

## **Elective Home Education (EHE) Frequently Asked Questions**

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, the following questions and answers will hopefully clarify the situation and help you in making your decision. They also outline the way in which Croydon local authority carries out its duties under the 1996 Education Act.

### **Does my child 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 school. However, for a variety of reasons, a small minority of parents decide to take on the duty to educate their child/children themselves, that is to 'educate at home'. Many parents make a success of home education and make at least satisfactory provision.

### **What are the parents'/carers' responsibilities?**

Under section 7 of the 1996 Act, 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'*. Education is statutory. Attendance at school is not.

### **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. The participation age was raised in 2013 and 2015 and home education is a legal option post -16 just as it is for under -16s.

### **Who do I inform if I decide to educate my child at home?**

If your child is currently on the roll of a school you are not obliged to inform the school that he or she is being withdrawn for home education. However, it is sensible to do so, in order to avoid subsequent misunderstandings as to how you intend to fulfil your parental responsibility for your child's education. The school is obliged to inform the local authority of children removed from its admission register and will give home education as the reason, if notified of this by the parent.

### **What is the local authority's duty under the 1996 Education Act?**

The role of the local authority is clear with regard to home education. They have two duties: to provide support for home educating families (at a level decided by local authorities themselves), and if families wish it; and to intervene with families if the local authority is given reason to believe that a child is not receiving a suitable education. The local authority has a duty to take action if it appears a child is not receiving education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Therefore, if your child is not on a school roll, the local authority will ask you for some information about your educational provision.

### **How can I teach my child if I am not a trained teacher?**

You do not need to have formal qualifications, or be a teacher, to educate your child at home. Qualities such as patience, enthusiasm and flexibility are invaluable. You do not need to 'know everything.' An important skill, as well as developing a sound

knowledge base, is for all concerned to learn how to learn and think, and how to find out information. Efficient education is defined in case law as education which 'achieves what it sets out to achieve.' Implicit in this notion is that parents should know and articulate what they set out to achieve through the education they provide.

### **Do I have to fit in with school terms and times?**

Education at home can be more flexible and less rigid than at school. It depends on how you decide to organise your child's education.

### **What if the local authority is not satisfied?**

If it appears that a suitable education is not being provided, the local authority will seek to gather any relevant information that will assist reaching a properly informed judgement. This will include seeking from the parents any further information that they wish to provide which explains how they are providing a suitable education. Parents will be given the opportunity to address any specific concerns that the authority has. The child will be given the opportunity, but not required, to attend any meeting that may be arranged or invited to express his or her views in some other way. Ultimately the local authority might send you a formal notice asking you to satisfy us that your child is receiving suitable education, and if this is not forthcoming then the local authority will look at serving a School Attendance Order requiring you to send your child to school.

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

You can seek a place in a school at any time and let the local authority know of your intention. It is not always possible for a child to go back to the same school if home education does not work out and you may find a very restricted range of school options, particularly if your child is in the later stages of secondary education.

### **What will happen if we decide to move?**

We would be grateful if you would let the Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education know your new address. If you are moving out of the county and still intend to educate your child at home the Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education will put you in touch with the Education Department in your new county.

### **What should I do if my child has Special Educational Needs?**

Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has special educational needs (SEN). This right is irrespective of whether the child has an EHCP/statement of SEN or not. Parents of any child subject to the statutory provisions of an EHCP (or Statement) who are considering whether to make their own arrangements should discuss this with their child's named SEN Caseworker to ensure that they are fully aware of alternatives (amended provision and/or change of placement) and their SEN statutory rights of appeal. If your child has an EHCP/statement of SEN and is attending a mainstream school you do not need permission from the local authority but if your child is attending a 'special school' – you must seek permission from the local authority before your child's name is taken off the school roll. The local authority will contact you to ask you for some information. If a child has an EHCP/statement of SEN and the parent chooses to home educate, information will be shared between the SEN casework officer and the Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education. If your child is home educated but does not have an EHCP/ statement of SEN and you believe he or she may have special needs you can request a statutory assessment.

