

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Multi-agency roles and responsibilities

What do we mean by home education

Elective home education (EHE) is a decision by parents to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school full-time.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children receive a suitable education, but they are not required to register them with a school.

This is a legal right under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996

Unlike home education arranged by schools or local authorities, such as home tuition for children too unwell to attend school, for example, parents who decide to elective home educate their child bear all the responsibility, including financial.

Elective home education (EHE) is equal in law to school-based education; it must meet the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational need(s). EHE must be **efficient, full-time and suitable** (i.e. prepares a child for life in a modern society and enables a child to reach their full potential). However, it does not need to follow the National Curriculum or resemble school-based education.

The Isle of Wight Council keeps a register of all known home educated children and is required to find out if children are missing education.

If a child has never been to an Isle of Wight school, the EHE Team may not know about the child, so seek information from other agencies to fulfil this duty.

A Local authority's statutory duty is:

'To make arrangements to enable the authority to establish, so far as it is possible to do so, the identities of children in its area who are not receiving a suitable education'

Multi Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Isle of Wight Local Authority:

- ➡ The EHE Team are keen to speak to parents considering EHE and help them to make an informed decision about EHE and support options.
- ➡ When a child is registered as home educated, the team send an introductory pack and aim to offer a visit within 3 months with support and advice available from an EHE Officer via telephone or email.
- ➡ The local authority must be satisfied that all children are receiving a suitable education, and most families have annual contact with the team (which is the Department for Education expectation). Informal enquiries, support offers, and appropriate legal notices will be sent to

parents when there are concerns or a lack of information about the home education being provided.

- ➡ The Isle of Wight Council EHE team will respond to Child in Need and Child Protection requests for information with a timely report and will attend meetings for children with a social worker or relevant meetings for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities if possible. If the child is not registered as EHE, it is important to notify the EHE team to ensure effective partnership working.

Education settings

Schools **must not seek to persuade parents** to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, schools must follow the statutory guidance. If the pupil has a low attendance, the school and Local Authority must address the issues behind the absenteeism and use the other remedies available to them.

Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities

- ➡ When a child leaves school to become Electively Home Educated, an **EHE Exit from School Roll form** must be completed by the school without delay and shared with the EHE team. It is important that the individual completing the form is aware of significant relevant information that should be shared including any previous safeguarding and welfare concerns. It is recommended the Designated Safeguarding Lead has oversight of the content of the EHE Exit form.
- ➡ As per DfE guidance, schools are encouraged to offer parents a meeting with the headteacher to try to resolve any problems at the time of an EHE notification from the parent, although parents are not required to attend.
- ➡ Head teachers and school staff must not encourage or pressurise a parent into de-registering a child from a school. Equally, Head teachers are not allowed to refuse the parent's right to de-register the child from the school for the purposes of Elective Home Education. The Local Authority will challenge schools where it appears that parents have been persuaded or coerced to de-register their child from school for the purposes of Elective Home Education.
- ➡ If a parent is considering or has already decided to home educate a child who is a Child in Need, is subject to child protection enquiries or has a Child Protection Plan, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead must immediately inform the child's social worker.
- ➡ If you have any safeguarding concerns about a child, who is going to be Home Educated, please submit an Inter-Agency Referral Form.
- ➡ Schools are encouraged to keep an open dialogue and ensure parents are making an informed choice about EHE.

Health professionals

Health professionals have a critical role to play, including GPs and school nurses. They may be the only agency that has visibility and knowledge of a child and so should be confident to ask questions about a child's education. If they have concerns, that child's welfare or wellbeing may be compromised, they should take necessary action, including referring to Children's Social Care where indicated. **National Panel Briefing: Safeguarding Children in Elective Home Education**

- ➡ If you have concerns regarding the education of a child who is EHE you should email the EHE Inbox (see below) to share your concerns.
- ➡ If you have SAFEGUARDING concerns, you should complete an [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\)](#)
- ➡ If you discover a child is being home educated, please check that child is known to Isle of Wight Council EHE team.

