

EHE - Best Practice Guide for Schools and Services

All children have a right to receive a suitable education, parents have a right to choose to educate their children at home

General Guidance

The best practice guidance is intended to support and guide schools and services in their conversations and interventions with parents who are considering, or have asked for deregistration for, Elective Home Education (EHE). The decision to home school is significant and the impact on a young person's education journey, wellbeing and outcomes must be considered. It is vital that parents are in possession of correct and complete information when considering this decision. In conversations with OFSTED schools may be asked to evidence the interventions that took place prior to and at the time the decision to EHE was made. School must ensure that the decision to EHE is led by parents and not encouraged or endorsed in any way by the establishment or staff working for it. If there is any suggestion that parents have been encouraged or guided towards a decision to EHE then this will be followed up by the LA in the context of potential off rolling. For all intentions received the LA asks that schools' complete education and safeguarding checks on the day the parents request that their child is removed from roll in order to be satisfied that EHE is not going to be incompatible with any known concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of the child(ren). Once a child is de-registered from school to become EHE their parents are offered a yearly adviser visit to support them with their EHE journey and review progress. If visits are declined, then a yearly request for a written report and/or evidence of learning is made.

Advice for Schools

If a family approach school and are considering Electively Home Educating their child(ren), a meeting should be offered to discuss why and plan a route forward. Please be vigilant and undertake safeguarding and agency checks as soon as a parent indicates that they are thinking about home educating. We ask that you prioritise this action on the day that you are notified.

Occasionally, parents remove their child(ren) from school when a meeting would have resolved the issue, or request to remove their child without full knowledge of the facts relating to EHE. An NCC EHE professional practitioner can support you with an intervention meeting or home/school mediation to explain the roles, responsibilities and expectations in relation to Home Education if required.

Action by EHE Team

De-registration

- NCC advise schools to request confirmation of the request for de-registration in writing to avoid any miscommunication and to be able to evidence decisions in the event of any future disagreement.
- Upon receiving a request for de-registration from a parent/carer it is still advisable to offer an intervention meeting as above and/or a reflective conversation with parent to ensure that they have fully researched their decision and it is being made in the best interests of the child(ren) involved. There may be specific circumstances detailed below when additional support can be offered.

- If a request is made for a child who is anxious, consider accessing services from the School Nurse, Mental Health First Aider/ARNA expert to offer advice and support in school and make reasonable adjustments. Encourage the parent to approach the GP for further advice.
- If a child has reached the threshold for a referral to the Family Service in relation to unauthorised absence, please follow your attendance procedures.

Children with SEND

For children with SEND there should be evidence that the graduated response has been followed by school. Further information about support available for children and young people with SEND is available through Nottinghamshire's Local Offer.

- Where a young person has an EHCP, this must be amended to reflect the named provision as EHE.

Advice for Professionals

- A discussion should be held between professionals and the education provision if there are concerns regarding an EHE intention, usually, the only grounds for requiring a child to remain on a school roll, is if the child is subject to a child protection plan and it is written into the plan that the child should be attending education (school or other provision) **OR** if the school is named on a School Attendance Order **OR** if the child has an EHCP and attends a Special School as their needs cannot be met via EHE.
- Families should be made aware that EHE is undertaken autonomously and whilst our team can provide signposting and education support, we do not provide tutors or supply any equipment, this is the families responsibility.

- Although we offer a yearly support and guidance visit, families do not have to accept this and in this instance a submission is requested to demonstrate that children are in receipt of suitable education; a yearly written submission may therefore be the only contact we have.

Complete the EHE Schools Form

The 'EHE Schools form' should be completed by an appropriate senior member of staff then reviewed and signed by the headteacher on the day a parent registers their intention to home educate. It is vital that it contains accurate and complete information as requested to enable the LA to form a view about whether EHE may be suitable and safe. Incomplete forms will be returned, and this delays the process. This information will be looked at by our Professional Practitioners and the future (if applicable) independent EHE adviser and will be used to determine intervention required. Where opinion is given, this must be clearly evidenced as such.

- Interventions offered around the decision to EHE should be detailed.
- Please be vigilant and undertake agency checks as soon as a parent indicates that they are thinking about home educating. We ask that you prioritise this action on the day that you are notified.
- A young person should be marked as a 'C' in the register from the date of the intention for authorised absence.
- If a school feels the need to tick the concerns box on the form then they should consider if a MASH referral is necessary. If the child has a CP/CIN plan then school will have to notify the Lead Professional to ensure that being on a school roll is not a protective factor and have the assurance of the Social Worker that EHE is a viable route for the family.

- If the child has an EHCP, then school should contact ICDS to inform them of the intention, so that ICDS can contact the family and amend the plan to reflect EHE however, if a special school is named on the EHCP then ICDS reserve the right to refuse the intention.
- The safeguarding section must be completed and signed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If there are any safeguarding concerns around a family who have submitted a letter informing you of their intention to remove from your school roll, please provide as much detail as possible on the forms you submit.
- A brief chronology of any 'causes for concerns' raised by staff must be recorded in the relevant section.
- Please retain all student records and file them, they are not held by EHE as we are not a school or education provider.
- When a family request a return to school following a period of EHE, it is good practice for them to return to the school they were originally on roll at, however, at the point of deregistration all families should be made aware by the school that this may not always be possible due to availability of places.
- If you have serious concerns about the welfare of a child, please follow your safeguarding policy and report concerns to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Telephone: 0300 500 80 90 or email: mash.safeguarding@nottscg.gov.uk
- If you become aware of any child who is being home educated and you believe not to be known to NCC's EHE Team, please pass this information to the general EHE contact.

Contact information

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NCC EHE website
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/home-education/elective-home-education>

Nottinghamshire Local Offer
<https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/home.pag>