



Northamptonshire
County Council



CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Elective Home Education Policy

PUBLICATION DATE:	June 2017
NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE:	August 2018
AUTHORISING OFFICER:	Alison Shipley Assistant Director for Vulnerable Children Learning Skills and Education

1. Introduction.

This document is based on the guidance issued to local authorities by the Department of Education (DfE).

Elective home education (EHE) is the term used by the DfE when parents decide to educate their children at home instead of sending them to school.

This policy aims to clarify the balance between the right of the parent to educate their child at home and the Local Authorities Education responsibilities.

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) recognises that there are many approaches to educational provision, which are not just a 'school at home' model. What is suitable for one child may not be suitable for another, but all children should be involved in a learning process.

2. Parental Rights and Responsibilities

Throughout this policy the word "parents" will be used to indicate anyone with parental responsibility.

In England, education is compulsory, but school is not and Children's Services - Education recognises parents' right to educate their children at home.

The law states that:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities have more information about parents' freedom to choose the form of education they believe is best for their child.

Parents may choose to employ other people to educate their children, but they will still continue to be responsible for the quality of the education provided. They will also be responsible for making sure that the people they employ are suitable by taking up appropriate references, including a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check where appropriate.

EHE differs fundamentally from home tuition arranged by NCC which is provided for children unable to attend school through illness or disability. Home education is also different from hospital education or Pupil Referral Units. Once a child is electively home educated, it is the parent's responsibility to make all the arrangements. With EHE the parent will also have to pay for all educational materials plus any examination fees and associated costs.

3. The Process for Parents

Parents do not have to ask anyone for permission to home educate, and may choose to home educate for a variety of reasons.

If the child is already on a school roll parents will need to write to the headteacher of the school asking for the child's name to be removed from the school roll because the child is now being home educated. This process is called de-registering. The headteacher is then required to notify The Education Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT) at NCC straight away and from this point the child will no longer be a pupil at the school.

This applies equally whether or not a child has an Education Health and Care Plan [SEN], but where a child is a registered pupil at a special school different rules apply as set out in Part 4 below.

If a parent is thinking of home educating because of a disagreement with school, they can contact the EIPT to discuss any concerns before making a final decision.

Once the EIPT are aware that a child is home educated, they will make initial contact to introduce themselves and to offer support and advice. Families will be contacted at least once a year and offered a visit.

Parents are asked for some basic information about the provision but this is not intended to be 'inspection' or 'monitoring'.

Although there is no legal requirement for parents to tell the authority that they are home educating, EIPT however would be grateful if parents new to home education would contact them.

Your child's status of home educated will be logged on our data base and it means that your child will not be mistaken for a child who is 'missing education' [CME].

If parents at any point would like their child/children to return to school you can contact the admissions team on 0300 126 1000 or e-mail on admissions@northamptonhire.gov.uk

We would also be happy to discuss the process with parents or they can request to speak to the Inclusion Officer for Elective Home Education on 01604 365054 or e-mail on ehe-admin@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

4. Home Education and Special Needs

If parents are concerned that their child may have special educational needs [SEN] you can contact the following support groups run by parents for parents:

<http://www.iassnorthants.co.uk/Pages/home.aspx>

Parents can contact the Information Advice and Support Service for independent advice and support: 01605 636111 or e-mail on contact@iassnorthants.co.uk

Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has SEN. This right is irrespective of whether the child has a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care Plan [EHC Plan].

Where parents elect to home educate a child with a statement or EHC Plan who is registered at a mainstream school, the school will remove the pupil from roll following receipt of written confirmation from the parent that educational provision is being made otherwise than at school.

If a child is registered at a special school under arrangements made by the local authority as detailed in the DfE Pupil Registration Regulations the parent cannot de-register for home education without the agreement of the local authority.

Where a child has a statement or EHC Plan and is home educated, certain duties will remain the responsibility of the local authority. Further information and guidance may be found in the SEN Code of Practice.

5. Children's Services - Education Responsibilities

EIP will keep an up to date record of all children known to be home educated and will ask parents for some basic information about the provision they are making for their child's education. From time to time the authority will contact parents and ask them to confirm that the details are still current.

If it seems that a child is not being provided with a suitable education EIPT will gather information to help the authority reach a properly informed judgement. Parents will always be informed in writing of any specific concerns.

However if it still appears that a child is not receiving suitable education, local authorities can use other duties and powers to support their work on Children Missing Education (CME) and EIPT will serve a formal notice in writing on the parent as set out in section 437 (1) of the Education Act 1996, which could be the first stage in serving a School Attendance Order.

A School Attendance Order [SAO] will only be served after all reasonable steps have been taken to try to resolve the situation and even after an order has been issued parents may still present evidence to EIPT that they are now providing suitable education and apply to have the SAO revoked.

If NCC Education decides to prosecute the parents for not complying with the Order, then it will be for a court to decide whether or not the education being provided is suitable and efficient.

For children with special educational needs, the LA has a duty to review all statements/EHC plans annually, following procedures set out in the SEN Code of Practice and this duty still applies to children educated at home.

6. Safeguarding Children

If health, child protection, welfare or social concerns come to light in the course of engagement with children and families or otherwise, these concerns will be immediately referred to the appropriate Children's Services department/Safeguarding Officer using established procedures.

When a referral for EHE has been received from a child's school, checks will be made by the EIPT to ascertain whether or not the child is currently open to social care. When a case is open to social care, the Elective Home Education / Safeguarding Risk Assessment will be sent to the child's social worker who must complete all relevant sections and return the risk assessment to the EIPT. Depending on the outcome of the risk assessment, follow up work and action may be required by social care and/or the EIPT.

Children Who Are In Need or With a Child Protection Plan

Social workers are required to inform the EIPT of any child allocated to them who is in need or has a Child Protection Plan and who is being EHE. An email must be sent ehe-admin@northamptonshire.gov.uk and should include the following information;

- Child Full Name
- Child Date of Birth
- CareFirst Number

Once received, EIPT business support will reopen the case and allocate it to an EIP officer. When reopened, the allocated EIP officer and the child's social worker should be notified. The child's social worker must update CareFirst to ensure the child's EIP officer has been recorded.

EIP officers must be invited to and attend (or contribute to in writing) statutory reviews for all EHE children identified as Children in Need or who have a Child Protection Plan.