



ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

**CHOOSING TO EDUCATE YOUR CHILD AT HOME
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS**

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Introduction

The legal responsibility for a child's education rests with his/her parents. Parents can meet this responsibility in a variety of ways: sending them to state school, sending them to private school, or home educating their children are the three most common ways. Staffordshire County Council aims to work in partnership with home educating parents and this booklet is designed to offer information to any parent considering home education.

The decision to educate your child at home is an important one. You will have the freedom to offer activities and styles of learning that are specific to your child, you will not be constrained by terms or hours of schooling but you will also be responsible for ensuring that your child receives a suitable education. Home education can potentially take up a great deal of parents' time, energy and money, so you are advised to think very carefully before you make any decision and to talk to other home educating parents.

You may wish to consider the following:

- Your child's interests and personality – some children will need lots of interaction with other people, others will prefer more time alone; some will learn best by initiating all their own learning, others will thrive on the interactions with a tutor, peer or parent
- The likely costs involved – books, equipment, exam fees, tutors, loss of parental income
- How to provide the social interaction that your child may need, such as meeting and mixing with new friends, specialists in a particular field of interest and interesting people who can expand their horizons
- How to provide activities such as group work, access to special facilities and equipment e.g. for science or sport, trips and visits

Many parents choose to home educate for positive educational and/or lifestyle reasons. If you are considering opting for home education as a result of a disagreement with the school which your child attends, it would be advisable for you to try and resolve the problem with the school before deciding on home education.

Choosing to educate your child at home is not a once and for all decision, and neither is sending your child to school. You can always change your mind. The important thing is to think carefully before making any decision and be aware of the impact on your lifestyle including your employment, entitlement to welfare payments and other family needs.

The contact details for some of the national and local organisations that support home educators can be found at the back of this booklet.

Staffordshire County Council offers a range of support to home educating families, see section 7 for more details.

Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is totally different to home tuition a term used to describe the situation when the Local Authority (LA) provides a teacher to educate a child in their home. Home Tuition is only used in exceptional circumstances, and the child would remain a student of the school they normally would attend.

Home education is an option that any family may consider for their children. The reasons for deciding on this approach are many, as are the styles of education undertaken. The following list is by no means exhaustive but does contain examples of some of the common reasons for home educating:

- a lifestyle choice
- religious or cultural beliefs
- philosophical or ideological views
- distance or access to a local school
- dissatisfaction with the current education system
- bullying
- a child's unwillingness or inability to go to school due to anxiety or mental health issues
- as a short term solution for a particular concern
- special educational needs
- parents' desire for a closer relationship with their children

Home education comes in many different formats and can look different in every family.

EHE Methods and Philosophies

**Schooling
at home**

**Radical
Schooling**



There is no 'right' or 'wrong' approach when it comes to home education, there is however a broad spectrum of methods and philosophies. Some parents choose to recreate school at home whilst others act as partners to their children, supporting and facilitating the child's learning as led and chosen by the child. Some philosophies apply only to education, others relate to all aspects of life. Many families move around the spectrum throughout their home education journey, even having one method for a particular area/subject and a different method for others. The methods/philosophies on the right side of the diagram above tend to be the hardest to understand and assess, and often look very different to school/school at home (see Appendix 3 for further information).

Parents

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children receive a suitable education.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 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, aptitude, and*
- b) to any special educational needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.*

Parents who choose to home educate are not required to register or seek approval/agreement of the Local Authority to educate their children at home. However, if a child has previously been registered at a school, parents must follow the deregistration process and the school is required to notify the Local Authority.

Home educating is often a learning process for parents as well as their children. Children who have been to school may benefit from a period of ‘de-schooling’; time to transition to being educated differently e.g. maybe having greater say in their activities or styles of learning and not needing to know the learning outcomes of every activity before they start. Parents often take longer to adjust than their children. Many parents will have completed their own education at school and therefore it can be difficult in the beginning to see how their child is learning, when the learning doesn’t look like traditional schooling.

“Take your time; be gentle on yourself and your child”.

Every big life change takes time to settle into, home educating is no different. There are very many gatherings and activities arranged within the home education community around the County (some local groups can be found on the Internet). Support and interaction with other home educators is often just as important for parents as it is for their children.

The type of educational activity can be varied and flexible. It is felt by the home education community that home educating parents may offer a more personalised curriculum as they are **NOT** required to:

- teach the National Curriculum
- have a timetable
- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- set hours during which education will take place
- have any specific qualifications
- make detailed plans in advance
- observe school hours, days or terms
- give formal lesson
- mark work done by their child
- formally assess progress or set development objectives
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation
- match school-based, age-specific standards

Parents are entitled to, and often do, make use of the services of private tutors. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that any tutors they use are suitable to have access to their children. The LA can offer support/signposting for parents wanting to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, see section 7 for further details.

