

Elective Home Education: 5-minute Guide for Professionals



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

For further guidance and information, please visit our webpage Hillingdon Elective Home Education.

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

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.



Your responsibility as a professional

A local authority is expected to identify and record children in its area who are being home educated or may be home educated and for whom the suitability of education being provided has not yet been firmly established or is due for review.

In many instances, families who choose to electively home educate do so by removing their child from their school setting. Under these circumstances, the school will make the local authority aware of the parental decision. There are also some parents who choose to make the local authority aware themselves that they are providing elective home education.

However, there are some children which may not come to the local authority's attention in this way, for example when a family moves into the borough or when a child is electively home educated throughout their academic career. In these circumstances, the local authority is dependent on partner agencies to alert them of children in receipt of elective home education.

If during an interaction with a child and/or their family you become aware they are receiving elective home education, it would be helpful for you to seek parents' consent in order to share their details with Hillingdon's Elective Home Education Team for them to make contact with the family.

You can share the details of any child you think may be receiving elective home education here.

Safeguarding

Elective Home Education in itself is not a safeguarding concern. Many EHE children are safe, having their educational needs met and are thriving. However, where there are apparent safeguarding concerns, it is important to acknowledge that in some circumstances a child who is EHE may have very limited or no contact at all with professionals compared to a child who is attending school. If you are concerned the education being provided to a child is not suitable, efficient or full time, you should contact Hillingdon's Elective Home Education Team to discuss your concerns. We can then make further enquiries directly with the family. It is possible the education being provided, although not conventional, still meets the legal criteria, in which case the local authority may not have any ongoing concerns.

Professionals should be conscious they may be the only professional having contact with the child and/or family. As such, professionals should be vigilant in ensuring safeguarding concerns are followed up correctly and reported through Social Care or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub team (MASH) here: Hillingdon Stronger Families Hub - Make a referral

Contacts

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