



ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



Education Welfare Service
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If you are thinking of or are interested in exploring the option of home education and your child currently attends school, you should contact staff at your child's school in the first instance. You can also speak to the local authority home education lead and/or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) allocated to your child's school.

If you would like further information about Elective Home Education, please email the Education Welfare Service:
homeeducation@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

Elective home education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe a parent's decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to home tuition, alternative provision and remote learning provided by school or a local authority.

In deciding to home educate, parents take full responsibility for their child's education. The local authority does not offer any financial support to home educating parents.

This guide will provide you with information about starting a home education programme, how the local authority can help and, importantly, home education and the law. We have included a list of useful websites at the end to further assist you.

Please note that the term “**parent**” is used in this guidance to refer to anyone with parental responsibility for a child.

2. What the law says

The education of a child at home is permitted subject to certain conditions imposed by the Education Act 1996 Section 7, which states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) To his age, ability and aptitude, and***
- b) To any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”***

Parents' legal duties are set out in Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act and are included in the most recent Department for Education (DfE) Guidance for Elective Home Education, which can be found via the following link: [Elective home education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/elective-home-education)

3. Starting a home education programme

Deciding to educate at home is a major step and a big commitment as far as time and resources are concerned. Do think long and hard about this. Talk and listen to your child, and plan what you intend to do before finally deciding. Look at any costs that may be involved for equipment, visits, books, tutors, etc.

In addition, consider the social side of growing up. Contact with other children, joint activities and the stimulus of seeing other children's work are real benefits of a fully rounded education, which all aid the social and emotional development of individual children.

Before starting a home education programme, think carefully about the following:

- ***If there are problems with your relationship with the school, we strongly advise you to speak to your child's headteacher and to contact us if you think it would be helpful. Before asking for your child to be taken off the school roll and educated at home, it is important to consider all options and be aware of alternative courses of action, such as reaching a resolution with school. Here, independent mediation can be really helpful.***
- ***If you are planning to home educate because of issues around behaviour or attendance, your child's school and the local authority will want to help and explore other options with you before you decide to home educate. Please do speak to your child's headteacher, the school's Education Welfare Officer and the local authority's Elective Home Education lead for advice.***

Children under 5 years old

If your child is below compulsory school age you do not need to tell us about your plans to home educate. However, we would be grateful if you get in touch so that we can offer early assistance and information.

Children of statutory school age (5 – 16 years)

If your child is on the roll of a school (eg. registered), you must write to the principal/headteacher of the school and notify them about your intention to withdraw your child from school to educate them at home. Once you have provided written notification, your child's name may be removed from the school's register. We strongly advise that you discuss your decision with school staff before taking this step.

It is likely that arrangements will be made for you to attend an Elective Home Education School Meeting with a senior member of school staff and either the school's allocated local authority Education Welfare Officer or the local authority Elective Home Education lead. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss your decision to electively home educate with the school and professionals to ensure that you have explored all other options and have access to any support available, such as Early Help. The Elective Home Education School Meeting can take place at any

stage before or after you have formally notified the school that you have decided to home educate.

If your child is not currently registered and on the roll of a school, and you are electively home educating, the law does not currently require you to notify the local authority of your intentions to home educate your child. However, it is recommended that you still inform us about your intentions.

Children attending special schools

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is attending a special school, you must seek permission from the local authority before your child's name is taken off the school roll for elective home education.

Children with an EHCP

If your child has an EHCP but does not attend a special school, your child's Special Needs Assessment Service case manager will be informed. An emergency Annual Review meeting may be arranged to discuss your decision to home educate. See section 4 for more information about children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

How we can help

When the local authority is notified that parents have chosen to home educate, initial contact will be made to establish what provision is being made. We will arrange a home visit in order to meet you and your child, and send you an Elective Home Education Child Information Form (CIF) to complete and return giving us the details of your education plan.

Once a year we will send you a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) to complete and return with information about what your child is learning. This form will ask you to describe the form and content of your educational programme. You will be asked to evidence your child's progress and include examples of their work in whatever format you choose. This might include copies or photographs of work, tutor reports and online learning reports.

You may choose to receive a home visit from the local authority Elective Home education lead instead or participate in a remote Microsoft Teams meeting. If your child has an EHCP, you will be expected to provide evidence of how you are meeting your child's specific learning needs. The information you provide will be checked by a specialist SEN teacher in order to ensure that your child's needs are being met as outlined in the EHCP. This will feed into Annual Review meetings, which will continue in the same way as for a pupil with an EHCP in school. The local

authority's Elective Home Education Lead will attend the Annual Review meetings in place of school staff.