De-registration

Mainstream Schools: Parents are required to notify the school in writing when withdrawing a child to educate them at home. For children with a Statement or an EHCP, the LA should be notified as well in order to amend the Statement or EHCP.

This must be your choice as parents to home educate your child, you should not be put under pressure by the school to do this as an alternative to exclusion or because your child has needs the school feel they cannot meet.

If you do feel under pressure from the school you should contact the head teacher or governors and make it clear you wish your child to remain on role.

See Appendix 1

Special Schools: Children educated at Special Schools are done so under the terms of an agreement between the parents/carers and the LA (Statement/EHCP). Both parties must agree changes to that contract in writing. As a result of this, consent from the LA is required to de-register pupils currently educated at a special school. See Appendix 2

School Responsibilities

On receiving notification from a parent/carer that a child is being de-registered, schools must remove the child from the school roll, complete a school exit form and inform the LA that the child is no longer registered at the school.

Schools are not permitted to promote elective home education as a solution to attendance concerns/high levels of absence, as an alternative to school exclusion or because of any Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

Local Authority Support Responsibilities

- Information and signposting can be provided to home educating families
- If you need proof of home education, the LA will write an official letter confirming a family's home educating status to enable them to make use of discounts offered on amenities and resources
- Home educating families are able to access the SEND Family Partnership
- The LA can put you in touch with other Children's Support Services e.g. Admissions, GRT Advisory Teachers
- The Libraries Service offers a home educators membership – no fines levied, ability to loan more books
- SEND Family Partnership offer a range of workshops for parents, all are available to home educating parents, some are specifically for home educating parents
- Annual celebration of EHE by SCC
- Advise parents on how to go about taking up appropriate references or undertaking Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on tutors/service providers for their children. See Section 7

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. Before a child is able to start any form of employment, he/she must obtain a Work Permit. A Child Employment leaflet for employers and parents and an application form for a work permit can be obtained by contacting the Child Employment office. See Section 7

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 a child is engaged in the theatre, in a film or television performance, in modelling or sport. Further information is available from the Children in Entertainment Office. See Section 7

When There Are Concerns

About Education

There are times when not everything goes to plan, when additional support is required. Similarly, there are concerned neighbours or members of the public who are not aware that school is not compulsory (although education is). If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving a suitable education, they have a legal responsibility to look into the situation further. This means that if there are concerns about the education of your child, perhaps as a result of a member of the public reporting them as being out and about during school hours, or a concerned professional you have contact with, the LA will need to contact you and ask for information.

The Education Act 1996 places legal duties upon the Local Authority. Section 437 states:

“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.”

Sometimes, the information provided will be as simple as confirming that your child is indeed home educated and not playing truant, other times information regarding the education itself will be necessary.

“If – a) a parent on whom a notice has been served...fails to satisfy the local education authority, within the period specified in the notice, that the child is receiving suitable education, and b) in the opinion of the authority it is expedient that the child should attend school, the authority shall serve on the parent...a school attendance order...requiring him to cause the child to become a registered pupil at a school named in the order.”

Section 443 then states:

“If a parent on whom a school attendance order is served fails to comply with the requirements of the order, he is guilty of an offence, unless he proves that he is causing the child to receive a suitable education otherwise than at school.”

The LA will only consider serving a School Attendance Order if it has reasonable grounds to consider that a child is not receiving a suitable education. Prior to this it will try to work with the parents in order to address the situation informally.

About a child’s welfare or safeguarding

Parents may choose to employ other people to educate their child, though they themselves will continue to be responsible for the education provided. They will also be responsible for ensuring that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children. Parents will therefore wish to satisfy themselves by taking up appropriate references and ensuring the tutors have a recent Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) certificate. See Section 7

The welfare and protection of all children, both those who attend school and those who are educated at home, are of paramount concern and the responsibility of the whole community. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* states that all agencies and individuals should aim proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As with school educated children, child protection issues may arise in relation to home educated children. If any child protection concerns come to light in the course of your engagement with children and families, or otherwise, these concerns should immediately be referred to the appropriate authorities using the information below.

You **MUST** refer the details of your **NEW** child protection concerns to FIRST RESPONSE in the MASH –

0800 13 13 126

[**frist@staffordshire.gov.uk**](mailto:frist@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Emergency Duty Service (out of hours)

0345 604 2886

or

Police **101**

For Stoke on Trent local authority referrals **01782 235100**

Staffordshire County Council is committed to working with home educating parents in a spirit of partnership and co-operation in order that both parties, parents and the County Council, can effectively meet their respective duties under existing legislation.

