

Additional Information about Elective Home Education (EHE)



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What is Elective Home Education (EHE)?

Elective home education is the parent or carer's choice to take legal and financial responsibility for ensuring their child(ren) receives a suitable, efficient and full-time education out of a school setting (at home or otherwise).

As a parent or carer, you have a legal right to choose to educate your child(ren) at home. Parents are not required to register or seek approval from the local authority. The exception is where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and attends a maintained special school. In this circumstance, Solihull Council would need to approve the child moving to elective home education. All electively home educating parents are required to satisfy the local authority that a suitable, efficient and fulltime education is being provided.

If you are thinking about educating your child(ren) at home, or are already educating your child(ren) at home, then we can help. We can discuss your child(ren)'s education with you and offer support and advice.

Listed below are some important documents that should be read before you decide to begin EHE. They explain the law regarding EHE and helpful information about the provision. The Solihull EHE policy specifies what we, as a Council, are responsible for in terms of EHE.

- [Solihull EHE Policy and Procedures](#) (The link to this is on our webpage)
- [Elective Home Education: Guidance for Parents](#) (DfE) ← Hyperlink
- [Elective Home Education: Guidance for Local Authorities](#)(DfE) ← Hyperlink

Considerations

1. Consider what your reason for home education is.

The choice to home educate is yours as parents. It is always best if the decision to home educate is a well-considered and positive choice for your family. You should not be made to feel that you have no other choice but to home educate by your child's school. Please contact us if you feel pressurised into home educating.

If your family is experiencing problems with your child(ren)'s current school, please try to work with the school to resolve these problems. If, at any point, you wish for your child(ren) to return to a school setting, they would likely be offered a place back at the school they most recently left. Therefore, it would be beneficial to resolve any issues in case you wish for them to return to education at a later stage.

2. Consider the thoughts and feelings of your child(ren).

It is important that you think about the social and emotional impact home education may have on your child(ren). If they would be negatively affected by the change, perhaps consider an alternative option to home education or identify how you would overcome this. Many home educating families in Solihull meet up so that their children can enjoy exciting social activities together.

3. Consider what you would like to teach and how.

It is important to consider what you would like your child(ren) to know and learn and how they will learn it before making the decision to home educate, so you can ensure you are equipped to be able to teach and/or facilitate the learning. This includes thinking about your time as the parent, and whether you can give your child(ren) the time they need to be supported in their education.

Setting out a clear goal for your child's education will also help you to provide an education that is 'efficient', meaning it achieves what you want it to achieve.

4. Consider the costs of EHE.

When a child is in home education, their education is solely the financial responsibility of the parent or carer. Therefore, you must consider the amount of money that is needed to provide the resources you may need (such as books, worksheets, curriculums and practical resources, like art supplies); equipment (including a computer and stationary); and opportunities to go on educational visits, etc.

Some home educating families choose to hire a tutor to teach certain aspects of a curriculum that are more complex and specialist - particularly in secondary education. This can be very costly. There is no requirement whatsoever for families to use tutors but some choose to do so.

Additional costs may arise if you wish for your child(ren) to sit examinations to gain qualifications such as GCSEs and A-levels. Each exam can be taken for a fee at an exam centre. Your child would be entered for exams as a private candidate.

5. Consider your environment.

Guidance states that 'home accommodation which is noisy and/or cramped is likely to make it very difficult for a child to learn and make satisfactory progress'.

Therefore, you must ensure that you can provide an environment that is conducive to learning for your child(ren). If the home is not always suitable, a local library may be an alternative, more suitable setting that you could use as required.

6. Consider how you can support your child(ren) to develop socially.

Social development is an essential part of growing up to be a 'citizen of modern Britain'. It is therefore important that you provide your child(ren) with ample and regular opportunities to mix with other children, formally and informally.

This could be through meeting up with friends previously made at school, joining an EHE group and meeting other families through the group, playing with children in the neighbourhood or joining a club.

We understand that this can be difficult to do at present due to COVID-19 restrictions.

How to Begin Home Educating and the Council's Role thereafter

Step 1: Tell the school

Once you have decided to home educate your child(ren), you should inform their school. You should send the school a signed letter explaining that you wish to home educate your child(ren) and when you wish for the school to remove your child(ren) from their register/roll. The school will then inform Solihull Council of your choice and their name will be recorded on the EHE register.

