

Busy Governance Guide to Elective Home Education

Children can be taught at home, either full or part-time. This is called home education (sometimes 'elective home education' or 'home schooling'). Parents must make sure their child receives a full-time education from the age of 5, but they do not have to follow the national curriculum, in England, education is compulsory, but school is not. The council can make an 'informal enquiry' to check the child is getting a suitable education at home. They can serve a [school attendance order](#) if they think the child needs to be taught at school. Elective home schooling is different to education provided by a local authority otherwise than at a school - for example, tuition for children who are too ill to attend school.

Remote Education: During the period when schools were closed to all but vulnerable children and children of key workers, most pupils were educated at home. This is known as home-schooling. While being home-schooled, children remained on their school roll and received a combination of support from schools, online learning resources such as [Oak Academy](#) and other resources parents may have provided themselves. Home schooling in this instance is different to elective home education, which is where parents choose not to send their child to school full-time on a long term basis.

1. If the child is currently at school, parents should tell the school if they plan to educate their child at home. The school must accept if parents are taking their child out completely. However, schools can refuse if parents wish to send their child to school some of the time (flexi-schooling).

2. On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's local authority Elective Home Education Service (EHE) that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. The parent with whom the child lives for most of the time, is normally in effective control of the education provided and whether the child attends school. However, that can be subject to a specific issue order made by the Family Court if parents do not agree who has responsibility.

3. Although children being home-educated are not normally registered at any school, parents sometimes choose to make arrangements for a child to receive part of the total provision at a school - the purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home. Such arrangements are sometimes known as 'flexi-schooling' and a child who is educated at home most of the time can also be registered at school and attend school for part of the week – perhaps one day a week.

4. Schools are under no obligation to agree to an arrangement to flexi-school, but some are happy to do so, whilst many local authorities are not.

5. When a child is flexi-schooled, the parents must still ensure that the child receives a suitable full-time education, but the element received at school must be taken into account in considering whether that duty is met, just as it should be when a child attends other settings on a part-time basis.

6. When a child is flexi-schooled, time spent by children being educated at home should be authorised as absent by the school in the usual way and marked in attendance registers accordingly. It is not appropriate to mark this time as 'approved off-site activity' as the school has no supervisory role in the child's education at such times and also has no responsibility for the welfare of the child

while he or she is at home. The Department for Education does not propose to institute a new attendance code specific to flexi-schooling.

7. Some schools have expressed concern that such absence may have a detrimental effect for the purpose of Ofsted inspection, but this is not the case; some schools with significant flexi-schooling numbers have had good outcomes from Ofsted inspections. Schools which have flexi-schooled pupils should be ready to discuss with Ofsted inspectors the arrangements they have in place to deal with the requirements caused by such pupils. Schools are held to account through inspection for the performance of pupils and that will include any who attend the school as part of a programme of flexi-schooling.

8. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record, this would be considered as 'off rolling'.

9. If the child attends state-funded school or FE college for part of the week, that will have no cost to the parents. However, examination costs are the responsibility of parents if a child does not attend school full-time, although some schools or colleges attended part-time may meet the costs, or the local authority may have a policy of assisting with such costs for children educated at home.

10. Some councils have noted that parents often send their children back to school because of the costs of home education as they must pay to enter children into exams, with schools charging up to £150 for a GCSE and £200 for an A-level, according to some sources.

11. Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system.

12. If the child has SEN and attends a special school, parents or carers will need to get the council's permission to educate them at home. However, parents or carers do not need the council's permission if their child attends a mainstream school, even if they have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

13. It is legally possible for a looked-after child to be educated at home (for example by foster carers) if the local authority as corporate parent decides this is appropriate after discussion with the carers.

14. If a parent or carer decides to stop home educating their child, they will need to contact their local authority to find out which schools in their area have places in the relevant year group. The school receiving the child will need to consider a reintegration plan to support children returning to mainstream schooling.

15. Where necessary - because it is evident that a child is simply not receiving suitable education at home and the use of school attendance powers is not achieving a change in that situation - the local authority should be ready to use its safeguarding powers. The overriding objective in these cases is to ensure that the child's development is protected from significant harm.

16. Register for children not in school – The former government and the current government believe that establishing a system of registration will help safeguard some EHE children who require support, but who are currently not visible to those services that are there to keep children safe and supported. They wish to place a duty on LAs to maintain a register of children of compulsory school age who are not registered at specified categories of schools (state or registered independent or Non-

Maintained Special), with the register including some children educated under the Education Act (1996) and those who are flexi-schooled. Further information is awaited.

For further information see the following guidance from The Department for Education:

[Elective home education: guidance for schools and local authorities](#)