



Guidance on Elective Home Education Education Safeguarding Service

This guidance has been designed for anybody wanting more information about Elective Home Education. It has been written to answer questions we are often asked by parents.

Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education to describe a parent's decisions to take responsibility for their child's education and learning. A child can become home educated either from the beginning of their statutory education or by withdrawing them from their registered school.

If a child's education is provided at home by their school or local authority, they are not considered to be electively home educated. Responsibility for their education and learning remains with the registered school.

Somerset County Council aims to provide helpful advice to parents and carers considering Elective Home Education for their child. It is our aim to maintain positive relationships with home educators in order to ensure the interests of our children continue to be protected.

In this document, we refer to parents, carers and legal guardians simply as "parents".

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Elective Home Education Frequently Asked Questions

Does my child have to go to school?

All parents have a legal responsibility to make sure their child receives appropriate full-time education. Most parents do this by registering their child at a school. In these cases, parents do have a legal duty to make sure their child attends regularly.

Some parents choose Elective Home Education. This means their children are not registered with a school, so their attendance is not required, but that child's education is then the legal responsibility of the parent.

What am I responsible for if I choose Elective Home Education?

If you choose Elective Home Education for your child, you become responsible for providing them with an appropriate full-time education as well as meeting any costs relating to that provision.

The law currently states that parents of children of statutory school age must make sure they receive an education that is: full-time, suitable to their age and ability and mindful of any additional or special needs they may have.

What does the Council have to do regarding Elective Home Education?

All councils (local authorities) must keep records of any children who are withdrawn from school to be electively home educated. They must also provide appropriate support where there is reason to believe that a home educated child is not receiving the education to which they are entitled.

In cases where a child does not receive appropriate provision following offers of support, School Attendance Orders can become necessary. The Education Safeguarding Service does this work on behalf of Somerset County Council.

What must I do if I want to educate my child at home?

If you have made the decision to educate your child at home, you must inform your child's school in writing. The letter does not have to be long but must clearly state your decision to home educate and include the date from which you will be home educating. The school will then remove your child from their roll and send that information to the Education Safeguarding Service.

Can I choose Elective Home Education if my child has an EHCP?

You can still choose Elective Home Education for your child has an EHCP but in some cases, there are additional considerations.

If your child is a registered pupil at a special school as named in their EHCP they cannot be taken off roll without the approval of the Somerset's SEND casework team. Your child's EHCP will need to be adjusted to reflect your decision to home educate.

The Local Authority would remain responsible for the education provision of your child and their EHCP would continue to be reviewed.

What does compulsory school age mean?

When a child is of compulsory school age their parents must, by law, make sure they receive appropriate, full-time education.

A child becomes compulsory school age on the first day of the school term following their fifth birthday. They continue to be compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the academic year in which they turn 16, even if they have not yet turned 16.

Do I have to follow the National Curriculum if I choose Elective Home Education?

Choosing Elective Home Education gives you the freedom to choose how best to educate your child and prepare them for adulthood – there is no requirement to follow the National Curriculum.

The National Curriculum can be a helpful tool for parents, especially in cases where a child might return to school. It can also provide insight into areas of learning that might otherwise be forgotten.

Do I have to do all the teaching if I choose Elective Home Education?

Parents that choose Elective Home Education take responsibility and control of their child's learning and what resources are used to enable this to happen. Parents do not have to do all the teaching, and some make use of tutors, EHE groups and online resources.

If you choose to educate your child at home, however, you should consider how you are able to track and show their progress.

Is any funding available if I choose Elective Home Education?

If you choose Elective Home Education you will not have access to any funding from the Local Authority and you become responsible for meeting the costs of your child's education.

Can my child attend school part-time if they are home educated?

A parent can ask a head teacher to consider admitting their child on a flexi-schooling agreement. Schools are not obliged to offer flexi-schooling and such agreeing to such arrangements would be at the discretion of the head teacher and school governors.

Can home educated children attend a Further Education college part-time?

Once your child has reached 14 years old, home educated learners may be able to access college courses on a part time basis to supplement their home education provision. This is called 14 to 16 provision. They can access part-time vocational courses with additional maths and English. Costs for these courses will vary.

Can home educated children do work experience?

Home educated children can access appropriate work experience placements during the final two years of their compulsory education. As a parent it is your duty to ensure that any placements are unpaid, offer suitable and appropriate learning opportunities and safe.

Any placements where the employer does not have adequate safeguarding procedures or insurance is not advisable. Some schools may be willing to share lists of approved companies on a local basis.

Can my child have a job if they are home educated?

The Child Employment Regulations contain strict rules regarding children's working hours whether they attend a school or are home educated.

Children must not work below the age of 13, during school times or over a specific number of hours during any school week. Certain work environments are also unsuitable for children and therefore not permitted.

