



Elective Home Education

Information for parents and carers


Sunderland
City Council

Sunderland Local Authority (LA) recognises that the education of children is the responsibility of parents and carers. The majority of parents choose to educate their children at school. However some parents decide to make their own arrangements and educate their children at home. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE)

These guidance notes are provided in order to help you if you are considering elective home education, or if you are already home educating your child.

The LA's role is not to prevent parents from undertaking EHE, but to work in partnership with parents, to ensure that the home education is effective under the existing legislation.

Home education is a huge commitment and requires dedication, energy and patience and it is different from home tuition as the LA will not provide a tutor.

Your reason for choosing EHE should not be influenced by any of the following:

- Avoiding non-attendance issues.
- Avoiding an exclusion.
- Not expecting your child to achieve satisfactory examination grades at school (GCSE or SATs)

Nor should a school seek to persuade a parent to electively home educate

It is important that you discuss any issue with school, or alternatively contact EHE on 0191 561 5601, before you de-register your child if any of the above reasons are influencing your decision.

Parents can also access advice and support from a range of independent organisations. Some of which can be found on page 16 of this document.

Please note that 'parents' should be taken to include all those with parental responsibility including guardians and carers.

Do children have to go to school?

No. School is not compulsory, but education is. The Education Act 1996 (Section 7) states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her 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.”

Although most children attend school, some parents decide, for various reasons, to take the responsibility for their child’s education and withdraw them from the school system. Whilst you don’t need to be a qualified teacher to educate your child other than at school, you must make sure that your child receives a “suitable” “efficient” and “fulltime” education.

The terms “suitable”, “efficient” and “full-time” are not defined in the legislation but case law in the Courts have indicated that education is deemed to be;

- “efficient” if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and
- “suitable” if it “equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life of the country as a whole, so long as it does not foreclose the child’s options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so.”

There is currently no legal definition of “full-time”. Children who attend school normally do so for between 22 and 25 hours a week, for 38 weeks a year, but this measurement of “contact time” may not be relevant to home education when education may take place outside of normal “school hours” or be made up of periods of 1 to 1 tuition. Full time does not mean being bound by school hours and terms.

The law requires a child to be educated from the age of five to the age of sixteen and you are responsible to see that this happens either in school ‘or otherwise’.

Circular 11/97 from the Department for Education indicates that the school leaving date for all children, whether ‘at school or otherwise’; is, ‘the last Friday in June in the school year in which a child reaches age sixteen’.

What should I consider before I decide to educate my child at home?

The decision to educate at home is not one to be taken lightly and the reasons for this are varied.

Your first consideration should be for your child.

- Will this be the best thing for them?
- Have you taken their feelings into consideration?
- How do they feel about being removed from their school and their friends?

Educating your child at home takes a lot of time and commitment and it is also important to be aware the LA does not provide any financial assistance, textbooks or home tutors. If you choose to home educate you assume sole financial responsibility including the cost of any public examinations you will need to provide all the books, resources, equipment and tuition for your child.

EHE children can take a range of examinations as private paying candidates. Home Educating parents can sometimes have difficulty in finding examination centres but local schools and colleges may accept private candidates.

There are a range of organisations and services available that you may find very useful and information on examinations can be found at:
www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation

What do I need to do when I have decided to educate my child at home?

You are not required to seek permission from the LA unless your child attends a special school, but you must inform your child's school in writing of your decision to home educate your child. If your child is registered at school as a result of a School Attendance Order you must get the Order revoked by the LA before the Child's name can be deleted from the school roll.

Your letter to the school should include your child's name and date of birth and your address and telephone number, as well as the date from which you intend to start home educating your child.

If your child is below statutory school-age or has never been registered at a school in Sunderland and you intend to home educate you are requested to contact the EHE Officer either by email or telephone contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet, however you are under no obligation to inform the LA.

