

westsussex.gov.uk



Elective Home Education (EHE) Information for Parents



Introduction

The legal duty and responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents. While most parents send their children to school, others choose to educate their children at home. In these circumstances, the parent is electively home educating.

The decision to educate your child at home is an important one as you will be responsible for ensuring that your child receives an efficient, suitable, and full-time education.

Home educating is challenging but rewarding; you will need to consider the time commitment, motivation and energy required to fulfil your legal duty and ensure your child reaches their full educational potential.

You are advised to think very carefully before deciding - it is a good idea to talk to other home educating parents or groups and, if you wish to, a member of the West Sussex County Council EHE team:

- **Phone:** 0330 222 3300
- **Email:** ehe@westsussex.gov.uk

EHE does not have to be a permanent decision: if you have removed your child from a school roll to EHE, your child is able to return to school at any time. However, please bear in mind their original school may now not have a space, and you may have to apply to an alternative school.

What the law says

Do children have to attend school?

The simple answer is "NO". However, the Education Act 1996 states that parents do have legal duties regarding the education of their children.

What is the Duty of Parents?

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 it states:

'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 regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

Parents or carers who decide on Elective Home Education must be prepared to take on fully the "duty to educate". This commits them to meeting the legal requirements, as laid down by the Education Act 1996.

Parents or carers should be able to demonstrate that the education their child is receiving meets the requirements of "full-time, efficient and suitable" and that the child is developing according to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special education needs they may have.

What is the duty of the County Council?

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has a statutory duty under s.436A of the Education Act 1996 - 'to make arrangements to enable the authority to establish, so far as it possible to do so, the identities of children in its area who are not receiving a suitable education.' In order to fulfil their section 436A duty, WSCC are entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided. Until a Local Authority is satisfied that a home educated child is receiving a suitable full-time education, then a child being educated at home is in scope of this duty.

We are committed to working with home educating parents in a spirit of partnership and cooperation so that together we can effectively meet our respective duties.

Children below statutory school age or not registered at a West Sussex school

If your child has not reached statutory school age or is not registered at a school in West Sussex and you are going to educate them at home, you can still get advice and guidance. For further support, contact the EHE team.

Children registered at a school

If your child currently attends school, you are advised to write to the school to tell them you are going to educate your child at home. The school cannot legally remove your child from their roll until they receive written confirmation from you. The process is called deregistration. The school then have a legal duty to inform the EHE team of your decision to deregister.

Ideally, both parents will agree to the deregistration. However, only one parent's name needs to be on the deregistration letter or email. If one parent disagrees, it is a family matter which you may require legal assistance to resolve.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has special educational needs (SEN). Some children with special educational needs have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) but others do not.

If your child has an EHCP and is home educated, it remains the duty of WSCC to ensure that the child's educational needs are met. We would encourage parents to continue to engage with the SENAT team and participate in annual reviews of the plan. The EHE team will contribute to this process.

If your child attends a special school, you must contact the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team (SENAT) to deregister them. Part B of your child's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) gives details of your child's needs. You must make sure that you give full information about how you will meet those needs. The SENAT must consent to your child's removal from the school roll. Your child must attend school, if they can, until SENAT agree to the removal.

There are parent advisors available through [SENDIAS](#) (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Service) whom you may wish to contact for advice and guidance. Their helpline number is: 0330 222 8555

Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

If you have made the decision to Electively Home Educate your child due to the impact of ongoing medical needs on school attendance, you may wish to consult with the [Fair Access team](#) to discuss whether alternative provision would be appropriate.

The EHE team

The EHE team recognises there are many diverse and varied, but equally valid, approaches to home education. We also recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

Home education can reflect a wide range of approaches and philosophies, from formal, structured time-tabled provisions to more informal, child-led approaches.

The EHE team aims to understand and respect home educating parents' individual educational preferences and philosophies and promote mutual understanding and trust.

Types of contact from the EHE team

Your child's home education must meet your legal duty to provide a suitable education under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

The EHE team will make informal enquiries about the education you are providing your child. You don't have to reply when we contact you or show proof about your child's home education. However, it is important to think carefully about why you might not want to and what is best for your child. If you don't give us enough information, we will not know if your child is getting a suitable education. If that happens, we have a legal duty to act.

