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# Parents' responsibilities

The responsibility for a child's education rests with the parents. In England, education is compulsory, but school is not.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that:

*"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him 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."*

# Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their children at home in place of sending them to school.

This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.

It is also different from Children Missing in Education which is used for those not in school or receiving a suitable education elsewhere e.g at home.

# Definitions

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

*(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he may have,*

**Efficient** - “ An efficient education is one which achieves what it sets out to achieve”

**Full time** - There is no need for EHE to replicate school timetables, but it is useful to consider that children in state schools receive 4.5-5hrs a day for 190 days a year.

“Education which manifestly is not occupying a significant proportion of a child’s life... will probably not meet the s7 requirement”

# A suitable education

“What is considered suitable will vary according to the age, ability and aptitude and needs of each individual child”

“The key focus for the authority should be on suitability for the child in question and progress that is being made”

- enable a child to participate fully in life in the UK.
- become literate in English and numerate appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and SEN
- does not need to follow National Curriculum
- should not conflict with Fundamental British Values
- should involve social opportunities

# Before deregistering a pupil to EHE

## Parents are advised to consider:

- What their child will learn
- How their child will learn
- Who will teach their child
- How will they fund EHE including exam fees if they wish to do GCSEs
- How will they assess their child and know that they are making progress
- How will they prepare their child for the next step in their education
- How they will re-engage their child with education if they have disengaged with school, and how they will keep them engaged
- How they will share information with the Local Authority
- What will happen if elective home education is not suitable

# Schools' responsibilities



- Where possible, discuss with parents the reason they wish to home educate and ensure they are aware of any other options e.g. applying to a different school, additional support within school.
- If the parent has requested the child to be de-registered but has not said they will be educating at home, please ascertain that this is their wish before completing the de-registration form.
- Ideally, please ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities should they choose to EHE and what will happen if EHE is unsuitable
- If a child has an EHCP, an early annual review should be convened to request a change of named placement on the EHCP. If it is not possible to hold an annual review, please inform the SEND caseworker for the child.
- When confirmation is received from the parent that the child will be home educated, de-register the child using the link at [Elective home education – KELS](#)
- Please check that the documents are fully completed, and the parent confirmation is sent (double check the information is correct)
- If you have safeguarding concerns about the child, please email [educationathome@kent.gov.uk](mailto:educationathome@kent.gov.uk) or call on 03000 416969. If you believe that the child is at increased risk of significant harm by being home educated, please refer to Children's Services based on the information you have.

# The role of the Local Authority

- The Department of Education believes that although the primary responsibility for ensuring that children are properly educated belongs to parents, a local authority has a moral and social obligation to ensure that a child is **safe** and being **suitably educated**.
- If it is not clear that that is the case, the authority should act to remedy the position.
- The current legal framework is not a system for regulating home education per se or forcing parents to educate their children in any particular way. Instead, it is a system for identifying and responding to cases where children who, for any reason and in any circumstances, **are not** receiving an efficient suitable full-time education.



# The role of the EHE Support & Advice Officer

9 EHE Support & Advice Officers each with a district holding a caseload of over 400 young people.

They offer 'support and guidance' relating to the parents' plans for their child's education.

They do not teach or provide resources

They do not have regular contact with families

They also identify children who are not receiving a suitable, full time education at school or otherwise and refer these as children missing education.

# Directing support

EHE officers gather information about the home education and deem it either unsuitable, suitable or working towards suitable.

If it is suitable, a review takes place approximately 12 months later.

If it is working towards suitable, targets are set, and a review takes place 3 – 6 months later. This should only be the case in the initial stages of EHE (except in exceptional circumstances)

If it is unsuitable targets are set and a review takes place in 6 weeks. If it remains unsuitable, the child is referred to Child Missing Education team.

Where no evidence is provided, or education is deemed 'unsuitable' a return to school is initiated. The case is referred to CME where a School Attendance Order will be requested and if not complied with, can result in court action.

This can be a lengthy process and during this period, the CYP remains without education or professional oversight.

# The impact of EHE on the child

When parents are well informed, value education and do EHE well, children can be as successful as any in school.

However, for many young people, home education is not suitable and the impacts are far-reaching

- May have further negative impact on mental health long- term
- May be unable to sit examinations
- More challenging to get into further education – more at risk of NEET
- Child may be without education for lengthy period of time
- If School Attendance Order issued, it is likely to name child's last school which could be challenging for school and child
- Child may be at increased risk of significant harm either within the family or within the wider community and without regular professional oversight

Please consider whether the parent's decision to de-register may be an uninformed, knee-jerk reaction and an alternative path could be considered e.g. applying to a different school, exploring additional support that could be accessed (EBSA pathway, Kent Schools Health referral, Early Help).

# Useful contacts

Generic enquiries and information

[educationathome@kent.gov.uk](mailto:educationathome@kent.gov.uk)

03000 416969

EHE Coordinator & DSL

[heather.grady@kent.gov.uk](mailto:heather.grady@kent.gov.uk)

03000 410160

## Useful documents

- KCC Elective Home Education Policy

[www.Kent.gov.uk](http://www.Kent.gov.uk)

- DfE Guidance for LA's & Parents

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

- Elective Home Education Guidance for Professionals

[Elective Home Education Guidance for Professionals \(office.com\)](https://www.office.com)