What if my child has Special Needs? (SEN)

If your child has a Statement of Special Needs or Education Health Care Plan and attends a mainstream school your rights remain the same as for a child without special needs. You should follow the same procedure outlined above.

However:

- If your child has a Statement of Special Needs or Education Health & Care Plan and attend a Special School their name cannot be removed from roll without the agreement of the LA, as the LA has a duty to maintain the statement/plan and to review it annually. If your child is a pupil at a special school the LA will need to consider whether your education provision is suitable before amending the statement/plan.

For further information contact the SEN Team on 0191 561 2230.

What will happen when I inform the school of my decision?

The school will advise the LA of your decision and your child's name will be deleted from the school register. The school is legally required to inform the LA that you have elected to educate your child at home and have deleted their name from the register.

Once the LA has been notified of your decision to educate your child at home, you will receive a letter inviting you to provide basic information detailing the education and learning experiences you intend to provide.

Further information on providing written information can be found online at: www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation

What is required of the LA?

The LA role is not to advise you on how you should educate your child we aim to develop positive relationships with parents who choose to home educate their children. The LA acknowledges that parents' education provision will reflect a diversity of approaches and interests as children learn in different ways and at different paces. Education is not just about academic achievement it is about preparing children to become a responsible citizen and ensuring that they are well prepared for independent adult life.

The LA has no statutory duty to monitor the quality of education provided by a parent; however we will make contact with you on an annual basis to check that you are still home educating. Although parents are under no legal duty to respond to this enquiry about the provision they are making we would be grateful if you would respond to this request, as doing so will assist us in keeping our records up to date. It would also help if you would inform us if you move house or should you secure a school place for your child in the future. It should be noted that a lack of response would not in itself automatically be a cause for concern.

The LA will be informed of any child who is deregistered from school however where a child is under statutory school age or has never been on a school roll and moves into the area the LA will be unaware of the child. We would ask the parents to consider contacting us however we understand that legally you are under no obligation to do so.

The LA maintains a record of all children known to be home educated, and will contact the parent to request some basic information about the provision they are making for their child's education. This is to ensure the children are correctly recognised as being Electively Home Educated and not as Missing from Education. Information held by the Local Authority will not be shared with other teams/agencies without the consent of parents except where it may be required by statutory law. Advice and support can be requested by a parent at any time. A visit will only take place when the parent has requested one and an appointment has been made and agreed in advance.

In appropriate instances, where the Local Authority receives a request from a service or agency that it is felt may be of benefit or assistance to EHE children, we will contact families to advise of the services on offer and to seek approval for details to be shared. Where consent is not given we will not share

information and simply advise home educating families of the services on offer with contact details for the agencies should their services subsequently be required, One example of this is the immunisation programme

Structured or informal education?

You may decide to provide education in a formal and structured manner following a traditional curriculum and using a fixed timetable that keeps to school hours and terms. Alternatively, you may decide to make your provision more informal depending on the developing interests of your child. One approach is not necessarily any more efficient or effective than the other.

However you choose to structure your child's learning and time, it is helpful to keep some records of their progress. Records can take any form:

- Reports and diaries
- Examples of work (it is helpful if these are dated)
- Photographs, drawings, recordings etc.
- Plans and programmes of work
- Evidence of achievements and progress made

Further information on learning styles can be found online at www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation

Will I need to keep records of what we have covered?

Parents often find that the level of questions and content of a child's conversation demonstrates their level of understanding and if they are making progress. Other parents prefer a systematic way, through tests or other means, of knowing their child is actually making progress at a pace appropriate to his/her ability. You may find it useful to look at the National Curriculum Guidelines to give you some idea of what your child is expected to be able to do at different stages or to guide you when planning the next steps in learning. It is desirable to record what has been learnt in order to make informed decisions about future areas of study and to be able to map progress. Many home educators keep a diary or notebook to show what they have covered, and some keep a photographic record.