Resources

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Homepage.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

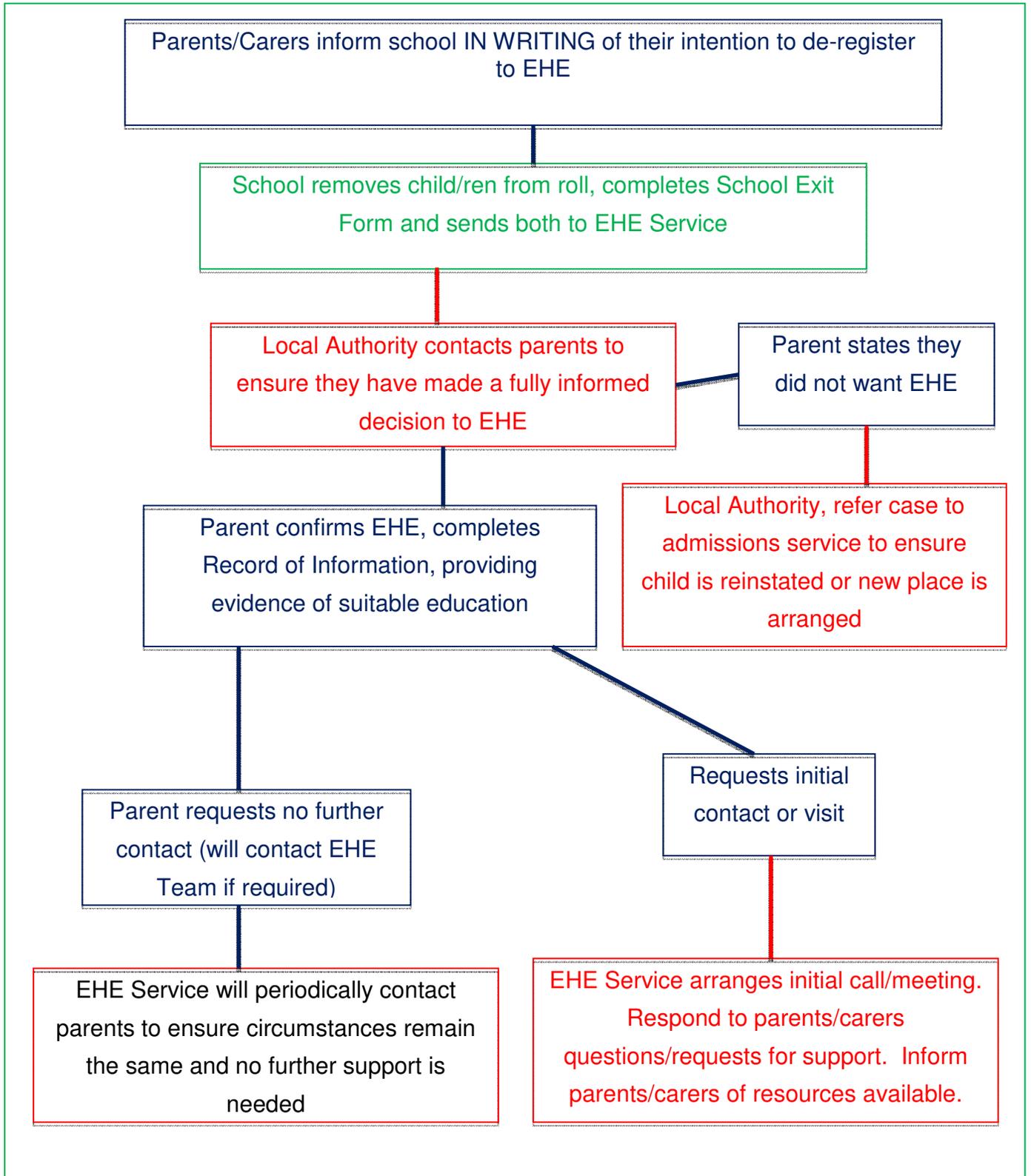
To find information about careers contact Skills & Employability at Entrust: 0300 111 8030

