

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Information for Elective Home Educators



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Further information is available on our website:

www.babcockldp.co.uk/EHE

Introduction

The education of a child at home is a great responsibility for a family. It demands a serious commitment of time, money, patience and energy. If you are considering educating your child at home as opposed to in a school, it must be borne in mind that it is the decision of parents as to what and how the child learns and that it is your responsibility to provide your child with a broad and balanced curriculum. Schemes of work and resources are not provided by Devon County Council. The following information will hopefully clarify the situation and help you in making your decision; as well as outlining the way in which Devon County Council carries out its duties under the 1996 Education Act.

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Do children have to go to school?

The 1996 Education Act states that **'it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate full time education for their children of compulsory school age'**. Most parents carry out this duty by ensuring their child attends the school which serves their local community. However, for a wide variety of reasons, some parents/carers decide to take on the duty to educate their children themselves. This is referred to as Elective Home Education.

What is the parents' actual duty?

Under section 7 of the 1996 Act, the parents of every child of compulsory school age: **'shall 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'**.

If, when you decide to home educate, your child is registered at a state or independent school you should inform the Head teacher, in writing, that you are home educating and they will inform the Elective Home Education Service.

Please note that if your child attends a Special School you will need the consent of the SEN O-25 Team before your child can be removed from school.

What is 'compulsory school age'?

The law requires a child to be educated from the start of the school term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year in which a child reaches sixteen. If the 16th birthday falls in July or August, compulsory school age ends on the June date before the birthday.

What is Devon County Council's duty under the 1996 Education Act?

The Act places the obligation on Local Authorities to ensure that home educators are providing an efficient education for their children, which takes into account age, ability, aptitude and any special needs that the child may have. Devon County Council has commissioned Babcock LDP's Elective Home Education Service to undertake this duty.

What should a home educated child learn?

When a child is educated at home it is the decision of the parent/carer as to what and how the child learns. The education should be such as to prepare the child for life in modern civilised society and enable them to achieve their full potential.

There is no requirement to follow the National Curriculum, which applies only to maintained schools; however, parents should ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is followed. You may wish to be aware of the content of the National Curriculum as it does provide a useful framework, especially if you intend to return your child to state education or to pursue more formal qualifications, such as GCSEs.

The National Curriculum subjects are: English, Maths, Science (known as the 'core' subjects), ICT, History, Geography, Design and technology, Art, Music, Physical Education and a Modern Foreign Language (from 11 years of age). Many published textbooks in shops and libraries are also based on it. Some publishers will give reductions to home educators.

How should I carry out Home Education?

Learning support may be provided by parents, small groups of home-educating families, or private tutors. Irrespective of how the child's education is arranged it will be up to the parent to demonstrate to the Elective Home Education Service that a suitable education is being provided.

Some home educators have a timetable showing the normal planned activities over a period of time such as you would find in a school. Other parents choose to follow a form of 'discovery' education where the interests of the child are followed. Yet others use a mixture of these methods. The Elective Home Education Service's interest is in establishing that a suitable education is taking place, rather than endorsing any particular method.

What support is available from the Elective Home Education Service?

All new home educators are allocated an Elective Home Education Adviser who can offer any advice you may need in relation to your child's home education provision.

What support is available for children with special educational needs and disabilities?

DIAS (Devon Information Advice and Support for SEND) are an independent organisation you may find helpful to consult when considering home education. They have produced a guide on home education which is available at:

www.devonias.org.uk/news/new-dias-guide-to-elective-home-education/

Devon's Local Offer for SEND provides information on the services and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities. It includes information on education, health and social care services and how to access them.

www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-local-offer

How is the Elective Home Education Service involved in education at home?

Once informed of your decision to home educate, you will be offered an appointment with your allocated Adviser to discuss your proposed arrangements for your child's education and address any initial queries you may have about home education.

Thereafter, support may be provided either through home visits, telephone or email contact, based on individual circumstances and preferences.

All families will be contacted at least on an annual basis for an update on the home education provision and to provide you with the opportunity to obtain any advice required. However, you are welcome to contact us at any other point if you need any help.

What are the advantages of a home visit?

The main advantages of a home visit are that it allows you to present a wide range of evidence in context and to discuss your child's work in a comfortable and private environment. We will always offer a home visit in the first instance.

The visit will take place during the school term time and it is helpful to us if it can be arranged during the working day. No discussion or advice on the education you are providing will take place unless an appointment has been made in advance.

During the visit, you may wish to show examples of your child's work, including such things as art work, poetry, handwriting, maths, photographs, craft work, short plays etc. If a structured approach is being followed then a timetable linked to programmes of study might be useful. If a less structured approach is being used then a record in the form of a diary might form extra evidence that would be of assistance. Indeed, anything that you and your EHE Adviser agree will assist in demonstrating the quality of the educational experiences for your child may be included.

Open discussion, without the need for parents to provide masses of paperwork, can be a simple and satisfactory way of demonstrating a suitable education provision.

What are the alternatives to a home visit?

Meeting at another venue

We can arrange for you to meet with an EHE Adviser, with or without your child being present at a mutually acceptable venue.

Sending in a report

Setting out your educational plans with examples of work (further guidance can be found on our website).

Demonstrate education provision

In some other mutually acceptable way.

Once the EHE Service has received a report from your EHE Adviser or information from yourselves concerning the education of your child, we shall inform you if we require any further information to ascertain the suitability of your child's education.

