

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing Education (BACME) Service – Advice for parents

If you wish, you may teach your child at home instead of sending him or her to school. This is known as home schooling, home education, 'education otherwise' or elective home education.

Elective Home Education

Waltham Forest Local Authority recognises that the education of children is the responsibility of parents and carers. The majority of parents choose to educate their children at school. However some parents decide to make their own arrangements and educate their children at home. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE).

These guidance notes are provided in order to help you if you are considering elective home education, or if you are already home educating your child.

The LA's role is not to prevent parents from undertaking EHE, but to work in partnership with parents, to ensure that the home education is effective under the existing legislation.

Your reason for choosing EHE should not be influenced by any of the following;

- Avoiding non-attendance issue.
- Avoiding exclusion.
- Not expecting your child to achieve satisfactory examination grades at school (GCSE or SATs).

A School should not seek to persuade a parent to electively home educate.

It is important that you discuss any issue with the school or alternatively contact BACME Service on 020 8496 1718, before you de-register your child if any of the above reasons are influencing your decision.

Parents can access advice and support from a range of independent organisations. Details of these are on page 10.

Do Children have to go to school?

School is not compulsory but education is. The Education Act 1996 (Section 7) states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

- a) To his age, ability and aptitude and
- b) To any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Although most children attend school, some parents for various reasons take the responsibility for their child's education and withdraw them from the school system. Whilst you do not need to be a qualified teacher to educate your child other than at school, you must make sure that your child receives a "suitable", "efficient", "fulltime" education.

- "Efficient" if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and
- "Suitable" if it equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life of the country as a whole, so long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so.

There is currently no legal definition of "full-time". Children who attend school normally do so for between 22 and 25 hours a week, for 38 weeks a year. This measurement of time may not be relevant to home education when education may take place outside of normal school hours or made up of 1 to 1 tuition. Full time does not mean being bound by school hours and terms.

Children must continue to receive suitable education until the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach the age of 16.

What should I consider before I decide to educate my child at home?

The decision to educate at home is not one to be taken lightly and the reasons are varied.

Your first consideration should be for your child.

- Will this be the best thing for them?
- Have you taken their feelings into consideration?
- How do they feel about being removed from their school and their friends?

Educating your child at home takes a lot of time and commitment and it is also important to be aware the LA does not provide any financial assistance, textbooks or

home tutors. If you choose to home educate you assume sole financial responsibility including the cost of any public examinations you will need to provide all the books, resources, equipment and tuition for your child.

EHE children can take a range of examinations as private paying candidates. Home Educating parents can sometimes have difficulty in finding examination centres but local schools and colleges may accept private candidates.

There are a range of organisations and services available that you may find useful and information on page;

What do I need to do when I have decided to educate my child at home?

You are not required to seek permission from the LA unless your child attends a special school. You must however, inform your child's school in writing of your decision to home educate your child.

Your letter should include your child's name, date of birth, your address, your telephone number as well as the date from which you intend to start home educating your child.

If your child is below statutory school age or has never been registered at a school in Waltham Forest and you intend to home educate you are requested to contact the BACME Service either by email or telephone contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet.

What if my child has Special Needs (SEN)

If your child has an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) and attends a mainstream school your rights remain the same as for a child without special needs. You should follow the same procedure outlined above.

If your child has an Education, Health Care Plan and attend a special school their name cannot be removed from roll without the agreement of the LA as the LA has a duty to maintain the plan and to review annually. If your child is a pupil at a special school the LA will need to consider whether your education provision is suitable before amending the EHCP.

For further information please contact the Disability Enablement Service on 8496 6505.

What will happen when I inform the school of my decision?

The school will advise the LA of your decision and your child's name will be deleted from the school register. The school is legally required to inform the LA that you have elected to educate your child at home and have deleted their name from the register.

What is required of the LA?

The LA role is not to advise you on how you should educate your child, we aim to develop positive relationships with parents who choose to home educate their children. The LA acknowledges that parents education provision will reflect a diversity of approaches and interests as children learn in different ways and different paces. Education is just not about academic achievement it is about preparing children to become a responsible citizen and ensuring that they are well prepared for independent adult life.

The LA has a statutory responsibility to keep a register of all children who are electively home educated. The LA will make contact with you on an annual basis to check that you are still home educating. If you move house or secure a school place for your child please contact the LA to advise them.

The LA requires evidence of home education to be submitted annually. Where there is no evidence of home education submitted a School Attendance Order will be issued.

The LA will be informed of any child who is de registered from school however where a child is under statutory school age or has never been on a school roll and moves into the area the LA will be unaware of the child. We therefore request that you contact the Local Authority to advise us if your child becomes statutory school age and has never been in education previously.

