

Children, Families & Cultural Services

Elective Home Education in Nottinghamshire

Guidance notes for Parents/Carers

March 2017

Introduction

This booklet is designed to support those families who are considering making provision for their child(ren)'s education at home as opposed to attending school. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE) and there are responsibilities attached to both the family and the Local Authority in ensuring that the needs of the child are met.

Nottinghamshire Local Authority seeks to adopt a partnership approach and to work with parents¹ on behalf of their children, so that they can enjoy their learning and achieve their full potential in a safe environment which promotes a healthy lifestyle. Through their education, it is hoped that all children are able to make a positive contribution to their community and develop skills needed for future economic wellbeing.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that all children of compulsory school age in its area are being suitably educated and must act if it appears that any child is not receiving such an education. It has well established working practices which are generally very well received because they have been influenced by the views of home educating families in Nottinghamshire.

There is a wealth of information and support available to parents on the internet and a list of websites is given at the end of this booklet (useful contacts page). In 2007, the government published guidelines (updated in 2013) for Local Authorities on Elective Home Education and a copy can be made available to you on request.

Should you require any further assistance, please contact the Elective Home Education team.

Jonathan Smith (EHE Programme Manager) jonathan.s.smith@nottscc.gov.uk

Business Support for EHE
ehe@nottscc.gov.uk Tel 0115 9772573

**Elective Home Education
Support to Schools Service
County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7QP**

In Nottinghamshire, the person with overall responsibility for Elective Home Education is Linda Foster, Acting Group Manager, Support to Schools Service.

For queries relating to Special Educational Needs and Education Health and Care Plans please contact the Integrated Children's Disability Service duty team at icds.duty@nottscc.gov.uk or 0115 8041275

¹ Please note that the term parent is used throughout this information to refer to the definition as contained in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and includes all those with parental responsibility, including guardians and carers.

As a parent, you have a duty to provide an education for your child during compulsory school age² (currently age 5 to 16). Most parents choose to provide this education by sending their child to school but, for a variety of reasons, some decide to educate their child themselves. This is called opting for Elective Home Education and it is very different from alternative provision provided by the Local Authority because your child will not appear on any school roll. It is a perfectly legal choice and parents are not required to have formal qualifications to educate their child at home. It is however a major responsibility for a family, requiring qualities such as dedication, patience, enthusiasm and flexibility.

Some parents choose to educate their children from the outset and never apply for a school place. Other parents decide to withdraw their children from school. Whatever the case, the decision should be a well informed one and an active and positive step in the best interests of the child. No parent should ever feel under any pressure to educate their child at home and the Local Authority advises parents not to make such a decision as a result of unresolved conflict at school.

The Local Authority recommends that parent register their decision to educate their child at home with the Elective Home Education Service. If you would like to register please contact the Elective Home Education Business Support Team on 0115 9772573. The benefits of registering include;

- Support on a one-to-one basis offered each year
- Sharing of good practice and signposting to resources and additional information
- Facilitating networking with other families
- An opportunity for you to share information and updates
- A reference from an EHE adviser for potential employers, colleges of further education or to support your application to continue to receive child benefit post 16, now that the age for participation in education/training has been raised to 18.

The duty of the parents

It is important to know that parents have a right to educate their children from their own philosophical, spiritual or religious standpoint.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the parents' duty:

'To cause the child to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

² Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the start of the first term commencing after the child's fifth birthday (or on the fifth birthday). A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16. From September 2013, children must continue in education, employment with training, or training until they reach 17. From September 2015 this requirement will be extended to age 18 or until the young person achieves a full level 3 qualification. The term school is used throughout this guidance to describe provision outside of the home where a children/young person is on the roll of that organisation.

Education is considered to be efficient and suitable if it enables children to achieve their full potential and it prepares the child for adult life in the community. Further in this booklet, the Local Authority gives advice on what constitutes a suitable education.

There is no legal definition of full time. Children in school normally spend between 21 and 25 hours working at school each week. Children in home education are taught in very different conditions and there is no direct comparison with school based timetables or educational arrangements. Please refer to The Department for Education Guidance 'Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities (2013)' for further information.

Taking your child out of school

If your child is in school you must formally de-register by writing to the headteacher and informing them that you intend to teach your child at home. If your child has never been to school, we encourage you to register with the Elective Home Education Service. You can register with the EHE Service by contacting the EHE Business Support Team on 0115 9772573.

Home education for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities

The Local Authority's duties in relation to the home education of children with special educational needs and disabilities are set out in chapter eight of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001), 8.95 and 8.96 below:

8:95 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 recognises parents' right to choose to educate their child at home. Such arrangements are described as 'education otherwise than at school'.