What an efficient, suitable and full-time home education might look like

The Department for Education has stated that elective home education must be full-time and 'efficient and suitable'. A definition of 'efficient and suitable' could include the following:

- The education provision for an electively home educated child should be age and ability appropriate and demonstrate the progress the child is making.
- Electively home educated children and young people should be provided with learning opportunities that will enable them to develop and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge needed for life in the 21st Century.
- Parents should consider the best teaching style for themselves and for their children before embarking on elective home education. Whatever style is adopted, it should allow children to become actively involved and provide opportunities for learning through practical activities, which may well change over time.
- The development of social skills is an essential part of a balanced and efficient education. Learning activities out and about in the community give children opportunities to experience social contacts, such as clubs and activity groups (eg. gymnastics, drama, Girl Guides, cubs, Sunday school, young musicians, youth choir and swimming, etc).

The National Curriculum

Parents are not legally required to follow the National Curriculum. However, some find it useful to know what the National Curriculum is and what children are taught in school. The current National Curriculum subjects are listed below:

- **English**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science**
- **Art and Design**
- **Citizenship (at Key Stage 3 and above)**
- **Computing**
- **Design and Technology**
- **Geography**
- **History**
- **Languages (from Key Stage 2)**
- **Music**

- **Physical Education**

Children should also be taught Religious Education (RE), and age-appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

Definition of full-time education

Electively home educating parents aren't obliged to cover teaching hours as a usual school day does. Each family will vary in how they organise their days to ensure that enough time is spent on teaching and learning each week.

Information on teaching / learning resources

A range of resources are available for parents and children, which you may find useful, including:

- Local library services - books for reading for pleasure and information, as well as affordable internet access.
- Commercially produced workbooks related to the National Curriculum, available to purchase in high street bookshops.
- Educational broadcasts (TV, radio, online).
- Visits to places of interest - museums, theatres, exhibitions, historic sites, lectures, nature walks, etc.
- Computer software with programmes for consolidating and extending learning in all subjects.
- Commercial tutoring services.

Parents are solely responsible for ensuring that an 'efficient and suitable' education is provided. This requirement does not mean that you have to do all the teaching. Some of it can be done by suitable friends, with other home educating families or by private tutors. However, it is important to check the credentials of anyone else having direct or online contact with your child at home or elsewhere for safeguarding purposes, including a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check – see the Safeguarding section on pages 10-11. Please also note that there are conditions relating to the numbers of children learning together in an unregistered environment. Further information can be found in this link: [Keeping Children Safe - Unregistered Schools | Wandsworth Family Information Service](#)

Qualifications and examinations

Electively home educated children do not have to sit any Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, or GCSEs. It is possible, however, for electively home educated children to sit GCSEs if desired. Currently, this is not funded by central government or the local authority.

There are a number of different examination boards that offer GCSE qualifications, and each offer a variety of syllabuses.

If you would like your child to sit GCSEs, you will need to find a centre that will allow your child to sit their exams there; a school, college or private tutoring service, for example. Do check the fees you will be required to pay. Copies of the exam syllabus and previous exam papers should be available from the centre. Private exam places are in high demand, so we recommend that you start to explore options and make plans at the beginning of the academic year that your child will be taking their exams.

4. Special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may be educated at home, whether or not they have an EHCP.

Whilst the EHCP remains in place the local authority has a duty to review it annually. If your child has an EHCP and is attending a mainstream school, you do not need permission from the local authority to remove them from school roll for EHE.

If your child attends a special school, you must seek permission from the local authority before your child's name is taken off the school roll. The local authority will then contact you to discuss this.

Whether or not your child attends a special school, we advise that school holds either an emergency Annual Review meeting or an Elective Home Education School Meeting. The meeting should be attended by the EHCP Case Manager and either the school's allocated local authority Education Welfare Officer or Elective Home Education lead. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your decision in the best interests of your child.

If your child is electively home educated and does not have an EHCP, but you believe he or she may have SEND, you can request an Education Health and Care Assessment. WIASS (Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service) will be able to provide information to you about this: [Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service \(WIASS\) - Wandsworth Borough Council](#)

You may also find it helpful to access information about the SEND Local Offer, which can be found online here: [Wandsworth's SEND Local Offer | Wandsworth Family Information Service](#)

5. Working with us

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) carries out the local authority's duties regarding elective home education and is supported to evaluate teaching and learning by qualified teachers employed by the Council.

Once you have decided to home educate your child, you will be responsible for making suitable arrangements for their education. As described above, someone from the EWS, or on their behalf, will contact you to ask for information about the elective home education programme.

What happens if I don't respond to the local authority's request for information?