Children's Social Care

- ➡ Children's Social Care should be notified by the school if a child has a social worker and the EHE officer will also contact you if a child with a social worker becomes electively home educated.
- ➡ Where a child has a social worker, the social worker and EHE Officer will work collaboratively. If the child also has an Educational Health and Care Plan, the social worker and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team will work collaboratively too via the child's caseworker. The social worker and the EHE officer / SEND caseworker should keep each other updated and invite each other to any relevant meetings. Where the child has a social worker, the social worker should be invited and attend annual reviews of children with an Education Health and Care Plan who are electively home educated.
- ➡ If a social worker has concerns regarding the education a child is receiving, they should contact the relevant EHE officer.
- ➡ If the parent wishes for the child to return to school, the, the social worker should support the transition back to school by liaising with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or pastoral lead at the school. The social worker should also discuss this with the EHE officer; the Education Inclusion and Access Service can also help assist this process if required.
- ➡ If a child who is home educated is allocated a social worker, the social worker needs to inform the EHE Local Authority Lead without delay.

All agencies

- ➡ If any practitioners who work with children, including colleagues in that voluntary and community sector, identifies a child who may be electively home educated or their education status is not clear, they should check with the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Lead whether that child is known to EHE team. *(contact details at the bottom of the document)*

Elective Home Education Legal Process

Parents/carers should inform a school in writing of their intention to home educate or they may be liable to legal action for non-attendance. Schools must then inform the Isle of Wight Council EHE Team without delay. If a child is considered to not be receiving a suitable education a School Attendance Order or Education Supervision Order may be put in place for the child and possible court proceedings for non-compliance.

Lack of a suitable education can impact a child's welfare and development and may meet the threshold for neglect.

Myth Busting

- **Myth:** Parents need permission to remove children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) from mainstream schools.
- **Fact:** Parents can remove children with EHCPs from mainstream schools without permission, but annual EHCP reviews will continue. Children in special schools cannot be removed without permission from the local authority (SEND Panel).

- **Myth:** Home educated pupils can easily access full-time college provision.
- **Fact:** Part-time provision may be available at local post-16 providers for some home educated pupils in Year 10 and/or Year 11, but only if home education has been assessed as suitable for at least 12 months before the course starts in September. This is not an alternative to school, as the provision is part-time and limited to a few GCSEs and/or vocational courses. This is not a guaranteed offer.

- **Myth:** Parents must inform the local authority when they withdraw their child from school for elective home education.
- **Fact:** Schools have a duty to notify the local authority, but parents are not currently required to do so. Registration is not a legal obligation for parents or local authorities, though a voluntary registration scheme is offered on the Isle of Wight.

- **Myth:** Parents must prove that home education is suitable.
- **Fact:** Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure their child receives a suitable education, but it does not explicitly require parents to prove this suitability to the local authority. They are not legally obligated to demonstrate or prove its suitability unless there are concerns raised by the local authority.

- **Myth:** Children in Care can be home educated without any special permissions.
- **Fact:** Children in Care cannot be electively home educated without the agreement of the local authority (via the Virtual School) as corporate parent.

- **Myth:** There is a cooling-off period before parents can start home educating their child.
- **Fact:** The decision to home educate can be made and enacted quickly by parents. While many schools would welcome a child back on the school roll, they are not obliged to do so.

- **Myth:** Local authorities EHE Teams can insist on seeing a home-educated child.
- **Fact:** Local authority powers do not extend to insisting on seeing a home-educated child without parental consent. There is no legal obligation under the Education Act 1996 for parents to allow local authorities into their homes to check the suitability of the education being provided.

What are the key processes?

A parent/carer must inform the school in writing of their intention to deregister their child for the purposes of Elective Home Education.



The school sends notification to local authority. **Where the child has a social worker, the school should also notify the child's social worker.**



The local authority EHE team will make initial contact with the family within 5 days through phone call, letter or email



Regular follow ups by letter/phone call, email and visits take place to secure information about 'suitable, efficient and full-time education'

If there is no response from parent/carer after 16 weeks from date of initial enquiry (or there are safeguarding concerns raised prior to that) an [Inter-Agency Referral Form](#) is completed by the EHE team

Key information

Contact details for the Isle of Wight Council Elective Home Education team:

Tel: (01983) 823151

Email: electivehomeeducation@iow.gov.uk

Contact details for the Isle of Wight Council Children Missing Education team:

Tel: (01983) 823151

Email: educationwelfareservice@iow.gov.uk

Further information is provided on the [IWC Elective Home Education](#), including a guide for parents and resources to support home education