The following is taken from the government document '[Elective home education: Departmental guidance for parents](#)'

'...you are under no legal obligation from education law to produce specific evidence, but you should consider carefully the reasons for not doing so, what is in the best interests of your child, and what is the most sensible approach. If you do not do enough to satisfy the local authority about the education being provided at home, it may have no option but to conclude that the education does not meet the s.7 requirement...'

First contact

When you start home educating, we will offer you a call or visit where we will talk about:

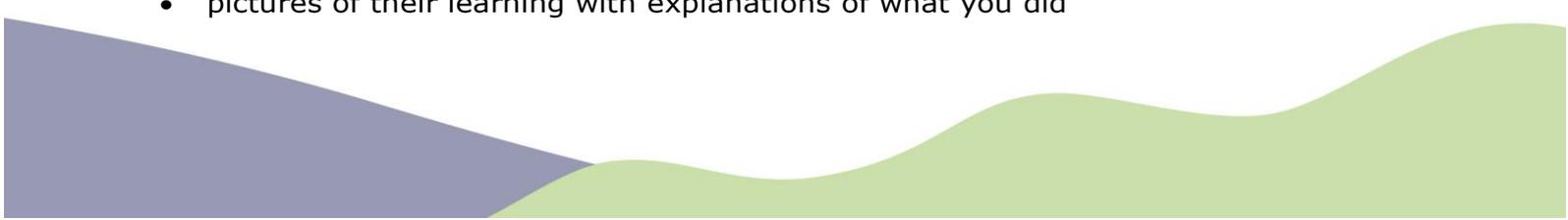
- your child
- why you chose home education
- the education you are providing
- any support or advice you may need

These meetings are a good start to our work together. An advisory teacher will look at everything you tell us. If you have asked for help or support, they will contact you. If you prefer not to have a visit or a call, you can instead complete a report with our Parent Self-Completion (PSC) forms or by using a different layout of your choice.

Education reviews

We will review your child's education provision regularly. These reviews can be a home visit, phone call or a meeting in another suitable place if you'd rather not meet at home. You could also complete a report, either by Parent Self-Completion (PSC) or by using a different layout of your choice. Reviews are a chance to talk about how things are going, celebrate progress and ask for advice or extra support if you need it. Your child is very welcome to contribute to these meetings; it's lovely to hear all about how they are finding their home education and what they are enjoying doing.

During a review, you might like to share examples of your child's learning, such as:

- a learning diary or journal
 - dated written or computer-based work
 - screenshots of online learning
 - dated workbooks or worksheets
 - reports from tutors or online providers
 - pictures of their learning with explanations of what you did
- 

Please note you are under no obligation to share any examples, but these can help to evidence what your child is doing at home should you wish to do so.

You will need to explain what kind of progress your child has made, why you are happy with this progress and how you establish progress is being made. This helps us make sure that your child's education is suitable. If your review takes place over the phone or in person we will send you a written report.

How often we ask for an education review depends on the information you give us. If we can see that your child is getting a suitable education at home, we will usually only ask for a review once a year. If you need help or advice at any time, you can contact the EHE team.

If the advisory teacher is not assured that your child is getting a suitable full-time education, they may want to ask further questions. They can also offer advice and help you to make improvements. You can agree together how much time you need to make any changes.

If you don't respond to our requests, or we can't be sure from the information you give us, we may have to find that your child's home education provision is not suitable.

What is a suitable, efficient, full-time education?

The terms "suitable", "efficient" and "full-time" are not defined in the legislation but case law in the Courts have indicated that education is deemed to be:

"Efficient" if it achieves what it sets out to achieve.

"Suitable" if it "equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life of the country as a whole, so long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so."

