

Extracts from Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Report Stage (Second Day)

Debated on Tuesday 18 March 2025

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[Bradley Thomas](#)

"On home education... not only is it a case of getting the balance right between privacy and the right to educate at home, but it is important that home educators do not feel stigmatised by the ability of the state to enter private property under less-than-forthcoming means that enable it subsequently to make an assessment of home education that is completely contrary to the reality experienced by the child in their own home?"

[Munira Wilson](#)

"There is a real fear that this legislation, which is seeking to safeguard children who go missing from education, will over-police home educators, most of whom are doing a great job. In fact, a lot of them home educate their children not because they want to but because they feel forced to."

[Graham Stuart](#)

"This Government are so certain in their belief that they know best that they will not even allow parents the freedom to educate their own children without state interference. Buried within this Bill is a new legal requirement for local authorities to maintain a register of children not in school—a policy that I recognise was in the Conservative party's manifesto, but which has the potential to be not just unhelpful, but actively harmful to children.

Our country has long upheld the primacy of parents, not the state, in determining the best education for their children, and this proposal seeks to undermine that fundamental covenant... The state thinks that it has a divine right to infringe on every aspect of the child's life—or, at least, this Government do. They want to know what home-educated children do at the weekends and during the holidays. If that information is not required for children who attend mainstream schools, what is the justification for demanding it for children who are home-schooled?"

[Abtisam Mohamed](#)

"Finally, I would like to give the House a message from many of my constituents who are home educators. There are some who say, "Home educators do a good job, but". A whole community is dismissed in seven words. Just for once, can we acknowledge the thousands of families who are taking responsibility for their children's education, often as a result of shortcomings in the school system...? Their work, and that of their children, should be appreciated and valued. We should not stigmatise home education; if child protection laws and systems fail, it is they that should require scrutiny."

[Gideon Amos](#)

"...the Bill goes wrong where it puts ideology ahead of the interests of the child and loses sight of those interests.

Any conflation of children being educated other than at a traditional school with safeguarding concerns is not borne out by the evidence. It is also an ideological position that is an insult to the parents and families of the 110,000 children—our constituents up and down the country—who are doing a great job in ensuring that their children are educated, whether they are home tutored or educated otherwise... Child for child, those educated at home are the safest and least in need of protection, so the overwhelming weight of new bureaucracy and legislation tackling home education as a sector is not justified.

These powers [of demanding data about other inputs to a child's education] are really extreme and extraordinary. Instead, we should be supporting the interests of the child.

We should be supporting home-educated children and allowing them to sit exams without charging them hundreds and hundreds of pounds for the privilege... Without such a provision, can Ministers conceive of anything in the Bill that supports home-educated children? There is plenty to regulate them, control them and expose them to rigorous inspection, but there is not a single clause in the whole Bill that supports children being educated at home."

[Lizzi Collinge](#)

"I have recognised, and will continue to recognise, that [the Sharif case] obviously does not speak to the vast majority of people who home-educate their children. However, as parliamentarians, we have a duty to protect the most vulnerable, and sometimes that includes regulating the majority, who are decent, honest people.

I want to reassure parents that the new regulations, such as registers for children not in school and the capacity to compel school attendance in certain cases, are not aimed at limiting home education as a whole or about policing how people choose to educate."

Later, in response to Graham Stuart's interjection that "The intention is not the thing; it is the actual impact that counts."

"What I do not accept is that the proposal is somehow a major imposition. I do not believe that checking that children are receiving a decent education and are safe and well cared for is a major imposition on parents, and I think all good parents would welcome that. These measures are being put in place to protect and safeguard vulnerable children. Having no oversight of children not in school is an unacceptable risk to children's welfare."

[Gregory Stafford](#)

"This Bill is yet another example of Labour turning children's education into an ideological battleground. I have said it before, but I will say it again: Labour clearly hates any form of education that is not state-controlled, local authority-run schooling, and this Bill is another example of that.... Most of this Bill is trying to solve a problem that does not exist...Many of those I have spoken to feel vilified for choosing to remove their children from mainstream education in favour of alternative specialised provision tailored to the individual needs of their children."

[Nick Timothy](#)

[on academies] "I am afraid the Education Secretary and her team, however, know exactly what they are doing. Their ideology blinds them to evidence and leaves them deaf to advice from those who know what they are talking about."

[Damien Hinds](#)

"Where are those in the modern Labour party who will say, "No, we will not be bound by ideology. We are going to do what is in the best interests of the children"? I hope there will be some of those champions in the other place."

[Vikki Slade](#)

"There is one part of this Bill that I believe needs to be amended: the level of unnecessary scrutiny that is being imposed on parents who choose to home-educate their children. Rather than protecting them, elements of the proposed register risk putting such families in danger.

Let me be clear: I support the principle of the register. As corporate parents, local authorities need to know where children are if they are not attending school. Collecting some information and the reasons for elective home education is important, not only for child protection but so that authorities can plan for the future....

I am also concerned about the excessive reporting requirements for the register...That not only places an unrealistic burden on families, but is impractical for local authorities to manage."

[Vikki Slade again](#)

"I think a lot of people who do not know anything about home education miss the fact that there is a whole community of home educators, and home-educated children spend plenty of time with their peers, but they are just different peers—others who prefer to have their education outside a school environment—and there is a risk of such organisations being driven underground or lost altogether.

In summary, I support the principles of the Bill, but I urge the Government to consider the amendments on excessive and potentially harmful requirements imposed on home-educated children."

[Neil O'Brien](#)

"I hope, as we go to the debate in the other place, that we are in complete agreement on the excessive nature of some of the requirements being made of home schoolers, who we must not treat as illegitimate just because they choose to educate their children in a certain way."