### **What if my child has social care involvement?**

Home education cannot be seen as a protective factor for a vulnerable child at risk. Home educated children are subject to less monitoring and scrutiny than those who attend school. Services are less likely to become aware of the signs of abuse or neglect. The local authority recognises that current legislation and guidance inadvertently helps the small minority of home educators who use elective home education as a cover to conceal child neglect and abuse.

Where a child is made subject to a child protection plan or is already subject to a child protection plan, the conference chair should make clear that if the parent has already declared elective home education, or states an intention to do so, the risk will be re-considered in light of this information with the likelihood that the child is considered unsafe as a consequence. The chair will therefore immediately ensure that the plan is changed or reviewed to protect the child and if this includes a stop to elective home education with immediate effect the chair will outline what harm is likely, what the risk is, and how it is increased as a result of continuing to educate the child at home. The resulting plan will reflect the necessary actions that need to be taken.

### **What else should I consider before taking the step to home educate?**

Deciding to educate your child at home is a major step that not only involves commitment but also a tremendous investment in time, money, and energy. It is well worth talking to someone who has experience of the highs and lows of home education before finally making a decision. Where parents are looking to home educate due to a breakdown in relations at the school and the parents are notifying of intent to home educate for these reasons, there should be a presumption that mediation will be explored prior to a final decision being made on whether to remove the child from the school roll. The local authority would expect all Croydon schools to have had a discussion with parents, signposting them to support and guidance before making any formal decision.

The local authority must establish whether a family is genuinely providing education or whether it is simply avoiding engaging with the school system. In the latter case officers must consider both child protection and educational issues and respond accordingly within the legal frameworks available. Home education is not a way of solving your child's non-attendance at school.

Many families make a pro-active decision to home educate. Such families usually provide a high standard of education for their children. However, some families may feel that electing for home education is the only available option when it appears that school issues cannot be resolved or where personal circumstances mean that attending school regularly is problematic. The local authority Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education aims to support families in these situations to ensure families understand the implications of the child no longer being on a school roll, for example having to locate an exam centre that accepts external candidates, and the lack of school places for young people during GCSEs.

### **Can my child take GCSEs?**

If an electively home educated child decides to take GCSEs/IGCSEs, then parents should make their preparations as early as possible. It is sensible to start planning when your daughter/son is in Year 9 (the school year in which they become aged 14). It is essential to find out where your daughter/son can sit the examinations. This

must be an accredited centre. You should contact local schools or further education colleges to see if they will accept external candidates. You will have to use the same syllabus/exam board as the school/college. You can also look on the internet for accredited examination centres under the chosen examination board. Parents will need to ask how much the school/college/examination centre will charge, as they will also, under current legislation, have to pay the exam board fees. The local authority is currently unable to provide this funding for GCSEs/IGCSEs if a child is receiving elective home education. It is your responsibility to identify exam boards and syllabus material and to prepare your child for the GCSE/IGCSE exams. Parents are responsible for meeting deadline dates and the costs for registering for the GCSE/IGCSE exams through the alternative learning provision.

### **Conclusion**

Croydon Council believes in the value of school-based education but respects the conditional rights of parents to elect to educate their children at home. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children receive a suitable education. If you and your child are committed and enthusiastic about it then education at home can be a happy and constructive experience for both of you. Where parents choose to home educate, Croydon Council considers it to be desirable for parents and the local authority to work together, recognising each other's rights and responsibilities and establish and maintain a positive dialogue in the interests of the child to ensure that a high quality education is received and children are safeguarded. Home education can be a happy, fulfilling and successful experience and as a local authority we would like to wish you and your child every success for the future. However, we recognise that in some cases it can become too burdensome and in that case we should like to encourage you to contact us and we will do all that we can to support you in finding a suitable school for your child.

### **Complaints**

Your comments are welcomed and should you find yourself unhappy with the service provided by the Children Families and Education Department please contact our Complaints Officer on 0208 726 6400.

However, if your dissatisfaction relates to the action or lack of action by a school you will need to follow the school's complaints procedure. The school will give you a copy if you ask for one.

### **Useful additional information**

The Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education can be contacted via email: [ElectiveHomeEducation@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:ElectiveHomeEducation@croydon.gov.uk).