Any children of statutory school age wishing to have a job must, by law, have a work permit, which must be applied for by their potential employer.

More information on child employment can be found on the Somerset Direct website.

Can my child sit formal exams if they are home educated?

Should you wish your child to take formal examinations (e.g. GCSEs), you will need to find an accredited centre willing to accept private candidates. You may have to use the same syllabus or exam board as the examination centre, so it is important that you contact centres before starting courses.

Entries should be made by January in Year 11 at the latest, but earlier discussion is advised.

You will be responsible for paying any examination costs to the examination centre.

What post-16 options are available for my child when they are home educated?

When your child is no longer of compulsory school age you may wish to continue providing their education yourself.

Alternatively, you can approach sixth form and further education colleges about accessing their course. Entry requirements to these colleges will vary depending on the course being applied for.

Your child can also access work-based training and modern apprenticeships.

What do I need to check if I want to use a private tutor or education provider?

If you choose to employ a private tutor or education provider, it is your responsibility to ensure that they have the right knowledge and skills to provide your child with an appropriate level of education.

It is reasonable to expect private tutors and education providers to be able to evidence that they have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance and to provide references. These are checks that we would recommend making.

Can my child access health services that are normally provided at school?

The NHS still provides some health services through schools.

Children educated through Elective Home Education are not able to access these services through school. You will need to discuss this matter with your doctor to ensure your child receives any vaccinations, tests or support as required.

What should I do if I'm thinking about choosing Elective Home Education?

Parents choose Elective Home Education for various reasons. We always urge parents to discuss their situation and concerns with their child's school before making a final decision. This is particularly important if you are considering Elective Home Education due to an unresolved dispute, attendance concerns or risk of exclusion.

There are also EHE communities that are often very helpful in discussing and understanding the reality of educating a child at home.

What happens once my child is registered as home educated?

Schools are required by law to inform the Local Authority whenever a child leaves their school to be educated at home. This information is logged on your child's education record.

In some cases, the Education Safeguarding Service contacts parents to discuss their decision and offer support, particularly where there are concerns that home education is not considered appropriate.

Do I need to show evidence of my child's learning if they are home educated?

Many people choose Elective Home Education because it gives great flexibility in how learning takes place. The Education Safeguarding Service works with parents wherever possible to make sure this work is being done at an appropriate level.

There are times when you might be asked to show evidence of the work being done and progress that your child is making. Normally, a member of the Education Safeguarding Service would arrange to visit you at home to talk about your child's learning. Evidence of their work might include include examples of any projects, plans and work completed.

What happens if the Local Authority receives a concern about a child's home education?

If there are any reasons to be concerned about the level of education a child is receiving at home the Local Authority has a legal duty to investigate the situation on a more formal level and offer support wherever possible.

A member of the Education Safeguarding Service will contact the parent to discuss the matter and make suitable arrangements.

What if I change my mind about Elective Home Education?

If you change your mind about home education after your child has been taken of their school's roll you will need to reapply for a school place using the school's normal admissions process. You will need to check with the school whether they or the Local Authority manage their admissions.

You can contact Somerset's School Admissions Team by calling 0300 123 2224.

What if the Education Safeguarding Service has concerns about the suitability of a child's home education?

The Education Safeguarding Service will work with parents to explore suitable education options. If concerns continue, we will explore the possibility of the child becoming registered at a school.

We would always prefer to work with parents collaboratively but if concerns continue and a school place cannot be found by agreement, the Service may seek a School Attendance Order. This would name a school at which the child must attend by law.

Do I have to provide written notification to the school of my intention to home educate?

We strongly urge parents to inform their child's school in writing of their decision to home educate. This enables the school to take the necessary action and prevents your child being considered absent or a Child Missing from Education.

Can a school refuse to remove my child from their school roll?

By law, a school is not permitted remove your child from their roll if:

- they are enrolled at a special school that is named as their provision on their EHCP
- they are enrolled at that school as the result of a School Attendance Order

If you choose to home educate without your child being lawfully removed from their school's roll you may be investigated by the Education Safeguarding Service due to non-attendance.

Do I have to respond to Local Authority enquiries about home education?

Parents are not required by law to respond to these enquiries. Choosing not to respond may result in concerns being raised that the child may not be receiving an appropriate education. This may lead to a more formal enquiry by the Education Safeguarding Service.

What if I don't provide evidence of a suitable education for my child?

If you do not, or cannot, provide evidence showing that your child is appropriately educated at home, the Local Authority has a duty to investigate the matter and consider issuing a School Attendance Order.

What should I do if my child has Special Educational Needs or a disability?

If your child has Special Educational Needs or a disability you should take this into consideration before making a final decision about home education. It is important that you are confident in your ability to meet your child's needs fully.

Children with an EHCP should have a review of their needs and any changes to their education discussed and noted within their Plan.

**Education Safeguarding Service
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