



# **elective** *Home* **education**

## **Guidance for Parents/Carers**

DRAFT 4

**Children & Young People's Services**

## Introduction

This booklet has been written to help you understand what may be involved if you are thinking about, or have decided, to educate your child away from the school system.

We recognise that there is a wide variety of ways in which education can be provided.

A decision to educate at home should not be made solely to resolve a particular problem in school. It is advisable to discuss the problem with the Head Teacher in the first instance, or write to the School Governors.

For ease of reference the majority of this booklet has been set out in sections in a format of 'Frequently Asked Questions' which we hope that you will find useful.

We can be contacted at:

Elective Home Education Team  
School Effectiveness Service  
Rockingham Professional Development Centre  
Roughwood Road  
Rockingham  
Rotherham  
S61 4HY

Tel: 01709 740226

Fax: 01709 557515

Email: [ElectiveHomeEducation@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:ElectiveHomeEducation@rotherham.gov.uk)

All contact details are correct at February 2014

# Frequently Asked Questions about Elective Home Education (EHE)

## The Law

### What is a parent's duty?

The responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents. In England, education is compulsory, but school is not. Parents have a duty to secure an appropriate full-time education for their children. Some parents choose to do this by educating their child at home. They do it because they judge it to be the best way to carry out their duty.

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:

- to his age ability and aptitude, and
- to any special educational needs he may have, either by attendance at school or otherwise."

*Parents are not required to*

- *teach the National Curriculum*
- *provide a broad and balanced curriculum*
- *have a timetable*
- *have premises equipped to any particular standard*
- *set hours during which education will take place*
- *have any specific qualifications*
- *make detailed plans in advance*
- *observe school hours, days or terms*
- *give formal lessons*
- *mark work done by their child*
- *formally assess progress or set development objectives*
- *reproduce school type peer group socialisation*
- *match school-based, age-specific standards.*

*However, we aim to offer advice and support to parents on these matters if requested.*

You should note that the EHE Officer will not be able to direct the learning which takes place nor can she/he accept any responsibility for it. If you decide to educate your child outside of school it is your responsibility to plan her/his education and to carry it out.

If you decide to re-integrate your child into a school in the future you will probably find the process more straightforward if your home education takes the National Curriculum into account.

There are dedicated support networks run by home educators to help parents whose children are taking exams. Home Education support organisations and local groups also offer opportunities for social and educational activities.

### **What if my child has never been to school?**

If your child is below compulsory school age you do not need to tell anybody but it will help us to keep our records accurate if you write to let us know you intend to educate your child at home when she/he is of compulsory school age. We will then ask you for some basic information as we do with all home educating families.

If the Local Authority discovers that you have a child who is not a registered pupil in a school and we don't know that you are home educating, or have any information about your educational provision, it could be misinterpreted that your child is "missing from education". The Local Authority has a legal duty to identify children who are missing from education so, for this reason, we will ask you to provide some information about your home education.

If your child is already being educated at home and the family moves to Rotherham please write to the Local Authority and let us know.

Please note that a parent who fails to register their child at a school and makes no other arrangement for their education will have a School Attendance Order served upon them. A parent who fails to comply with such an order is guilty of an offence. (Education Act 1996 Sec 443)

### **What if my child is having difficulties at school?**

This does not mean that you *have* to take your child out of school. Discuss the issues with the school, the Head Teacher or governors at the school. A school **cannot** request that you educate your child at home because s/he is having difficulties or has poor attendance at school.

### **What is the process if I want to take my child out of school to home educate?**

If your child is of compulsory school age, (the term after the child's fifth birthday) and is already registered as a pupil in a Rotherham school you will need to write to the Head Teacher

It is then the Head Teacher's legal duty to remove your child's name from the admission register and the Head Teacher will notify the Local Authority.

It is important that you know that once your child's name is taken from the school roll it may not be possible for your child to return to the same school if you change your mind, because the place may have been allocated to another child.

### **What if I just keep my child at home?**

Registered pupils must attend school regularly. If your child is still a registered pupil you will be visited by an **Attendance Officer** or **Education Welfare Officer** to find out why your child is not attending school.

A parent who fails to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which she/he is registered is guilty of an offence. (Education Act 1996 Sec 443) and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine. The Local Authority would then take steps to get your child back in school.