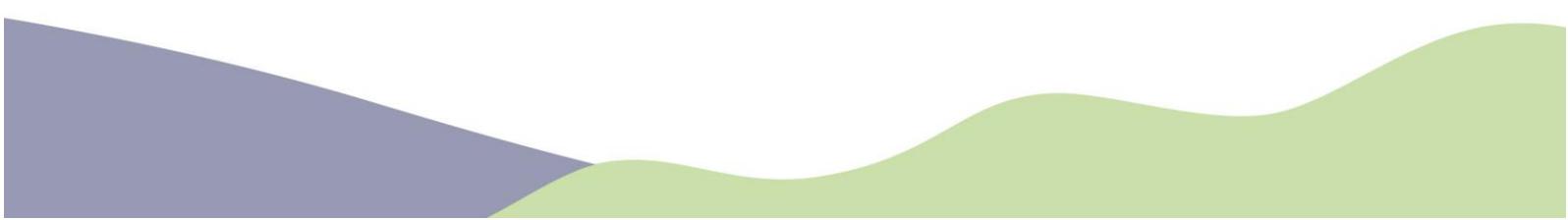
In terms of EHE, 'full-time' education should occupy a significant proportion of a child's life to meet the s.7 requirement. The EHE team is aware that children who attend school do so for between 22 and 25 hours a week, for 38 weeks a year. This is a good measure, though we acknowledge the nature of some EHE activities may affect this. A responsible adult will need to be available to oversee the education and potentially supervise the child or young person; this may require changes to an established lifestyle.

Children must continue to receive a suitable education until the last Friday in June, in the academic year in which they reach the age of 16.

What should I include in the education provision?

Children educated at home are not required to follow the National Curriculum or take public examinations but should receive an efficient education appropriate to their individual needs and aspirations. We use minimum expectations for literacy and numeracy when assessing suitability, whilst bearing in mind the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs he or she may have.

It is important for your child to develop a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills: developing numeracy and literacy skills, having opportunities for physical exercise, and social interaction with others. It is key that your children have access to appropriate resources to help them to learn and make progress.



Different types of home education

Some families choose to deliver their home education provision in a similar way to school. This is more of a structured style where families use a timetable, more formal lessons for some subjects or set work to be completed by a specific date so that their child can choose when they work on it themselves.

Other families may choose a more semi-structured or unstructured style of learning, these can take different forms including 'autonomous and self-directed learning, undertaken with a very flexible stance as to when education is taking place, should be judged by outcomes...' [Elective home education: Departmental guidance for local authorities](#) page 9

Using tutors

Some home educators choose to employ tutors for parts of their children's education. Tuition is an effective way of developing a child's confidence, knowledge and skills, but it can be expensive. Some home educators choose to team up with other parents and ask the tutor to provide small group tuition. This can reduce individual costs and give opportunity for group learning.

When considering employing a tutor, we recommend the following advice:

- Obtain references from families who have used the tutor
- Ask to see the tutor's DBS documentation
- Be clear about what areas of learning you want the tutor to cover
- Ensure the tuition happens in an appropriate location with family members around

Please contact the [West Sussex Local Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) if you have any concerns about an adult who works with children.

Taking exams

There is no requirement for home educated students to take examinations, but many do to help with routes into post-16 destinations such as college.

Currently there are a limited number of exam centres in West Sussex for private candidates to sit exams. It is advisable to contact local schools, academies and tuition centres at least six months in advance of when your child would be due to take GCSEs, to see if they accept private candidates. See South and [South-East England Exam Centres](#), exam boards and iGCSEs information here

Parents who choose to educate their child at home must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility, including bearing the cost of any public examinations. The application process, costs and timescales may be different for each exam centre.

Part-time College Provision

Some further education colleges run day courses for 14–16-year-olds (year 10 and year 11). This allows students to try new vocational activities and helps them to prepare for post-16, full-time college courses. The student will likely attend for 1-2 days a week, and some colleges provide English and maths learning alongside the vocational course. Please note that your child will still be registered as EHE even if they attend a part-time college course and will be expected to continue their learning on days they do not attend college.

Please contact your local college for to see if they provide this as an option and further information on what they can offer to 14–16-year-olds. Please note many colleges require young people to have been Electively Home Educated for a period of time before accepting young people onto their course.

