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## **Elective Home Education**

**This fact sheet is about educating your child or young person at home. It tells you your rights and responsibilities and what help is available.**

### **The important things to know**

- Most children have their education at school, but some parents choose to educate their children at home. This is called Elective Home Education (EHE). Parents have a legal duty to make sure that if their child is of compulsory school age, they get a suitable full-time education.
- Making the decision to home educate can be a big one for any family and it can affect lots of areas of family life. It's important to think it through and explore all your choices. As well as the benefits of home education, there are some downsides too.
- Legally, you don't need to register or get approval from the local authority to educate your child at home, except if your child is at a special school.
- Once you decide to home educate, it's helpful to tell Bracknell Forest Council: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/home-schooling> They can give you information, advice and support.
- There are lots of organisations, websites and groups that can support you, but, there is no general financial help for resources, tuition, support and activities.
- If your child has an EHC plan, you can home educate. You must tell the school and the Local Authority and they must review the EHC plan every year to make sure your child's needs are being met.
- If you've been home educating and it's no longer working, then you can arrange for your child to go back into school. It can sometimes be difficult for children to readjust, so it's important to talk about it with your child and plan well.
- If your child isn't managing at school, or if you think they might be at risk of being permanently excluded, you shouldn't feel pressurised into 'choosing' home education. If you want to find out more about your options get advice from [Bracknell Forest IASS](#).



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## **What is Elective Home Education (EHE)?**

Elective home education is what the Department for Education calls a parent's decision to teach their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to home tuition that might be given by a local authority, or education provided by a local authority somewhere other than a school.

There are lots of reasons why parents choose home education. Parents have to make sure that, if their child is of compulsory school age, they get an appropriate full-time education. This is the law ([under section 7 of The Education Act 1996](#)).

Compulsory school age is when a child's education must start and finish. In the UK it's from the start of the school term following their fifth birthday, until the last Friday in June in the school year when they reach 16. If your child's 16th birthday is in July or August, compulsory school age ends on the June date before their birthday.

There's nothing written down in law to say what a 'full-time' education is for state-maintained schools. A child in school should get between 21 and 25 hours of education a week, depending on how old they are. But home education is very different to going to school, and there are no rules that say a child should get a certain number of hours each week.

Young people between 16 and 18 have to take part in education or training. They can have that education at home instead of at college.

### **What you have to do for your child's education (your responsibilities)**

If you decide to teach your child at home, you'll be responsible for their education. The local authority may make an 'informal enquiry' from time to time to check that what you're teaching them is suitable and good enough. If they think that it isn't, you could end up being given a school attendance order. This means you won't be able to home educate, but instead you will have to register your child at a school that the local authority names. If you don't follow what's set out in a school attendance order you can be taken to court.



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## **Who do I need to tell if I decide to home educate my child?**

Legally, you don't need to register or get the local authority to agree if you want to teach your child at home, except if your child is at a special school. But if your child isn't in school, the local authority might ask how you're educating them. Many parents find it helpful to tell the local authority that they're home educating.

Some parents choose to home educate when their child is young, so they may never be in the school system. But if your child is on roll (registered) at a school and you decide to take them out to home educate, then you should tell the head teacher in writing. This will help to prevent any mix-ups about why your child isn't at school.

Only one parent needs to give their go ahead for their child to be taken off a school's roll. This is the parent that a child lives with. If you and your child's other parent can't agree about whether they should be taken off a school roll, the family court will make a legal decision about it.

The head teacher will tell the Local Authority what you've decided. If you're taking your child out of school completely, the head teacher must accept your decision. But they can refuse if you want to send your child to school some of the time and home educate for the rest. This is called flexi-schooling and it's unusual for schools to agree to it.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan you should tell the local authority you'll be educating your child at home. If your child is at a mainstream school, their plan will need to be changed. The placement (school) named on the plan will have to be changed and the support your child gets will probably need to be looked at. If your child is at a special school their EHC plan will need to be changed. You will also need to get permission from the local authority to take your child's name off the school's roll. The local authority can say no if you ask to home educate. If this happens, you can appeal their decision not to change the EHC plan. Contact [Bracknell Forest IASS](#) if you need more information and advice about this. The local authority must look at the EHC plan every year to make sure that you're giving the right education and support, and that your child's needs are being met.

### **If you're having an EHC needs assessment and you want to home educate:**

- Where you and the local authority agree that home education is right for your child, the EHC plan should make it clear that they will be educated at home. If this is clear in the plan, then working with you, the local authority must arrange the support that's set out in it.



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### **If your child has a plan which names a school, and you now want to home educate:**

- If you decide to home educate, you must tell the school in writing that your child will be getting their education somewhere else. The school must take your child's name off their admission roll. If the school is a special school, the local authority must agree that your child's name can be taken off the roll.
- If the local authority decides that the education you're giving is suitable, it should change the EHC plan to name the type of school that would be suitable, but say that parents have made their own arrangements ([under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)).
- The local authority doesn't have to provide what's in the EHC plan as long as they're sure what you're providing is suitable.
- If the local authority thinks that your child isn't getting the right support, and their needs aren't being met through home education, they should give you support to improve things. If that doesn't work, as a last resort, they can issue a school attendance order. This means a child will have to be registered at, and go to, a named school.

### **Applying for an EHC needs assessment:**

If you're home educating your child and you think they might need more support, or you think that their needs aren't clear, you can ask the local authority for an EHC needs assessment. Contact our service if you would like help with this. When you ask for an assessment, you'll need to show why you think your child needs one. So, you'll need some evidence that they may have an unmet or unclear special educational need.

If you would like more information, call us on 01344 354011 or email us at [send.support@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:send.support@bracknell-forest.gov.uk).