### **Can a school simply take my child off the school roll?**

No. A school cannot force or request you as a parent to remove your child from the school roll under any circumstances. The Head Teacher cannot remove your child from the school without the parent/carer's written, signed permission.

### **What happens when the school tells the council?**

Once we are informed of your decision to educate at home, we will contact you to ask you to give us some information about your provision. Many people find a face to face meeting is helpful at this stage.

### **What if my child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs?**

A statement of SEN is no barrier to home education. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to carry out an annual review, wherever the child is educated. If your child is at a mainstream school and you write to the Head Teacher to say you will be home educating, the school will let the EHE Officer and the council's Special Needs department know.

### **What if my child is at special school?**

You will need to contact the school to let them know you wish to home educate. Where a child with a statement of Special Educational Need attends a Special School, the law is different, so please contact the EHE team, or the LA SEN team to discuss individually.

### **What kind of information will be helpful?**

We would like to hear about your ideas for your child's education and would appreciate it if you could share examples of what your child has been doing. The EHE Officer will give you feedback on this and send you a report.

### **What happens if the Local Authority has concerns?**

You will be kept fully in the picture if we think that the educational provision for your child does not meet the requirements of the 1996 Education Act. A School Attendance Order is very much a last resort and is rarely used in cases where education is being provided otherwise than at school. It gives the Local Authority the powers to name a school your child **must** attend and to ignore the Order is an offence, unless you can prove your child is receiving a suitable education.

Safeguarding concerns will be brought to the attention the Director of Children's Services and members of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board, as appropriate. <http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/safeguarding/>

### **How often will the Local Authority make contact?**

We would like to establish a good working relationship with you. Following the initial contact and discussions, future visits or contacts will be discussed and agreed with parents as appropriate. If everything is satisfactory then the visits/contact will be offered on a flexible basis, minimum annually.

## Local support for home educating families living in Rotherham

### School Nurses

Although your child may not be in school, the School Nurse Service is available to support all children of school age in Rotherham. We will pass on your contact details to the school nurses.

### Paid employment

The law about paid employment for young people of statutory school age remains the same for those who are home educated as those in full time school. Employment means helping with a trade or occupation which is carried on for profit, even if the child receives no pay.

Children may not be legally employed if they are under 13 and they must have a work permit. There are various legal restrictions on the employment of children – please see the RMBC website for further details on employing school age children.

### Careers advice and guidance

Rotherham has an integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) who can be contacted via [iyss-enquiries@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:iyss-enquiries@rotherham.gov.uk)

### Ceasing to home educate

If you decide at any time that you would like your child to return to school, or to go to school for the first time you will need to contact the School Admissions Team to apply for a school place. If you would like to discuss your thoughts about home education and applying for a school place with the EHE Officer please contact us. We will write to you to confirm what we have done so that you have a clear record of the discussion we have had and any action we have taken to support you. Please note however, that the school of your choice may be full for your child's year group and that you may need to appeal for a place or consider applying to a different school.

### Assessing for Special Needs before going to school

If you feel that your child should be assessed for a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) before going/returning to school, please let the EHE know so that we can advise you of appropriate contacts.

### School Admissions Team contact details:

School Admissions Team  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE  
Tel. No. : 01709 822505  
Email: [admissions.enquiries@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:admissions.enquiries@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Please note:** If you are known to the Local Authority you are likely to receive a letter asking you to apply for a place for your child in the year before she/he is 5 and also in

the school year in which she/he is 11. This will happen even if you are home educating your child. If you do not want to apply for a place please inform the School Admissions Team so that your intentions are clear and they will know that they do not need to contact you again.

If you would like help, or if you wish to discuss your education plans for your child in the secondary phase, please contact the Elective Home Education Officer.

**National and local home education support organisations:**

Local and National support networks are known to the LA and may be appropriate to support you.

These include Yahoo Groups such as:

Sheffield & South Yorkshire Home Education Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SYHEC/>

Rotherham Home Education Group

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/RothHE/info>

or national groups, including:

Home Education Advisory Service, PO Box 98, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6AN

Tel: 01707 371854

[www.heas.org.uk](http://www.heas.org.uk)

The home education consultancy website has a vast array of up to date information and support at

<http://edyourself.org/>

Education Otherwise

Tel: 0845 478 6345

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

Please note that RMBC cannot be held responsible for the content on any of these sites and is not affiliated to any of the organisations. The above list does not constitute a definitive or recommended list of support organisations and others may be available to parents.