Preparing for post-16 destinations

The Government's Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) now means that all young people must remain in some form of education, employment or training up to the age of 18. Making post-16 plans is vital and can help guide what learning takes place in the build up to that time.

In addition, attending college open days and looking at their prospectuses helps to give young people an aim for the next steps in their education and career.

Please see our website's guidance for [post 16 options](#)

Work Experience, Child Employment & Children in Entertainment

If you choose to seek a work experience placement for your child, it is important that you ensure they are covered by insurance and that the placement is suitable. WSCC do not complete risk assessments nor have insurance to cover work experience carried out by home educated young people. As a parent it is your duty to ensure that any placements are unpaid, offer suitable and appropriate learning opportunities and are safe. This opportunity should complement, and not hinder, the overall quality of the home educational programme, so that other essential areas of learning are maintained and not pushed out.

Regulations regarding Child Employment apply to all children of compulsory school age whether they attend a school or are home educated.

Children may not work (paid or unpaid) until they attain the age of 13 years. There are restrictions on the nature of the work and the hours that can be worked dependent on age. Before a child can commence any form of employment, they must be in possession of a Work Permit. An explanatory leaflet and an application form for a Work Permit may be obtained by contacting the Child Employment Team on the details below.

Regulations regarding children in entertainment apply to all children of compulsory school age whether they attend a school or are home educated.

An Entertainment Licence is required if a child is engaged in a theatre performance, in a film or television production, in modelling or sport, or if the engagement is during normal school hours. Occasionally children can be exempt from licensing - please seek clarification from the Child Employment Team:

- **Phone:** 0330 222 8384
- **Email:** Childemployment.entertainmentteam@westsussex.gov.uk

Safeguarding

The welfare and protection of all children are of paramount concern and the responsibility of the whole community.

As with children educated in schools, child welfare issues may arise in relation to home educated children. If any child welfare concerns come to light, these concerns will immediately be referred to the appropriate agencies by the EHE team.

WSCC EHE team work collaboratively with WSCC Children's Services to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and in the event of any concerns about the welfare of an EHE child, initiate and follow through established safeguarding procedures, which may include the necessary sharing of information with other relevant professionals in the interest of a child or young person.

Wherever possible, the EHE team will discuss any welfare concerns with the family and ensure that the family understands the reasons for any referral to the [Integrated Front Door](#).

Local authorities have a duty under Section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This section states:

“A local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred upon them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.”

Parents may choose to use other people or settings, such as private tutors or learning providers to educate their child for part of their learning. However, parents will continue to be responsible for the education.

Parents are also responsible for ensuring that those adults involved in the education of their child are suitable to have access to children. Parents are therefore encouraged to take up appropriate references or undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

What happens if it appears that my child's home education is not suitable?

If your education does not meet your legal duties, we must serve a notice. This is known as a section 437(1) notice. It means that you must show us your child is learning at home is full-time, suitable and efficient. You will have at least 15 days to reply. This gives you time to gather information send it to us to be reviewed or arrange for a phone call or home visit to share this information.

If you respond to the notice, we will consider any details and proof you provide. If you don't respond, or we are still not assured that your child is receiving a suitable education, we will pass the case to the Children Missing Education (CME) team and a Notice will be served instructing your child to attend school, a School Attendance Order (SAO) under Section 437 (3) of the Education Act 1996. If a child is passed to the CME team, we may consider making a referral to the Integrated Front Door (IFD) if this is deemed appropriate.

What can you do if you are dissatisfied with West Sussex County Council's assessment of your educational provision?

Firstly, you should discuss your concerns with an Advisory Teacher.

Should you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the manager of the Elective Home Education team, Kay Jones via ehe@westsussex.gov.uk.

Home education support groups

There are a number of local and national groups that provide support and advice to home educators, including the organisation of learning and social events as well as providing advice and guidance on a range of issues. You will find many of the groups by searching on social media sites. Below are a couple of links recommended to us by home educating parents:

[Child Law Advice](#) A website providing information on procedure and requirements for home educating children.

[Educational Freedom](#) A non-profit organisation providing home education information and support.