What happens if the Elective Home Education Adviser has concerns or reservations about the education at home programme?

If the EHE Service is not satisfied that a suitable education is taking place then further visits and/or consultations may be offered with the aim of helping you to overcome the difficulties within a mutually agreed time scale. If, in the end, the EHE Service still considers that your child is receiving a less than suitable education then it is Devon County Council's duty to issue a School Attendance Order. This will require you to send your child to a school named on the Order (Section 437, Education Act 1996).

Please note: At any stage during the School Attendance Order process you may present evidence to the EHE Service that you are now providing a suitable education. This will be considered by the EHE Service and if we are satisfied, the Order may be revoked.

What if I decide to educate at home and then change my mind?

If your child has been out of school for less than 6 weeks, they can return to the same school under Fair Access. The EHE team can offer advice and support regarding this, as well as finding a new school. You can also contact the School Admissions team at Devon County Council on 01392 383000.

Are home educated children able to attend school part-time (flexi-schooling)?

In Devon, children generally attend school full-time unless there is a planned programme of re-integration. However, a parent may request that a Head teacher admit their child on a flexi schooling agreement. This arrangement would be at the discretion of the Head teacher and Governors of the school as the child would be on roll of the school. Further information available on our website.

Are home educated learners able to attend a Further Education College part-time?

Home educated learners are able to access FE College courses on a part time basis to supplement their home education provision. This is called 14-16 alternative provision and is available when your child reaches year 10. They can access part time courses which are mainly practical in nature but some also offer English and maths. Details of courses at each college are described on our website under 14-16 provision.

Can home educated learners undertake work experience?

Work experience may take place during the last 2 years of compulsory education and can be extremely valuable as part of the home education programme. However, it is important to note that any work experience opportunity must be unpaid and clearly seen to be enhancing your child's education and life experiences and cannot be used as a replacement of the education you are providing for your child. It is also important to note that you are responsible for ensuring the placement is safe, insurance is in place and all health and safety criteria are met. This will include a thorough risk assessment appropriate for the work your child is doing being undertaken and that you are informed of any controls that are put in place. Further information is available on our website.

What are the rules regarding paid work for home educated learners (Child Employment)?

Any child that is home educated is still governed by the Child Employment Regulations and therefore cannot be employed (paid or unpaid) during the school day. Further details are available on the Babcock LDP website.

Where can home educated learners sit formal examinations?

Should you wish your child to take formal examinations e.g. GCSEs, you would have to find an accredited centre willing to accept private candidates. You may have to use the same syllabus/exam board as the school/college and for this reason it is important that you

contact school(s) before starting courses if possible. Entries should be made by January in Year 11 at the latest, but earlier discussion is advised.

Entering, administering and invigilating external examinations are costly processes. Costs must be met by home educators and it will be important to agree with the school what these costs are, and that they will be paid prior to entry being made. Schools will provide details of when fees must be paid.

For further details, including exam centres willing to accept private candidates please refer to our website.

What are the post 16 options available to home educated learners?

- Continuing with home education
- Returning to a school with a sixth form if there is one in your area
- College of Further Education
- Work based training/modern apprenticeships.

Whatever your child wants to do after the age of sixteen it would be sensible to make early preparations. An interview with CSW (formerly known as Careers South West) may be useful. Contact details and further information can be found on our website.

What is Devon County Council's duty in relation to safeguarding children?

Devon County Council has a duty under section 175 (1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes Electively Home Educated children. All agencies that come into contact with Electively Home Educated children are required to consider whether children are being adequately safeguarded within those settings and, where appropriate, to notify other agencies of their concerns.

What checks should be undertaken before employing a private tutor / enrolling your child at an unregistered setting?

If you choose to employ a private tutor it is your responsibility to ensure that this person has the right knowledge and skills to take on this role. It is entirely appropriate that any tutor should also be able to demonstrate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance and provide references if they are not known to the family. Details of DBS checks are available from the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ Similarly, if you decide to enrol your child at an unregistered setting you will need to assure yourself that effective safeguarding processes are in place as the Local Authority does not undertake this role.

How can home educated children access health services normally provided through schools?

Information about vaccinations, support for mental health and wellbeing and routine health checks, with relevant contact details and useful links can be found under the 'Health' section on our website.

What action should you take if you decide to move?

We would be grateful if you let us know your new address. If you are moving out of county, these details will be forwarded to the new Local Authority where you will be residing. It is important that information is kept up to date to avoid your child potentially being listed as a child missing education.

What should you do if still undecided about whether home education is right for your child?

Deciding to educate your child at home is a major step that, as you know, not only involves commitment but also a tremendous investment in time and energy. There is a wide variety of reasons for choosing to home educate, but if it is due to an unresolved dispute with a school, the EHE Service 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. Independent support agency addresses are available on our website. We are also here to offer advice and support.

For general enquiries please contact:

EHE Admin support

Tel: 01392 287230 Email: LDP-ElectiveHomeEducation@babcockinternational.com

For education advice please contact:

Elective Home Education Lead Professional: Emma Hitchins

Tel: 01392 287255 Email: emma.hitchins@babcockinternational.com

Education at home can be a happy and constructive experience for both you and your child. If you decide to take this on the EHE team wishes you well and will do what it can to ensure that a suitable education is provided.

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