

Elective Home Education: 5-minute guide for Hillingdon schools



Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home, or elsewhere, which does not involve them being registered on a school's roll. This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.

This briefing has been prepared by the Elective Home Education Team to provide a guide to schools about the legal rights and responsibilities of both parents and the local authorities.

Why do parents choose to electively home educate their children?

Families may choose home education for a variety of reasons:

- Lifestyle / culture / philosophical / religious beliefs
- Medical needs
- Bullying / fear of bullying
- Anxiety / School phobia / refusal
- Particular talent / activity (e.g. arts or sports)
- Not offered preferred school(s)
- Special Educational Needs where need is not being met at school
- Disaffection with school environment

This list of reasons is not exhaustive. Parents may choose to provide EHE for any reason.

Parental Rights and Responsibilities Education is compulsory but school is not.

The Education Act 1996 Section 7 states that a parent must ensure their child receives education that is full-time, efficient and suitable. There are no statutory definitions for these requirements.

A parent must ensure that education is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and takes account of any Special Educational Needs. The education should primarily equip the child for life within the community to which s/he is a member but should not limit the child's options in later years to adopt a different form of life.

Parents have a legal right to educate their child at home and are not required to have any qualifications or training to provide their children with a suitable education.

Parents do not have to follow the National Curriculum or follow a strict timetable of learning and may use different means to educate their child/ren. Some parents employ tutors or purchase on-line educational resources.



Parents often join with similar minded families and share resources. Many local resources (e.g. libraries, sports centres etc.) have sessions dedicated to home educated children.

What process should schools follow when a parent elects to home educate their child(ren)?

Schools themselves should not raise the topic of EHE with parents. If parents inform the school they wish to EHE then school should then discuss this with parents.

Schools should be informing parents if they have any safeguarding concerns about their child(ren) as and when they arise. Elective Home Education in itself is not a safeguarding concern. If school feel a child being EHE increases their concerns, then they should be open with the parent(s) about this including if this will result in a referral to Children's Social Care following the schools safeguarding policy. Each situation will be unique to the circumstances of the child. Schools should be clear with parents, and in any subsequent referral, about why EHE would increase any prior safeguarding concerns. Whilst these conversations can be daunting being honest and upfront with a family is more likely to allow an ongoing partnership with the school in the future.

Any safeguarding concerns should be reported through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Where children's Social Care are already involved with a family schools should share this information with the allocated social worker and any risk will be re-considered in light of this.

School to offer to hold an Exit Discussion with the parents to fully understand their reasons and offer reassurance and support if their child remains on roll, ensuring parent is aware by choosing to educate their child at home they assume sole responsibility for their child's education.

In the context of Elective Home Education (EHE), schools will need to demonstrate that they have followed Keeping children safe in education 2023 ('KCSIE') in relation to Elective Home Education at paragraphs 176-179. This states where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, it is recommended that local authorities, schools, and other key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child.

This is stressed in KCSIE as particularly important where a child has special educational needs or

a disability, has a social worker, or is otherwise vulnerable. Particular advice is set out for pupils with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

Schools must also notify the Local Authority when a parent withdraws their child from school to provide EHE. In this circumstance a parent is encouraged to write to the Head Teacher requesting that their child is de-registered and confirming that it is their intention to home educate their child.

All schools are expected to provide Hillingdon's Elective Home Education Team, with the following information;

- Parent's letter, or email, informing the school of their decision to home educate.
- Reason/s the school are aware of why the parent has decided to home educate.
- An up to date attendance record for the child.
- List of attainment levels (useful for education advisers when they visit, or if the case is referred to the Fair Access Panel).
- Any potential vulnerability factors that may have been identified by the school. This will help us to signpost effective support to families. These could be:
 - Disadvantaged or eligible for Pupil Premium
 - Refugee or asylum seeker
 - Previous exclusions (permanent or fixed term)
 - Mental health or wellbeing concerns
 - Looked After Child (including previously LAC)
 - English as an Additional Language
 - Known to any other agencies
- Any existing or previous safeguarding concerns: Early Help, CIN or CP.
- Details of the allocated social worker, if the child has one.
- Notification/information if the child has special educational needs with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Confirmation that the school have offered to provide parents with either previous classwork or a summary of the curriculum followed to date (and possibly the future curriculum plan). This will assist the parent with their planning for home education. The parent may decide to ignore this documentation hence their reason to EHE as they may have dissatisfaction with the education system. However, this will be a useful tool for some.

Removing the child from the school roll

Under the Pupil Registration Regulations (2006), the school is required to deregister the child or young person upon receipt of the parent letter and inform the child or young person's home Local Authority (LA). In order to promote recent recommendations by Ofsted the school will temporarily keep a pupil on roll for 5 school days

following referral to the Elective Home Education Team. This will allow time for an officer to process the request and attempt to engage the family further to seek a resolution (if necessary) before removal from roll. The removal should only be done following confirmation from the Local Authority. This confirmation will be made in writing with the school. During the 5 school days schools can record the pupil as an authorised absence under Code C. After this time, if it is agreed that the pupil will become deregistered then schools will be able to back date the attendance to the date specified by parents.

Hillingdon Schools EHE referral online form

Schools should follow the link below to notify the Local Authority for families who wish to home educate and be removed from the school roll:
EHE Procedure for Hillingdon Schools - Leap

Contacts

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