

# Elective Home Education

Guidance for parents



# Introduction

In this country, parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive a suitable education. Most parents choose to use schools but some prefer home education. It is the legal right of parents to educate their children at home if they so wish and North Yorkshire County Council's Children and Young People's Service wishes to work cooperatively with those parents who make this choice.

These guidance notes have been written to help those parents and carers who are thinking about educating their children at home. They set out parents' rights and responsibilities together with the legal duties and responsibilities of Headteachers and the Local Authority (LA).

The following information attempts to answer some common questions which families ask when deciding whether or not to embark on home based education.

Useful websites and additional information can also be accessed via the EHE Room on Fronter (North Yorkshire's Virtual Learning Environment)

**<https://fronter.com/northyorks/>**

**username:** homeguest

**password:** Fronter123

This area is updated on a regular basis and includes an online forum area which provides opportunity for families to recommend resources to each other.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the law in relation to education at home?

Parents / carers must ensure a child receives a full-time education from the age of five.

Most choose to send their child to school, but they do have the legal right to educate their child at home instead.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 says that:

*“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him 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**.”*

The word “otherwise” affirms parents’ right under the law to educate their child at home. This is called Elective Home Education (EHE).

Whichever course a parent/carer decides to take it is a good idea for them to talk to the child and take their wishes and feelings about their education into account.

## What is seen as an “efficient” and “suitable” education?

An “efficient” and “suitable” education is not explained any further in the Education Act 1996 itself. However “efficient” has been broadly described as an education that achieves what it sets out to achieve; and “suitable” if it prepares the child for life in our society and at the same time enables the child to achieve his/her full potential.

## Are any specific hours specified for Elective Home Education?

The law does not define the term “full-time”. The amount of hours spent on teaching in schools is often not relevant to home based education, where there is more access to one to one and small group teaching. Learning at home need not operate around a tightly structured timetable but can take place in various forms during all waking hours.

Although home based education does not need to take the same form as school based education it is parents’ responsibility to ensure that their children are given appropriate learning opportunities so that they may develop according to their age, ability and aptitude.

## Do parents/carers need permission to educate a child at home?

If a child has never been to school, there is no action for a parent / carer to take prior to starting home based education. However we would ask that they notify the Local Authority of this decision via the Customer Resolution Centre on 01609 780780 so initial advice can be given to support them.

If a child is already in school parents / carers need to inform the school formally by writing to the Headteacher saying that they intend to teach the child at home. The child’s name will then be taken off the school roll and the school will have no further responsibility for the child’s education.

The Head teacher will inform the Local Authority of the parents/carers' decision.

### **What are the school's duties?**

Each maintained school has a statutory duty to provide a Common Transfer File (CTF) to the new school. If a pupil is moving to EHE the school will still need to generate a CTF to notify the LA of the decision. The Local Authority will also notify the Children and Families Service who will then arrange for a visit from a worker to discuss arrangements and ensure you have access to the guidance and resource information packs the Local Authority provide.

### **What happens when a parent/carer withdraws a child from school?**

Once the Local Authority are notified of the intention to Elective Home Educate a child a Family Outreach Worker (FOW) will write to arrange to visit the family in order to

- to see if there is any information the parents / carers need,
- respond to any queries the adults or children may have,
- discuss any issues or problems at this time of change,
- and to ensure the safety and welfare of the home educated child.

A Family Outreach Worker (FOW) will revisit families on an occasional basis, giving written notice in advance, to update our records and discuss any aspects the young person, parent/carer or FOW wish to raise

On an on-going basis it's advisable, but not compulsory, for parents/carers to let the Local Authority know of any significant changes in circumstance relevant to the home educated child's education, like a change of address. For North Yorkshire we would ask parents/carers to ring the Customer Resolution Centre on 01609 780780

### **Can a parent / carer educate a child at school part-time?**

This is not normally recommended as an alternative to full-time schooling, but can be a successful strategy in very specific circumstances eg to re-engage pupils who have been home educated back into mainstream schooling. It should be for a short time, as part of a phased return, and is only possible with the agreement of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. This arrangement is known as flexi-schooling and can result in a very successful partnership between the home and the school in delivering a child's education. It is down to the individual parent/carer to approach and agree any flexi schooling arrangement directly with an individual school - there is no right for a parent/carer to demand flexi schooling, or for that service / arrangement to be provided by a school.

### **Do parents/carers need any formal qualifications to educate their child at home?**

No, they do not have to be a qualified teacher or have set formal qualifications to educate their child at home. They will obviously need to have the skills necessary to be able to plan a child's education and to support their learning on an ongoing basis.