'In such cases, if the child has a statement of special educational needs, it remains the LEA's duty to ensure that the child's needs are met. The statement must remain in force and the LEA must ensure that parents can make suitable, provision, including provision for the child's special educational needs. If the parent's arrangements are suitable the LEA are relieved of their duty to arrange the provision specified in the statement. If, however, the parents' attempt to educate the child at home results in provision which falls short of meeting the child's needs, then the parents are not making 'suitable arrangements' and the LEA could not conclude that they were absolved of their responsibility to arrange the provision in the statement. Even if the LEA is satisfied, the LEA remains under a duty to maintain the child's statement and to review it annually, following the procedures set out in chapter nine'. (of the Education Act 1996).

8:96 In such situations section 324 (4A) of the Education Act 1996 does not require the name of a school to be specified in part 4 of the statement. Part 4 should state the type of school the LA consider appropriate but go on to say that:
"parents have made their own arrangements under section 7 of the Education Act

1996.” The statement can also specify any provision that the LEA have agreed to make under section 319 to help parents provide suitable education for their child at home.

Children attending special schools may only be removed from them, to be home educated, with the agreement of the appropriate Integrated Children’s Disability Service (ICDS) officer.

Parents seeking to have their child assessed for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), formally known as a Statement of Special Educational Needs, should address their enquiry to the NCC ICDS team. The contact details are provided on page 2 of this document.

Taking exams

You can arrange for your child to take exams as external candidates with an exam centre. Some local schools will be happy to assist but please be aware this can involve considerable research and parents have to meet all costs incurred.

The examination boards should be able to provide a list of centres near your home. Study through a reputable correspondence college should also provide you with access to an exam centre. Contact details for both examination boards and correspondence colleges are available on our useful contacts page at the end of this booklet.

EHE advisers will support you to access learning at a college of Further Education post 14, if this is of interest to you and your child.

How Nottinghamshire Local Authority supports Electively Home Educated children and their families.

The Local Authority has a team of experienced Elective Home Education advisers to work with individual families. Once notified of the decision to provide home education, the Elective Home Education Service’s administrator will contact the family to offer and hopefully agree to partnership arrangements. In most cases she will facilitate a meeting with an adviser.

Most parents are happy to meet with an adviser in their home although an alternative venue can be agreed if preferred. Advisers work in a sensitive manner and strive to engage parents and child in positive dialogue from the outset. In rare cases, the parent may choose to meet the Local Authority adviser by themselves or not at all. If parents exercise their right not to meet with a Local Authority adviser, the EHE programme manager will ask for parents to provide information on their child’s education through samples of work, diaries, reports from parents or independent tutors or a description of their educational philosophy or in some other appropriate agreed form.

The Local Authority, in its role as champion for all children will make enquiries to ensure that children are receiving a suitable education and ask that parents respond to such enquires. Whilst parents are under no duty to respond to such enquiries, case law and DfE Guidance suggests it would be sensible for them to do so.

The Elective Home Education adviser will arrange an introductory meeting when all matters relating to the home education provision can be explored. The adviser will offer advice and guidance to support parents to put a suitable programme of home learning in place and will arrange a follow up visit usually after three to six months to support the parent to achieve this. The adviser will then consider with the parent whether or not the provision is suitable and a written report will be made and copied to parents. This will state whether the Local Authority has any concerns about the education provision, will specify what these are and give the parent an opportunity to address these concerns, and make recommendations to the parents. The adviser may return again within another three to six months to determine whether or not the recommendations have been implemented.

If the provision is considered suitable, an annual cycle of review will be established. Alternatively parents may be asked to submit written reports as evidence of their satisfactory home education. Only as a last resort will the adviser recommend a return to school. In such cases the child will be referred to the School Admissions Team who will support parents in applying for a school place.

In talking with an adviser, some parents may decide that the needs of their child can be best met through seeking support from the Family Service. Further information about the work of this team is available from the Nottinghamshire County Council website at <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/family-services>

It is useful to know that Family Service consists of representatives from a number of agencies within the Children, Families and Cultural Service who can identify a pathway of support for your child should it be deemed necessary.

The Local Authority does not receive or provide any funding for Elective Home Education and parents cover all the costs involved, including examination fees. However, there is access to the free library service and many local amenities such as Rufford Abbey, which provide a range of learning activities.

Exploring the meaning of a suitable education.

Elective Home Education advisers will share their views regarding the suitability of the education parents are providing for their children. In educational terms, a plan of work is referred to as the curriculum. Whether provided in school or at home, it consists of everything that happens in order to educate the child. It should offer a broad and balanced range of learning experiences making provision for the child's physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development.

In designing the curriculum, parents are advised to consider the kind of learning activities that will take place and strive to include variety. Although home educators do

not have to follow the National Curriculum, there are some elements without which it would be difficult to say that a young person was suitably educated for life in the wider society, for example:

- key skills; numeracy; literacy; ICT; problem solving
- personal, social and health education including physical education
- citizenship and environmental education
- life skills; practical and inter-personal
- creativity and expressive arts.