Resources and support available to EHE families

There is a variety of information available for parents which can be found on the council's website www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation . Sunderland City Council's policy and EHE guidance document can be accessed and downloaded from this site.

Choosing others to educate my child

It is important to note that should you choose to employ other people to educate your child, you should ensure that they are deemed suitable to have access to children. If you are considering employing a tutor there is a helpful guidance document that can be found online at www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation

Where can we get advice about qualifications and careers?

GCSE Examinations

Home educators can start GCSE courses at any age. Some begin quite young and take just one or two at a time. Others wait until they are 16 and then enrol at a college to take GCSE subjects appropriate to their future careers.

There are three main ways in which home educated students have taken GCSEs by:

- correspondence courses where a tutor is usually assigned to give advice and mark work;
- enrolling at a local college or adult education class;
- at home doing their own research, choosing appropriate books and buying past exam papers.

The latter is only really appropriate for exam-only International GCSEs (IGCSEs), unless you can find a suitable independent person qualified to grade coursework.

It is possible for them to take exams as private (external) candidates. If your child wishes to do this, you will need to find a registered centre for the exams; these include local schools and colleges. You will need to factor in the cost of the awarding body (examination boards) fees and the cost of examination

centre invigilation. Unfortunately, there is no funding available from the Local Authority for parents to home educate their children.

You should note that not all awarding bodies offer qualifications that are suitable for private candidates, owing to the supervised elements of many examination specifications. Coursework and controlled assessment, which is an essential feature of many traditional GCSE examinations, must be supervised by an accredited person; this can be a potential barrier, particularly for candidates who embark on home schooling late in the academic year or mid-course. It is therefore advisable for you to contact individual awarding bodies to discuss the arrangements for private candidates at the earliest opportunity.

Home educating families may choose IGCSEs because of the difficulties of arranging approved supervision for controlled assessments in GCSEs. IGCSEs are predominantly exam-based as the candidate is not required to submit coursework as part of the overall mark scheme. The main exam boards or awarding bodies for IGCSEs are Cambridge International Education Centre and Pearson Edexcel. More exam centres are registered with Edexcel though this does not necessarily mean that the centre will accept private candidates for IGCSEs.

Contact details for the relevant awarding bodies can be found below:

AQA

www.aqa.org.uk

OCR

www.ocr.org.uk

Cambridge International Education Centre

www.ciec-education.co.uk

Edexcel

www.qualifications.pearson.com

WJEC

www.wjec.co.uk

On the awarding body websites, you will find the syllabus, a wide range of supporting materials for your chosen qualifications and also examples of the forms you will need to fill in to register for these. It is important to note that you have to fill in these forms yourself as your chosen examination centre does not do this for you.

An alternative approach is to investigate the support available from distance learning providers such as:

The National Extension College: www.nec.ac.uk/content/home-educator-faqs

Oxford Home Schooling: www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk

North Star: www.northstarworldwide.org

For vocational courses: www.cityandguilds.com

National Careers Service (NCS)

NCS can help young people make the right choices at school, college and after full-time education. The NCS provide information, advice and guidance to help young people make decisions on learning, training and work they offer free, confidential impartial advice to help young people take the right steps towards a great career.

Telephone: 0800 587 8191

Website: www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

What if my education provision is deemed to be unsatisfactory?

Under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities shall intervene if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education. This section states that:

“If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.”

Section 437(2) of the Act provides that the period shall not be less than 15 days, beginning with the day on which the notice is served.

If it appears that your child is not receiving a suitable education, you will be asked to provide further information on your on-going home education provision. Contact will normally be made in writing. Should there be any further concerns a written report will be sent to you, outlining these concerns, and giving you the opportunity to address them.

The LA may require more frequent contact whilst those concerns are being addressed. If this is the case, the LA will discuss these concerns with you, with a view to helping you provide an education that is more suitable and meets the best interests of your child.