## **Do they have to follow the National Curriculum?**

No, they do not have to follow the National Curriculum. What is taught and how a child learns is up to the parent/carer. Also the hours and how the day is organized is a matter for the individual parent/carer. Home education does not have to follow a set plan of lessons or a timetable.

However it is a good idea and best practice to set out and be able to describe the programme's intent for the child's education and have plans of the subjects or themes they have covered and will be covering. It is also useful to keep records or a diary and photographs of learning experiences.

## **Is there any problem taking a home educated child out to places during traditional school time?**

Outings and visits can take place during "school times". The Local Authority can arrange for a parent/carer to be issued with an 'identity card' that confirms a child is receiving home education, should anyone ask for proof.

This involves parents submitting an electronic "passport style" photograph of their child which will be checked and a card issued. Cards will need to be renewed annually.

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

Parents/carers are within their rights to educate a child with a statement of SEN or an EHCP (education, health and care plan), otherwise than at school. However they will need to show that they are making provision to meet the special educational needs of their child to a local authority officer in the SEND Team.

If a child has a Statement or EHCP the Local Authority has a statutory duty to continue to undertake the Annual Review of this. At this time an assessment would be made as to whether the education being provided is meeting the needs as identified in the statement/EHCP and also whether it is still appropriate, depending on the circumstances and provision being made.

SENDIASS provides information for families in North Yorkshire who have a child with special education needs [www.northyorks.gov.uk/send](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/send) and the IASS network provides support nationally. [www.iassnetwork.org.uk](http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk)

## **What if a parent/carer suspects that a child might have Special Educational Needs?**

If a child does not have a statement/EHCP but parents/carers think that they may have special educational needs, the first thing they should do is contact the school/setting SENCo, who will be able to discuss this. If SEND is suspected then the SENCo should know how to assess needs and involve the inclusive education service, if required.

## **What are the Local Authority's Responsibilities?**

The Local Authority provides information for families about elective home education and suggests resources and other support that families can access. The Local Authority is also committed to establishing and maintaining positive links with home educating families.

Whilst local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis, they do however have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

As mentioned already above, within North Yorkshire a Family Outreach Worker (FOW) will contact and visit families where a child is being home educated to establish that a suitable education is being provided, offer support and advice and provide parents/carers with the opportunity to discuss the provision they are making for their child's education.

Parents are not legally required to give the local authority access to their home, nor to provide alternative information, however, it would always be our wish to maintain an on-going positive dialogue with home educating families and to offer support where necessary.

### **Is there any funding available for parents who decide to educate their child at home?**

Parents who elect to home educate their children have always taken on the full financial responsibility for their child's education.

However, there may be some circumstances in which the local authority has the discretion to provide support to enable a home educated young person e.g. to support a home educated child's special educational needs. Where circumstances meet criteria established by the government, the Local Authority can consider providing support.

Local Authorities are not obliged to help home educators with any costs associated with examinations.

If you require further advice on this please contact the numbers at the end of the document as appropriate.

### **How does compulsory school age affect home educators?**

The compulsory age for a child to start full time education in the UK is at the beginning of the school term after the child's fifth birthday.

The school leaving date for any young person - home or school educated is now as follows:

In England a young person can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

They must then do one of the following until they are 18:

- stay in full-time education, eg at a college
- start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- work or volunteer (for 20 hours or more a week) while in part-time education or training

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school>

### **What if there are concerns about the home education programme?**

If there are serious concerns about the education being provided this will be explained to the parents/carers who will then be given some time to rectify the situation.

However, if the education provided is still found to be unsuitable or if the Local Authority has reason to believe that no education is being provided, then steps may be taken to return the child / young person to school. A School Attendance Order requiring the child to attend a named school is only made in the last resort after careful consideration and detailed discussion with the family.

## **Can parents/carers change their mind and get their child back into school?**

Many parents and their children find home education a stimulating and rewarding experience. However some parents may discover that home education is not appropriate and decide to seek readmission into school for their child. The Children and Families' Service: Prevention would be able to assist with this process.

Whatever the circumstances, de-registration from schools can be reversed and North Yorkshire's Inclusive Education Service will always be happy to assist in securing your child's entry into school, where a child has special educational needs and/or disabilities.

If you require further advice please contact

North Yorkshire Customer Resolution Centre  
Telephone 01609 780780

SENDIASS - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Independent Advice and Support Service: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/send](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/send)

- Inclusion
- SEND Team
- Inclusive Education Service;  
[inclusiveducation@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:inclusiveducation@northyorks.gov.uk)

## Contact us

**North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD**

Our Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm  
(closed weekends and bank holidays). Tel: **01609 780 780**

email: **[customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk)** web: **[www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)**

If you would like this information in another language or format please ask us.

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