Elective Home Education in Hillingdon:

Guidance for Schools

**It is mandatory for school aged children to be at school from 8 March 2021.**

The aim of this briefing is to provide advice and guidance to schools with all the information that is needed to help support families due to growing concerns, both locally and nationally, that there will be an increase in families who choose to home educate their children during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Parent may choose to Electively Home Educate because of any of the following: -

⮚ They have seen a significant change in their children since educating them at home

⮚ Parents of children with Emotional Based School Avoidance might now see EHE as a realistic option

⮚ Parents have enjoyed home educating their children during lockdown

⮚ Parents are afraid of Covid-19 and have anxieties about their children returning to school and/or are themselves in the high-risk vulnerable group.

Parents have the right to choose to Electively Home Educate, but we have considered that, as a result of COVID 19, there may be a change in those who are choosing this route now that it is mandatory for school aged children to be at school from 8 March 2021. We have tried to pre-empt that choice and looked at ways in which we collectively can help reduce an increase in numbers. The information provided by schools around plans and risk assessments continue to be critical to give parents the information, and hopefully reassurance, they need.

**How can schools provide reassurance to parents on the safety of children?**

* Continue to build parent confidence
* Continue to identify children and young people where it is known that parents are anxious about returning full time.
* Inform parents that there will be enhanced and dedicated pupil bus services to mitigate the potential pressure on public transport
* For those identified children you can offer individual support to their families
* Share Covid-19 Risk Assessment with all parents
* Provide targeted support to families who have a history of anxieties around school
* Complete individual risk assessments for children with additional needs
* Consider what provision is available for families who have to isolate
* Request support from Hillingdon where you are aware the children have additional needs.
* Refer to [DfE Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools)

***Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school***

*All other pupils must attend school. Schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this.*

*This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.*

*If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. Schools should be clear*

*with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).*

It will be important for parents to understand what they are taking on if they choose to EHE as it is very different from the Covid-19 experience of Home Education. There are concerns that both are seen as the same, but they are definitely not. Schools have provided work for families which could have given them structure and variety and this will not continue should parents wish to Electively Home Educate. There have also been a lot of additional things happening through social media, for example, Joe Wicks PE Lessons and cooking with Jamie Oliver. These are not available in the non-Covid world. In addition to this, many online resources have made their packages free to use, such as twinkl and The Khan Academy, which again will eventually come at a cost. The Local Authority will provide families with advice and guidance for parents which will be aimed at providing reassurance and making an informed choice.

**What should schools do if parents are suggesting they wish to Electively Home Educate?**

1. Schools are the first point of contact to discuss any queries that parents may have in returning their children to school
2. Consult with your Participation Officer for advice prior to removal from roll
3. Hold an **Exit Discussion** with the parents to fully understand their reasons and offer reassurance and support if their child remains on roll.
4. If parents still wish to Home Educate, they are strongly encouraged to provide a **letter** to the school stating their wishes
5. The school then completes the Elective Home Education - School Information Form and keeps the pupil on roll for the next 5 school days recorded as an authorised absence under Code C. ***Please note this is not a statutory requirement and parent(s) may refuse this arrangement***. After this time, if it is agreed by the LA that the pupil will become deregistered then schools will be able to back date the attendance to the date specified by parents.
6. School sends – Elective Home Education - School Information Form & Letter from parent to ehe@hillingdon.gov.uk
7. The following can also be found on our website [London Borough of Hillingdon - Elective home education](https://archive.hillingdon.gov.uk/ehe)

* [DfE Elective Home Education – Guidance for Parents](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791528/EHE_guidance_for_parentsafterconsultationv2.2.pdf)
* [LBH Elective Home Education Policy](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/5284/Elective-Home-Education-LBH-Policy-2021/pdf/Elective_Home_Education_LBH_Policy_2021.pdf?m=1614610643933)
* Links to useful websites
* A list of Education resources
* Elective Home Education newsletter registration
* Elective Home Education - Information for parents

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