[Education Otherwise](#) A registered charity providing information and support to home educating families in England and Wales.

[Ed Yourself](#) Group providing information and resources about EHE issues. They have links to local groups in West Sussex.

Other useful contacts

School Admissions

For questions about applying for a school place, please contact the Admissions Team:

Pupils Admissions North:

- **Phone:** 0330 142903
- **Email:** admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk

Pupils Admissions South:

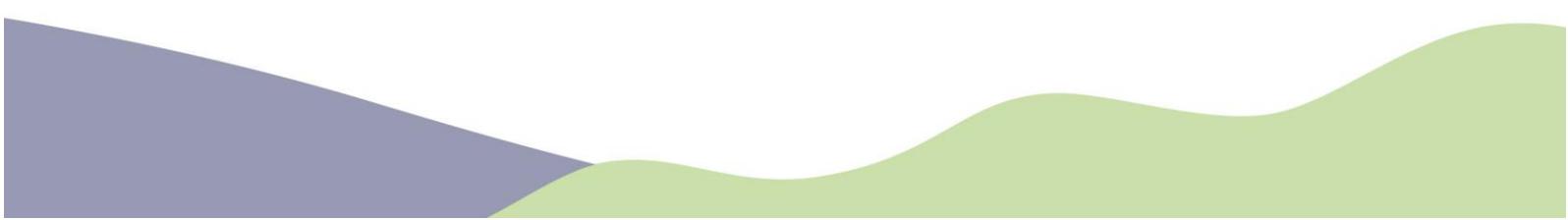
- **Phone:** 0330 142903
- **Email:** admissions.south@westsussex.gov.uk

Child Welfare

If you have concerns about the welfare of a child, please contact the Integrated Front Door (IFD):

- **Phone:** 01403 229900
- **Email:** WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk

If you have any further questions or need advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact the EHE Team:

- **Phone:** 0330 222 3300
 - **Email:** ehe@westsussex.gov.uk
- 

Online learning suggestions

Click on the links below or Google the titles to access.

Please note that some of these sites offer free options and others you may need to subscribe to access further offers

- [CGP Books](#)
- [BBC Bitesize](#)
- [Oak National Academy Online Classroom](#)
- [Seneca Learning](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [Twinkl](#)
- [The £2 Tuition Hub](#)
- [Chatty Zebra Curriculum](#)
- [Numerise](#)

Subscription options

- [IXL](#)
- [EdPlace](#)
- [Oxford Home Schooling and tuition](#)
- [King's InterHigh](#)
- [Minerva Virtual Academy](#)

Health and wellbeing support

Should you have any concerns around the emotional wellbeing of your child, please click on the links below to find details of how support can be accessed:

[Your Mind Matters](#) - a new West Sussex Single Point of Access for emotional wellbeing and mental health support. The service provides a simplified single route so that children, young people, families, carers and professionals can be directed to the right service, eliminating the need to refer to multiple services.

[Pathfinder Mental Health Services](#) - Looking for advice, information and services to support your mental health and wellbeing or supporting someone else? Find out about local services here.

[Young Minds](#) - if your child is struggling with worry or anxiety, here are some ways you can support them and places you can get help.

[Hope Charity Project](#) - The HOPE Charity Project has been set up to help families in Sussex and surrounding areas who are worried or struggling to support their children suffering from mental health issues, or emotional health as we prefer to call it. We offer a very real, compassionate approach to providing advice, support, and comfort to the children, parents and siblings who are all affected by this growing nationwide problem.

[Reading Well](#) - Reading Well supports you to understand and manage your health and wellbeing using helpful reading. The books are all recommended by health experts, as well as people with lived experience of the conditions and topics covered, and their relatives and carers.

[Teen Breathe magazine](#) - Mindfulness & Wellbeing - a bi-monthly magazine for ages 8-14 covering topics including mindfulness, wellbeing, creativity and health.

[Allsorts Youth Project](#) - Allsorts Youth Project listens to, connects & supports children & young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (LGBT+).

[Thriving in Education](#) - Children's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Support and information for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