Parents are advised to develop a programme of learning that has clear aims and some means of measuring its effectiveness. They should consider how they will know what their child has learned, what resources they might use and how they will arrange for their child to interact socially. It is also important that parents can respond to changes in their child's learning needs, particularly as they grow older. Teenagers may wish to follow formal examination courses, seek careers advice or access work-based and/or vocational learning.

When a child is educated at home it is the decision of the parent as to what and how the child learns. A suitable education will prepare the child for life in modern civilised society and enable them to achieve their full potential. As previously stated, there is no requirement to follow the National Curriculum, which applies only to maintained schools. However, parents may wish to be aware of the content of the National Curriculum as it does provide a useful framework, especially if they intend to return their child to state education or to pursue more formal qualifications, such as GCSEs and IGCSEs.

The National Curriculum includes English, mathematics, science (known as the 'core' subjects), ICT, history, geography, technology, art, music, citizenship, physical education and a modern foreign language. Information on the National Curriculum is available to download from the Department for Education (DfE) website.

Some parents prefer to adopt an autonomous approach in educating their child and the adviser will discuss the kind of progress that is being made. There is a great deal of literature available which enables parents to develop their educational philosophy. The local authority's interest is in establishing that a suitable education is taking place, rather than endorsing any particular approach.

The criteria used by the Local Authority to determine whether a child is receiving a suitable education

It is hoped that children can enjoy their learning and achieve their full potential in a safe environment which promotes a healthy lifestyle. Through their education all children should be able to make a positive contribution to their community and develop skills needed for future economic well-being. To this end, the Elective Home Education adviser would hope to see evidence that:

- the learning process is effective. A named adult should have overall responsibility for the programme of study
- learning includes the key skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT and problem solving. The learning activities are appropriately matched to the child's age and ability and there is the right balance of challenge and support offered
- learning is enhanced by educational visits and broadcasts. Provision has breadth and balance and learning is active, practical and carefully planned
- the child is making progress
- there are opportunities for physical development and social interaction
- learning is enjoyable
- there are opportunities for independent study and research , appropriate to the child's age and ability, and the child has access to a quiet area
- public examinations and access to career advice is available
- the child is in good health physically and emotionally
- the child has the opportunity to express their views about their home education
- the child is well equipped for life within their community.

Flexi-schooling

In Nottinghamshire, children generally attend school full-time, except if there is a planned programme of re-integration to school. "Flexi-schooling" or "flexible school attendance" is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part-time; the rest of the time the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). This can be a long-term arrangement or a short-term measure for a particular reason. "Flexi-schooling" is a legal option provided that the head teacher and the Governing Body at the school concerned agree to the arrangement. The child will be required to follow the National Curriculum/curriculum of the organisation whilst at school but not whilst they are being educated at home.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

All members of our community have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people. This means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- enabling children to have optimum life chances.

Children's Social Care is the lead agency in this area of work and Elective Home Education advisers must refer children to this service if there is any concern that they are at risk. Parents will be informed if such a referral is to be made.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints on any aspect of the procedures outlined in this document as they apply to you, you should contact the Elective Home Education Team whose details are on page 2 of this guidance.

Finally;

Deciding to educate your child at home is a major step that involves commitment and a tremendous investment of time and energy. There are a wide variety of reasons for parents choosing to home educate, but if it is due to an unresolved dispute with a school, the local authority strongly suggests a dialogue first with the school to attempt to resolve any dispute. It is also well worth talking to someone who has experience of the highs and lows of home education before finally making the decision. There are several support agencies in England to help home educators. An internet search using "home education" lists many of these organisations. Some of these groups also have local support networks. Two of the best known groups are the Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS) and Education Otherwise.

Returning your child to school

If at any time you wish your child to return to school full time the School Admissions Team will be able to advise on how to go about this. The normal admissions procedure will apply and will be subject to a place being available in the appropriate year group at the school. The School Admissions Team can be contacted by:

Web: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-admissions/apply-for-a-school-place>

Tel: 0300 500 8080

Email: admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk

The duty of the Local Authority

Nottinghamshire County Council has a number of duties in relation to children who are educated at home by their parents. The law states:

- Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities, as far as it is possible to do so, of the children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. The duty applies to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not otherwise receiving a suitable education at home, privately, or in alternative provision.

- Local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of elective home education on a routine basis. However, under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities shall intervene if it appears to a Local 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 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.
- The Department for Education Guidance 'Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities (2007)' advises that local authorities should work to address the situation informally. In these circumstances the local authority will ask the parents for further information about the education that is being provided. Parents are not legally required to respond to such enquires, but it would be sensible for them to do so.