A School Attendance Order, requesting that your child be placed back on to a school roll, will only be served after all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the situation. This is very rare and it is hoped that it can be overcome as a result of detailed discussions and support rather than proceeding through the Courts.

EHE Health and wellbeing 0-19 Growing Health Team

The school nursing team is available to all school age children. School health teams can offer health reviews, support, education, advice and guidance to children and young people who are home educated.

For primary school aged children, this may include a height, a weight, a hearing/vision check and an immunisation review. You can discuss any health concerns over the telephone, and advice, support will be offered regarding any concerns identified. Advice will be given about access to primary care and dental services as well as local services providing health promotion.

For secondary school aged children and young people, they can offer a health assessment if you have concerns about the health physical and emotional health or wellbeing of your child. The school nurse can arrange to meet the child or young person with or without their parent or carer in one of their clinics or in the home.

If you would like more information, please contact them directly. School Health team can be contacted on the Single Point of Contact on 03000 031 552

Immunisation

Pupils in Sunderland Schools receive vaccinations at various times in their lives, and Elective Home Educated children are entitled to these vaccinations:

School age flu vaccination:

- All primary school aged children are offered the nasal spray flu vaccine every year during the autumn/winter.

HPV – Cervical cancer vaccination:

- All 12 to 13 years school year 8 are offered two doses of HPV vaccination between 6 and 24 months apart.

Tetanus, diphtheria and polio and Meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y:

- All young people aged 14 years or school year 9.

To ensure out Home Educated young people do not miss out on these vaccinations we write to parents of age appropriate children on behalf of the Immunisation Team providing them with details of the relevant vaccinations for their child.

Further information or advice can be sought from your GP or alternatively:

- You can visit www.immunisation.nhs.uk; or
- Contact the team directly on 0191 4028179.

Home Education Groups

There are many home education groups set up to support home educating families. These offer educational activities, classes, and provide social interaction with a network of likeminded families. There are links to some home education groups on our webpage; others can be found on social media platforms like Facebook.

The Local EHE Group run a youth group every Friday afternoon between 1 and 3pm during term time at Lambton St in Sunderland. You can find out more about this by accessing their facebook page Sunderland Washington and Durham Home Ed.

Safety on the Internet

Technology is a valuable educational resource for children. The internet, other digital information and communication technologies can promote creativity and assist with the development of key social skills. Conversely, it can also provide a medium whereby inappropriate material such as pornography and abusive images can filter through, cyber bullying can take place and online grooming by predators can occur. You can seek advice and information on keeping children safe whilst on the internet by visiting:

www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command, or CEOP Command. CEOP Command is part of the UK's National Crime Agency. It protects children from harm online and offline with a focus on child sexual exploitation and online protection issues.

www.ceop.police.uk

If you want to know more about keeping children safe online, you can use CEOP's Thinkuknow education resources. This aims to empower children and young people aged 5-17 to identify the risks they may face online and know where they can get support.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

CEOP Command is part of the UK Safer Internet Centre here you will find online safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe online.

www.saferinternet.org.uk

Flexi schooling

This is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part time; the rest of the time the child is home educated. "Flexi-schooling" is a legal option provided that the Head Teacher at the school concerned agrees to the arrangement. The child will be required to follow the National Curriculum whilst at school but not whilst he or she is being educated at home.

Can my child complete work-experience?

We do not carry out risk assessments nor do we have insurance to cover work experience undertaken by home educated young people and as such unless the employer can evidence they have risk assessed and have the appropriate level of insurance required to have a young person on their premises; work experience is not recommended. Children can benefit greatly from experiencing a real work environment; however, parents must be assured they can do this safely and with the right level of support and guidance.

Early College Placements

Since September 2013 the Government have directly funded college placements for EHE pupils. Colleges can if they choose to offer EHE pupil's access to any course not just designated 14-16 courses. If a parent wants their child to attend college on a full or part-time basis then that is their choice and it is at the college's discretion. Colleges are able to accept EHE children as the parent retains responsibility for the child and therefore they are not required to make special arrangements for pastoral care or offer a full curriculum.

