on their behalf as part of a bulk purchase scheme.

A school might want to do this to target support at its most disadvantaged pupils, to engage some of the most hard to reach parents, or so it can become part of a wider scheme addressing not just the low income families, but aiming for wider provision of computers to pupils.

A parent might want to do this to get the support of the school in choosing a package that will most benefit their child. One that will be compatible with wider school technology plans for instance using a learning platform or for online reporting.

Here's an overview of an aggregation process a school might go through...

Prepare

Decide if you want to aggregate

- Look at benefits and any risks
- Find out about running an e-Learning Foundation scheme?

• Consider if you could work together with cluster schools

- Assess demand – ask parents
- Understand the rules

Affiliate with e-Learning Foundation

Register with the Home Access Grant

Administration Service

Define offer(s)

- To Home Access Grant recipients
- To other parents
- Work with suppliers
- Cost/donation values

Advertise and launch

Advertise

- Check for best practice advice (including e-Learning Foundation)
- Parents newsletter
- Posters

Launch event

- Slides
- Demo kit from supplier
- Choice of device ie netbook/ laptop/desktop
- Help filling in forms

Post launch

- Send out more info and provide support
- Encourage participation

Order

Order

- Send off Home Access forms
- Negotiate with suppliers
- Receive Home Access Grant

Cards

- Match the grant card with applicant data and choice of device
- Order from supplier

Train and use (optional)

Train

- Training for learners
- Training for parents
- Training for teaching staff

Use

- Increase use of learning platform/VLE
- Monitor amount of homework using ICT
- Increase communication with parents using ICT

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Frequently asked questions

1 Q. Who can aggregate?

A. Any school with a significant number of families likely to benefit who are not in the local authorities of Durham, Shropshire and Hull as these authorities will be running local authority-wide aggregation schemes. Running a scheme requires a significant amount of administration work, so running it for a very small number of pupils may not be worthwhile. Schools who wish to aggregate must be affiliated to the e-Learning Foundation. Academies may also apply to run a scheme and they do not have to be affiliated. Academies in Durham, Shropshire and Hull can choose to apply independently or to support their local scheme.

2 Q. Do schools have to provide an aggregation schemes?

A. No, it is purely voluntary for schools. It should be considered how it might fit in with other school priorities, for instance increasing parental engagement. Schools can support this process without formally aggregating. If a school does not elect to run an aggregation scheme then their families will not miss out; they can still apply for a Home Access Grant.

3 Q. Can schools cluster?

A. Yes schools can cluster in their promotion, ordering and administration of the grants, however they must all be e-Learning foundation affiliated and must register to aggregate individually.

4 Q. Do all eligible parents have to opt into an aggregation scheme?

A. No. Eligible parents can elect to use the standard retail scheme and use their grant to order a package outside of any school scheme. It is the responsibility of the school or the academy to communicate the aggregation opportunity to parents in a balanced manner so they can make an informed choice about the purchasing route which best suits them.

5 Q. Do schools running a Home Access aggregation scheme recommend a particular package?

A. Schools must give eligible parents a choice of packages. However they may advise parents on the educational benefits of various packages, including what the school may be ordering for other students, for instance as part of an e-Learning Foundation scheme.

6 Q. What would my school have to do and by when?

A. In the first instance a school needs to be registered with the e-Learning Foundation; you then need to register with the Home Access Grant Approved Supplier before 28th February. As HAGAS will be accepting individual's applications from early January it is worth noting that by registering after this point means some of your parents may have already benefited. See the summary diagram or the "Home Access School aggregation rules and guidelines" document for more details.

7 Q. Who is responsible for returns?

A. Families will be able to deal directly with suppliers where products are faulty and within the warranty period, however return and refunds will need to be managed by the grant redemption manager. Once a family has applied for a grant and been accepted they are part of that scheme and are not able to drop out from there on.

8 Q. What role does the e-Learning Foundation have?

A. Since 2001, the e-Learning Foundation (e-LF) have run schemes in schools which provide computers to whole cohorts of pupils. They have experience of doing this with over 100,000 pupils in just under 400 schools nationwide. An e-LF scheme can be run alongside Home Access aggregation to provide computers to those not eligible to Home Access Grants.

Please note: this document is not the complete set of rules. More detailed information can be found in the documents listed below.

Home Access Grant Administration Service - Home Access school aggregation rules and guidelines, School aggregation terms and conditions, School aggregation registration form and Home Access Grant application (for parents).

www.homeaccess.org.uk and 0333 200 1005 (Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm)

e-Learning Foundation - School Affiliation Benefits and Affiliation Application Form. www.e-learningfoundation.com

Becta - range of information about the programme. www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess

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