Local authorities have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Websites worth noting

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

Web - based resources & support

The following list is offered as a means of support. Nottinghamshire County Council is not responsible for the content of the websites and does not seek to endorse any of the website content listed, nor does it subscribe to any of the websites listed. The list has been compiled using information from the Department for Education and from home education families in Nottinghamshire.

General information – list of support groups:

www.home-ed.co.uk/index

www.homeschool.co.uk

www.education-otherwise.net

www.edyourself.org.uk

www.ace-ed.org

www.heas.org.uk

www.student-support.co.uk

www.free-range-education.co.uk

www.christian-education.org

www.muddlepuddle.co.uk

www.practicalparent.org.uk

Structured learning

The new curriculum www.qca.org.uk

Teacher's TV www.teachers.tv

National Curriculum www.nc.uk.net

Access to tutors/tuition/distance learning

The Open and Distance Learning Quality Council www.odlqc.org.uk

The Association of British Correspondence Colleges www.nationline.co.uk/abcc

Learn Direct www.learndirect.co.uk

Oxford Home Schooling www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk

North Star UK www.northstaruk.org.

National Open College Network www.nocn.org.uk

International Correspondence Schools www.icslearn.co.uk

National Extension College www.nec.ac.uk

The Student Support Centre www.simply-education.co.uk/

Kip McGrath www.kipmcgrath.co.uk
Kumon Maths and English www.kumon.co.uk
Helping Learning www.helpinglearning.co.uk
Little Arthur School (Isles of Scilly) www.littlearthur.org.uk
Inter High - An Independent School on the internet www.interhigh.co.uk
Briteschool – The British E-School Live Online www.briteschool.co.uk
Primary Home Education UK www.primaryhomeeducation.co.uk
Conquer Maths www.conquermaths.com

Examination boards:

www.ocr.org.uk – select “FAQ” from home page, then use search “Taking OCR examinations, Private Candidates”, click on FAQs.
www.aqa.org.uk – use “Search” – Private Candidates
www.edexcel.org.uk – select “Studying” from home page, then Academic Qualifications, then Private Candidates.

Special Educational Needs

www.dyslexiahelp.co.uk, www.dyslexics.org.uk
The Department for Education and links to the National Curriculum and Teacher Net.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education> (search Special Educational Needs)
Young Autism Project www.ukyap.org/index
SEN Teacher www.senteacher.org

Specialist sites/books/materials

British Association for the Advancement of Science www.the-ba.net
The Geographical Association www.geography.org.uk
The Geological Society www.geolsoc.org.uk
Rockwatch the nationwide club for young geologists www.rockwatch.org.uk
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds www.rspb.org.uk
History – www.activehistory.co.uk
Natural History Museum - www.nhm.ac.uk/kids-only
Science – www.sciencemuseum.org.uk
Channel 4 – www.channel4.com/learning
BBC – www.bbc.co.uk/education
[BBC - KS1 Bitesize - Games](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/ks1/games)
[BBC - KS2 Bitesize - Home](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/ks2/home)
[BBC - KS3 Bitesize: Home](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/ks3/home)
[BBC - GCSE Bitesize - Homepage](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/gcse/homepage)
Exam revision – www.gcse.com
Co-ordination Group Publications – www.cgp.books.co.uk

Resources and online activities relevant to Key Stage 1 & 2, Special Needs and Early Years –

www.curriculumonline.gov.uk

Countryside Agency www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Young Writers www.youngwriters.co.uk

Victoria and Albert Museum www.vam.ac.uk

Topics including science and environment www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk

Interactive learning activities www.topicbox.co.uk

Early Learners www.learningparade.typepad.co.uk

Letts and Lonsdale publishers www.lettsandlonsdale.com

Sites recommended by parents

www.readinga-z.com

www.funbrain.com

www.exploratorium.edu/ The museum of science, art and human perception – USA

www.topmarks.co.uk

www.show.me.uk

www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk

www.coxhoe.durham.sch.uk

www.abbotswood.hants.sch.uk

www.enchantedlearning.com

www.senteacher.org/

www.conquermaths.com

www.homeschoolmath.net/worksheets - introducing Miquon Maths

<http://www.cimt.plymouth.ac.uk/menus/resources.htm> - supporting maths

<http://www.parentsintouch.co.uk/worksheets/index.php>

<http://clickschooling.com>

www.educationcity.com

www.non-school-nottingham.org.uk

Teacher resources

<http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk>

<http://www.tes.co.uk/topSection>.

<http://www.chalkface.com/auto/lessonplans3>.

Also

www.theteachersguide.com

www.schoolexpress.com

www.familylearning.org.uk

www.mathsphere.co.uk

www.young-enterprise.org.uk

www.tenner.org.uk

www.fiverchallenge.org.uk