Free educational resources

- <http://educationalfreedom.org.uk> – support, advice and information for home educators with the UK.
- <http://alittlebitofstructure.webs.com> – resources that have been shared by a group of home educating parents for home educating parents.
- <http://www.atschool.co.uk> – a resource for parents teaching their primary school age children at home.
- <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/english/english.htm> – parents can access free lesson plans, activity ideas and resources for primary age children.
- <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en> - a website where parents and children can access free online games, songs, stories and activities for children to have fun and learn English too.
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools> – the BBC learning website with primary and secondary resources which are available for all children, whether educated at school or otherwise.
- <http://www.channel4learning.com> – online education resources for educators of primary and secondary school age children
- <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources> - a website where parents may access a variety of educational resources, including lesson plans or resources for specific topics of interest.
- <http://www.senteacher.org> – a website dedicated to providing free printable resources for those responsible for teaching children and young people with special educational needs
- <http://edyourself.org> – a home educational consultancy site providing updates on key areas of practice and policy relating to elective home education.
- SEND Family Partnership: 01785 356921
- <https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/check?execution=e1s1> - Disclosure & Barring Service to check tutor/service providers for their children
- ew.statutoryactions@staffordshire.gov.uk – Child in Employment Office
- ew.statutoryactions@staffordshire.gov.uk – Child in Entertainment Office

Appendix 1

Procedure for De-registering from Mainstream School



Appendix 2

Education Health and Care Plan/Elective Home Education Flowchart

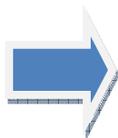
Elective Home Education (EHE) requests for Children and Young People who attend a special school

A flowchart to support decision making in line with statutory guidance and provide clarity to parents and schools on local procedure

Parents notify the school of their wish to EHE

Where a special school receives a formal letter from parents with parental responsibility (PR) requesting that the school take their child off roll stating their intention to EHE clearly, the school informs the relevant SEND

Assessment and Planning Service team and organises an Annual Review of the Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), inviting parents and the Elective Home Education Service. Parents should come along with information as to how they plan to meet their child's needs, objectives on the Statement of SEN or outcomes of EHCP and provide a suitable education.



Annual Review

Annual Review takes place and all views and discussion notes are included in Annual Review sent to the relevant SEND Assessment and Planning Service team.

If parents would like some support during this process, they may wish to contact the SEND Family Partnership Service who are independent and can help them to express any views they may have or advise on SEND legislation. They can be contacted on 01785 356921.

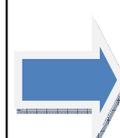


The parental request for EHE is considered by the Local Authority

A SEND Key Worker will prepare the Annual Review for the Decision Making Group (DMG) Panel for discussion.

The SEND Assessment and Planning Service team may request additional information from the parents of the child, the school, Elective Home Education Service or any other professionals involved with the child.

The DMG Panel decide, in light of all the evidence submitted with the Annual Review and in line with the law, if it is appropriate or not to amend the Statement of SEN/EHCP to reflect parents' choice to EHE and take on the full responsibility of providing a suitable education and with it the full financial responsibility.



A decision is made

The decision is communicated to the child's parent and school.

If it has not been agreed to amend the Statement of SEN/EHCP parents will be notified of what actions they can take if they disagree with the decision.

If it has been agreed to amend the Statement of SEN/EHCP parents and school will be notified of the decision. The SEND Assessment and Planning Service will notify the school when it is appropriate to off-roll the child and amend the Statement of SEN/EHCP accordingly. The EHE Service will be notified at this point so the child can be added on the EHE database. The school must notify the EHE service that the panel agreed to amend the statement. School to send copy of de-registration letter and school exit form to EHE service.

Relevant legislation, regulations and statutory guidance:

Section 7 of Education Act 1996, Part 3 (Section 42 [2 & 5]) of Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Regulations 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2001, SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years 2015

Appendix 3

Key features: School at Home

This is not supposed to be a checklist of things to look for, more a list to give a flavour of what just one method of home education might look like:

- May have a classroom/school room at home
- Possibly follows a curriculum or teaches subjects
- May have a timetable or specific learning/teaching times
- Differentiates between learning and living
- Often structured, focusing on things a child 'needs' to learn

Key features: Radical un-schooling

This is not supposed to be a checklist of things to look for, more a list to give a flavour of what just one method of home education might look like:

- Does not differentiate between living and learning
- Parents partner their children, supporting them in their interests, researching resources, activities, people that may help them find out more
- Learning what food makes them feel good is as important as learning to read (just one example)
- Trusts (and works hard to facilitate when appropriate) that children will learn the skills they need as and when they need to
- Focuses on the child's interests. Radical un-schoolers feel they know their children very well, what they enjoy, how they learn, what motivates them etc. This makes it possible for them to 'strew' information, resources, activities that may help the child deepen or broaden their understanding/knowledge
- Rarely has a classroom/school room at home
- Can look like 'holidays' all the time - lots of outdoor time, unlimited access to computers, games, books, toys
- Only follows curriculum at child's request
- Children may stay up late, wake up late, wear 'interesting' outfits and eat at unconventional times