Further information is available on the Gov.UK website or alternatively email ehes@sunderland.gov.uk

Can my child get a part-time job?

Child employment

Regulations regarding child employment apply to all children of compulsory school age, whether they attend a school or are home educated. Children may not work until they reach the age of 13 years and even then, they cannot work during normal school hours. Before your child is able to commence any form of employment, they must be in possession of a work permit. Your child's employer should apply for this. For more information visit: www.sunderland.gov.uk/childemployment

Children in entertainment

Regulations regarding children in entertainment apply to all children of compulsory school age, whether they attend a school or are home educated.

A Performance Licence is required if your child is engaged in paid work in modeling, sport or in theatre, film or television performances outside of school hours. A licence is also required if the engagement is un-paid and takes place during normal school hours, whether this is a one off event or an on-going commitment.

If you require further information on children in entertainment, please email: childemployment@sunderland.gov.uk

What is 'Raising the Participation Age'?

Raising the Participation age was introduced in 2013, to require young people to stay in 'education and training' until they are 18. It's not quite the same as the school leaving age as it doesn't mean young people have to stay on at school. They will have a choice of what they can do:

- Option One- study full-time at school, college or with a training provider or remain home educated.
- Option Two - full-time employment or volunteering (full-time is counted as more than 20 hours a week) but it must be combined with part-time study or training.
- Option three - secure an apprenticeship.

Post 16 choices

If your child would like to go on to full-time education or training, there are several options:

Continue to be Educated at Home

The young person can continue their education at home to A level and even Degree standard. If your child is wanting to go to College or University, it is important to start your planning and research early to ensure your child can meet the enrolment requirements.

Sixth Form

You need to contact the college/school as early as possible and make an appointment to see the principal or headteacher. Schools offer Advanced and A/S level courses as well as some vocational courses. Your child may also be able to take GCSEs in Sixth Form should they need to re-sit.

Modern Apprenticeships

Register with the Government's find an apprenticeship service: www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship to search for opportunities and apply online. A daily digest of new

Employment

If your child wishes to start work the National Careers Service can offer advice.

Helpful independent organisations

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education)

Website: www.ace-ed.org.uk

An independent national education advice centre offering confidential advice to parents.

ED yourself.org

Website: www.edyourslef.org

This website is the work of Fiona Nicholson. Fiona has given evidence to Government Committees on the subject of elective home education and can provide you with a clear up-to-date analysis of the key areas of elective home education practice and policy in England and Wales.

Education Otherwise

Website: www.education-otherwise.org

A UK-based membership organisation, which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Home Education Advisory Service

Website: www.heas.org.uk

A national home-education advisory service based in the United Kingdom. It is dedicated to the provision of advice and practical support for families who wish to educate their children at home in preference to sending them to school. HEAS produces a range of publications and leaflets on different aspects of home education. An annual subscription gives access to the advice-line, quarterly magazine, educational discounts, resources for loan and a regional list of other subscribers.

What if I want my child to return to school?

After a period of EHE, you and your child may decide that you would like to re-register at school. If this is the case, you can download the appropriate form from: www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13004/Apply-for-a-school-transfer

Complaints Procedure

The LA works in partnership with you to develop a good working relationship for the benefit of you, your child and the city. However, if we haven't got it right and you wish to make a complaint you should firstly contact the Attendance Manager who has overall responsibility for EHE.

They can be contacted by
Email: ehe@sunderland.gov.uk

How are we doing?

As we are always looking to improve our service, we would be extremely grateful if you could take the time to complete the form entitled 'How are we doing?' following any contact you may have with the LA in relation to EHE. The form is available online to download at: www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation



The Attendance Team

Email: ehe@sunderland.gov.uk

www.sunderland.gov.uk/electivehomeeducation

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