Safeguarding

The Law says that a local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred on them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This would include children who are electively home educated.

The vast majority of parents choosing to EHE their child/children are doing this for the right reasons however a number of recent, high-profile cases in which children have been placed at risk whilst being electively home-educated suggest the following;

- Home-educated children are subject to less monitoring and scrutiny than those who attend school. Services are less likely to become aware of the signs of abuse or neglect.
- Parents of children with special educational needs, particularly those with complex and/or profound needs, are likely to struggle with the practical and emotional difficulties of providing home education. Such parents may lack the support of others and become isolated.

It is, therefore, vital to gather information about vulnerable children/families and to share it systematically with relevant officers and workers.

- Elective Home Education service will follow Waltham Forest safeguarding procedures at all times and work with relevant agencies and individuals to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and where there are any concerns about the welfare of a home educated child, they will initiate and follow established procedures.
- When a child is referred to Elective Home Education, and that child is subject to a statutory plan or an assessment with children's social care, we will ask the school to keep them on roll until safeguarding checks have been carried out by social care to ensure that home education is a safe option.
- Where home education is deemed to not be a safe option we will contact you to let you know the next steps in making choices regarding your child's education.

Choosing others to educate your child

It is important to note that should you choose to employ other people to educate your child, you should ensure that they are deemed suitable to have access to children.

I intend to home educate what happens next?

Once the LA has been notified of your decision to educate your child at home, a letter of acknowledgement will be sent and we will request that you to provide basic information detailing the education and learning experiences you intend to provide for your child/ren.

What if my education provision is deemed to be unsatisfactory?

Under Section 437 (1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities shall intervene if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education. This section 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 with a the specified period in the notice that the child is receiving such education”.

Section 437(2) of the Act provides that the period shall not be less than 15 days, beginning with the day on which the notice is served.

If it appears that your child is not receiving a suitable education you will be asked to provide further information on your on-going home education provision. Contact will normally be made in writing. Should there be any further concerns a written report will be sent to you outlining these concerns and giving you the opportunity to address them.

The LA may require more frequent contact whilst those concerns are being addressed. If this is the case, the LA will discuss these concerns with you, with a view to helping you provide an education that is more suitable and meets the best interests of your child,

A School Attendance Order, requesting that your child be placed back on to a school roll will only be served after all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the situation. This is very rare and it is hoped that it can be overcome as a result of detailed discussions and support rather than proceedings through courts.

Information for providing written reports

The first time you provide us with information we would like to know about your philosophy: In other words what approach you will be using and who is involved in educating your child(ren), e.g. specialist tutors, other family members/adults. In the first report and any subsequent reports it is helpful to include:

The subjects/topics covered during the year

Any specific achievements

Any areas where your child is progressing well or less well.

main resources used to support learning. These can include books, computer software, library, TV programmes, specialist equipment

Opportunities for social Interaction. This could include membership of organised groups, or the local Home Education support network

Examples of work to demonstrate progress

A list of experiences your child has had over the last twelve months or copies of any syllabus or plans used together with the experiences gained from them.

By including this information it enables LA Officers to understand the provision made for the child/ren and demonstrates the progress made by your child/ren.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION

Qualifications

The internal assessment component of many standard qualifications and courses, such as National Vocational Qualifications and GCSE's can restrict the choice of qualifications which home educated children may wish to aspire to. Likewise GCSE qualifications are not offered or centrally organised by one examinations board. There are a number of different examination boards and each offers a variety of syllabuses. It is crucial therefore that if you wish your child to sit GCSE examinations; before embarking him/her on a particular course, you should first ensure that you identify a centre such as a school or college, which will accept his/her examination entry. In such circumstances you may find it helpful to consider the following procedures:

If you have an existing and positive relationship with a school or college you may wish to enquire as to whether your child could be entered there for the exams you wish him/her to sit. At the same time you should ensure that the school or college would be willing to undertake to assess any coursework.

If you do not have a relationship or contact with a school or college, you will need to contact an examinations board, which should be able to arrange a local centre on your behalf. If you do this you should also ensure that the board could arrange for any coursework to be assessed.

In either case you should ensure that you know and have a copy of the exact syllabus to be studied for that year. Examinations boards can supply syllabuses and copies of previous exam papers at nominal cost. You can often access these for free online on their respective websites also.

It is usual for GCSE courses to be studied over two years; some students however, can complete them in a single year. Examination entries need to be finalised in

January prior to the exam (in June of that year). Careful, advanced planning is therefore essential.

If a child has been withdrawn from school in order to be home-educated part way through Key Stage 4, there may be a need to liaise with the school in order to ensure continuity of learning.