The position of Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education sits within the Learning Access service in the Children Families and Education Department. The role of the Monitoring and Support Teacher for Elective Home Education is not to tell parents how to educate their children or to promote registration at school. It is to respond to concerns that a child is not receiving a full time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude and, where appropriate, provide support and information for parents.

### **Websites**

There are many websites that provide information for anyone considering EHE – some links to such sites are provided here:

Department for Education: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>

Education Otherwise: [www.education-otherwise.net](http://www.education-otherwise.net)

Home Schooling: [www.home-schooling-uk.com](http://www.home-schooling-uk.com)

Ahome: [www.ahomeeducation.co.uk](http://www.ahomeeducation.co.uk)

Home Education Advisory Service: [www.heas.org.uk](http://www.heas.org.uk)

Home Education in the UK – Special Educational Needs: [www.he-special.org.uk](http://www.he-special.org.uk)

Croydon Parents In Partnership: <http://www.pipcroydon.com/>

Home Ed Exams Wiki: [http://he-exams.wikia.com/wiki/HE\\_Exams\\_Wiki](http://he-exams.wikia.com/wiki/HE_Exams_Wiki)



## **Science:**

*Please check the suitability of the websites and ensure that science experiments are supervised and have the correct equipment.*

[sciencemuseum.org.uk/learning](http://sciencemuseum.org.uk/learning)

There is a range of activities you can do at home from making instant ice cream to making slime. Check out the kitchen science booklet.

[nasa.gov/kidsclub](http://nasa.gov/kidsclub)

There is a range of space games and information about life in space.

[discoverykids.com](http://discoverykids.com)

Has a range of science experiments and games.

[topmarks.co.uk](http://topmarks.co.uk)

Covers a range of subjects but has a science section with interactive pages

[bpes.bp.com/resources/list](http://bpes.bp.com/resources/list)

A range of science resources for primary age children.

[sciencekids.co.nz/](http://sciencekids.co.nz/)

Has a range of science experiments and quizzes.

[schoolscience.co.uk/primary](http://schoolscience.co.uk/primary)

Has a range of science experiments and quizzes and has a link to make your own model of a volcano.

[stem.org.uk/primary-science](http://stem.org.uk/primary-science)

Has a range of resources but you do have to sign up (free) to access them.

[mysteryscience.com](http://mysteryscience.com)

The website says, "Every lesson begins with a Mystery that hooks your students. I then narrate an unforgettable story told with stunning images and videos and punctuated with opportunities for discussion. Every lesson concludes with simple hands-on activities designed to use supplies you already have (or are easy to get)."



### **History:**

Do not forget the wonderful museums across London. [Here are some more unusual museums in London.](#)



### **Information Technology:**

[Thinkyouknow](#) resources for parents and young people.

There are a new set of films that follow the adventures of Sam, Ellie and Alfie as they form a band and enter their school's Battle of the Bands contest, taking on the mean but 'cool' Popcorn Wizards as they go. The three friends learn that while the internet can help them in pursuit of their goal, they need to use it wisely and safely.

Check out the trailer for **Play Like Share** [here](#)

You might also like to have a look at the following sites:

**NSPCC Net Aware:** this is a type of search engine for applications and websites. On this site there is reviews written by young people as well as parents, which think about the risks but also the benefits.

[www.net-aware.org.uk/](http://www.net-aware.org.uk/)

**Super Better:** [www.superbetter.com](http://www.superbetter.com)

This is a gaming site that has a focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing.

**Zipit:** This is an NSPCC tool that supports young people in a humorous way to say no.

[www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/)

NSPCC and O2 have a helpline for parents that can help with security and parental safety settings etc:

[www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood/about-us/partners/nspcc-o2-online-safety-partnership/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood/about-us/partners/nspcc-o2-online-safety-partnership/)



### **Languages:**

[www.duolingo.com](http://www.duolingo.com)

The website says, "Duolingo is the world's most popular way to learn a language. It's 100% free, fun and science-based. Practice online on duolingo.com or on the apps!"

Alternatively, you could try ...

[www.memrise.com](http://www.memrise.com)

Its website says, "uses images and science to make learning easy and fun"



### **Music:**

<https://www.croydonmusicandarts.co.uk/>