Parents need to satisfy the local authority that a suitable education is being provided. Should a parent not respond to the local authority's request for information, we may follow up as a child missing from education (CME) enquiry or issue a School Attendance Order to return your child to school.

The information you provide in your child's SEF helps us to see the type and level of learning your child is engaged in. Also, at meetings or visits, you will have the opportunity to discuss the programme of work you have arranged and show examples of work completed by your child. This also gives us the opportunity to sign-post any online resources, details of examination boards, possible qualification options and useful contacts that may help you. After information has been seen, via the completed SEF, visits or meetings, we will advise whether your child's education has been deemed to be suitable.

What types of evidence could I provide?

A combination of some or any of the following could be presented as evidence of your child's home education provision:

- A written programme of work is a good starting point for discussion.
- Examples of your child's work give a good indication of progress over time, as well as current activities.
- Reports/ attendance reports from your child's online learning provider.
- Reports from tutors/ tutor agencies.

The areas the local authority will focus on when considering the suitability of the home education programme will include:

- Your plans to ensure your child receives a broad and balanced curriculum.

- Your long-term plans for the whole year, and how these relate to what you have planned for the next few weeks.
- Your thoughts about how subjects or topics will link together.
- Your plans for a mixture of work so that your child does practical work as well as written tasks.
- Who or what you will use to help you.
- Ways you will record your child's progress or difficulties.
- Your plans to evaluate your child's work and make sure that they know what the next steps are to make progress.
- How you will decide whether you are achieving what you set out to do.
- Your child's voice, for example, how they feel about their home education provision and how they view their progress

What happens if the local authority is not satisfied?

If it appears that an efficient and suitable education is not being provided, we will seek to gather more information that will assist us to reach a fully informed decision. This will include requesting any further evidence that you may be able to provide to demonstrate how you are providing a suitable education.

In the event that the education being provided is deemed to be unsuitable, you should consider making applications for a school place for your child, with support from the local authority.

Should you not take any action to secure a place for your child in school, a notice may be served instructing you to cause your child to attend school. This notice is called a School Attendance Order and is issued under Section 437 (3) of the Education Act 1996. If your child has an EHCP your child or young person will need to return to the named provision.

Will the local authority share any information about my child with outside organisations?

Information may be shared within the Council to monitor the education of children out of school and assess which services we provide for them.

If your child is reaching the end of statutory school age, during the time you are home educating, with your consent we will pass your details (name, address and telephone number) to Early Help services to ensure that your child receives appropriate support and advice regarding education, employment and training post-16 options – see section below on children over statutory school age.

Safeguarding

Where necessary, we may also need to share information with the police or social care should we become aware of any safeguarding or child protection issues.

If you decide to employ someone to provide education for your child, as mentioned before, it is advisable to ensure that they have a disclosure and barring service (DBS) check (formerly known as a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and have a teaching qualification. You should seek references from other service users or employers. It is your responsibility to ensure that the person you engage to provide education to your child is suitable. Information about this can be found online here:

[Check someone's criminal record as an employer: Checks you can make on someone's record - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-someone-s-criminal-record-as-an-employer)

Children over statutory school age

When your child reaches the statutory school leaving age of 16, the local authority no longer monitors educational provision. (This is from the last Friday in June each calendar year.)

In 2013, the government introduced what is called the RPA (Raising the Participation Age) which requires any child born after 1st September 1998 to continue to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday. To comply with this requirement, your child has a number of choices:

1. To continue the elective home education that you currently provide for a further two years.
2. To study full-time in a school Sixth Form, Sixth Form College, Further Education College or with a training provider.
3. To take up an apprenticeship.
4. To enter full time employment or voluntary work with training equivalent to one full day a week. The training should lead to an approved qualification.

6. Useful websites

There is a considerable amount of information and a range of services available online to help parents with developing and delivering a home education programme. Some of these are listed below. Please note these are examples and are not endorsed or promoted by the local authority:

- [Home - BBC Bitesize](#)
- [The Smartest Revision App - Improve Grades - Build Confidence \(edplace.com\)](#)
- [Award Winning Maths & English Tuition | Explore Learning](#)

- [▷ Online School UK | King's InterHigh online schooling \(kingsinterhigh.co.uk\)](https://www.kingsinterhigh.co.uk)
- [Primary Resources - KS2, KS1, Early Years \(EYFS\) KS3, KS4, Twinkl](https://www.twinkl.com/primary-resources)
- [Oak National Academy \(thenational.academy\)](https://www.thenational.academy)
- [Khan Academy | Free Online Courses, Lessons & Practice](https://www.khanacademy.com)
- [Collage – The Home Schooling App \(collageapp.co.uk\)](https://www.collageapp.co.uk)