At present, home educated young people who take GCSEs as private candidates need to find someone who can authenticate the coursework element of their GCSE and sign a statement vouching that this is all the student's own work. Many home educating families' sign up with a distance learning provider such as [NEC](#) or [Oxford Home Schooling](#).

Further information on GCSE Examination Boards

Oxford Cambridge & RSA (OCR)

OCR is one of three unitary examining bodies in England incorporating the RSA (Royal Society of Arts), UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), and MEG (Midland Examining Group).

Contact: OCR Information Bureau, General Qualifications:

7-11, Hills Road

Cambridge

CB2 1BP.

Email helpdesk@ocr.org.uk Tel 01223 553998

Fax 01223 552627

OCR Information Bureau, Vocational Qualifications:

Progress House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JQ

Telephone: 024 7647 0033

Fax: 024 7646 8080 email: cib@ocr.org.uk

Edexcel

Edexcel was formed in 1996 by the merger of BTEC and the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council (ULEAC). Edexcel is one of the main examination boards for England and Wales.

Contact: Edexcel,

Stewart House

32 Russell Square

London

WC1B 5DN.

Tel 0870 240 9800

Fax: 020 7758 6920

Website: www.edexcel.org.uk

Email: enquiries@edexcel.org.uk

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

The AQA is one of three unitary examining bodies in England incorporating the now merged Associated Examining Board and the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board. The AQA also has responsibility for the City and Guilds' GNVQ qualification.

Contact: AQA

Devas Street

Manchester, M15 6EX

Telephone: 0161 953 1180

Fax: 0161 273 7572

Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Email: mailbox@aqa.or.uk

Helpful independent organisations

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education)

Website: www.ace-ed.org.uk

An independent national education advice centre offering confidential advice to parents.

Education Otherwise

Website: www.education-otherwise.org

A UK-based membership organisation, which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Home Education Advisory Service

Website: www.heas.org.uk

A national home-education advisory service based in the United Kingdom. It is dedicated to the provision of advice and practical support for families who wish to educate their children at home in preference to sending them to school. HEAS produces a range of publications and leaflets on different aspects of home education. An annual subscription gives access to the advice-line, quarterly magazine, educational discounts, resources for loan and a regional list of other subscribers.

To ensure the LA discharges its safeguarding responsibilities, Waltham Forest, have timely procedures in place following receipt of written notification from parent/s informing of their decision to Electively Home Educate their child/children to ensure that all children are in receipt of suitable education and do not become a child missing education.

The process outlined below is followed when parent/s have not been able to provide an education plan that meets the DFE requirements;

- **From the date of initial contact from Elective Home Education lead parent/s have 2 working weeks or to provide a suitable education plan or to make initial contact.**
- **Once an Education Plan is submitted to the EHE lead, parent/s will be contacted to inform whether the education plan meets the Department for Education requirements in 5 working days.**
- **The EHE lead will determine if the Education Plan meets the Department for Education requirements. Parent/s will be informed of this and that contact will be made in a year's time for the annual review of the Education Plan.**
- **If the Education Plan is deemed not to meet the Department for Education requirements parent/s will be provided a written report outlining what additional information is required. Parents have a further 2 working weeks to submit further information. If this meets the DFE requirements parent/s will be informed of this and that contact will be made in a year's time for the annual review of the Education Plan.**
- **If the Education Plan is determined as inadequate in line with the DFE requirements, parent/s will be asked to apply for a school place within 15 working days.**

- **If an application is not made, parents will be sent an intention to issue a School Attendance Order naming a school for the young person/s. Parents will have 15 working days to arrange admission for the young person/s at the named school.**
- **At this point if parent has not engaged with admission to school, case will be put for prosecution for breach of the School Attendance Order.**

The process outlined below is followed when parent/s have not provided an education plan to the Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing Education Service;

- **From the date of initial contact from Elective Home Education lead parent/s have 2 working weeks to provide a suitable education plan.**
- **If no contact is made within the 2 working weeks, parent/s will be contacted and provided a further 5 working days to provide education plan.**
- **If an education plan is not provided within the 5 working days, parent/s will be written to inform that that an application for a school place needs to be made within 15 working days.**
- **If an application is not made, parents will be sent an intention to issue a School Attendance Order naming a school for the young person/s. Parents will have 15 working days to arrange admission for the young person/s at the named school.**
- **At this point if parent has not engaged with admission to school, case will be put for prosecution for breach of the School Attendance Order.**

This outline is provided in order to help you if you are considering elective home education, or if you are already home educating your child. In most cases we hope not to reach the above stage as a result of discussions that have led to solutions to support parent/s rather than proceedings through courts.

Should you have any queries, or would like to talk to someone before you decide to Electively Home Educate your please contact Mary Ryan-Hubert on 0208 496 1701 or Mary.Ryan-Hubert@walthamforest.gov.uk.