Your child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If your child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date. If you are choosing to electively home educate from the point at which your child becomes of statutory school age, you are currently under no obligation to let the Council know. This may change in the future as the Government continues to debate statutory registration for all EHE children. However, whilst not required, it would be helpful to inform us as we can offer helpful information and support should you wish for it.

Step 2: Contact from Solihull Council

Soon after you start home educating, a member of the EHE team will call you to introduce themselves and offer any information and support you may want at the start of your EHE journey.

After that, the EHE team will be in touch to arrange contact, either in the form of a visit, video call, phone call or written report, to enquire informally about the education you are providing. We find that most parents are happy for us to visit them at home but, if you prefer, we could arrange to meet at the Council House or at a mutually-agreed location. Please note that there should be no significant break between the end of schooling and the provision of a good education for your child(ren) at home.

Solihull Council is entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided. Parents are under no legal obligation to agree to such a meeting or 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 the most sensible approach to take. If you do not do enough to satisfy the Council about the education being provided at home, we may have no option but to conclude that the education does not meet requirements.

Step 3: Visit or Providing Information

Visits are an invaluable way for the EHE team to develop a relationship with EHE families. Our visits are informal and will generally last no more than an hour, dependent on the number of children you are home educating. First and foremost, we aim to have an informal

discussion about your child(ren)'s education. You and your child(ren) may wish to show us some of the resources you have and some work that has been produced.

Currently, visits are suspended due to COVID-19; we need to ensure that we are keeping both families and staff as safe as possible. Therefore, we are making contact with families over the phone or by email.

If you do not wish to have a visit or they are not possible, we are happy to discuss your child's education over the phone, through a video call or over email. To ensure the officers understand your child's education and the suitability of it, it would be helpful for us to have an overview of what their education is like and for us see a small amount of work that your child has produced. You can provide us with an overview of your children's education in a variety of ways: write a letter, type a document or complete the form that we will send to you.

Once we have learned about the unique education that you are providing for your child, a report will be written based upon the information given and it will outline whether the education is suitable. This will be based upon it fulfilling a variety of suitability factors, being full-time and efficient. The report will then be sent to you. If there are any inaccuracies within the report at this time, we encourage parents to let us know so that suitable amendments can be agreed and made.

Step 4: Further contact

If we find the education being provided is suitable, we will contact you after 12 months to arrange a further visit or for you to provide information that your child(ren) continues to receive a suitable education at home. We will always be available for support by email or phone in the meantime.

If we find the education provided to be unsuitable, the Council has a duty to support you. We are committed to working with you to ensure that you can provide a suitable education that meets your child(ren)'s needs. Therefore, another visit or further communication will be made to offer more support. We will continue to support you until education provided at home is suitable.

Support and Resources

- The EHE team are always happy to offer support and advice. As experienced, qualified teachers and education leaders, we understand what good teaching and learning can look like and understand the complexities involved wherever and how ever that learning is taking place. Feel free to call or email the team to ask any questions or for advice.

Email: ehe@solihull.gov.uk

General enquiries: 0121 704 6959

Lead Officer (Bev Petch): 0121 704 6632

- Other home educating families can be a great resource: you can share ideas, learning resources, learn from each other's experiences and support one another. You may even be able to arrange opportunities to meet up, socialise or for your child(ren) to learn within a group. You can find many EHE communities online and through social media.
- The following documents have been created to support parents and carers to provide a fulltime, efficient and suitable education. There are no expectations for the documents to be used. These documents are here to support and provide ideas; only you, as the educating parent, can decide if the resources are suitable for your child(ren).

Included within these document are the following:

- Templates to support planning and timetabling
 - Hyperlinks to resources (free and fee constrained)
 - Hyperlinks to places to visit for educational purposes
 - Hyperlinks to organisations and groups that offer support to home educating families
- [Primary Planning & Resources Pack](#) (The link to this is on our webpage)
 - [Secondary Planning & Resources Pack](#) (The link to this is on our webpage)
- There is a summer school for parents, put on by Birmingham City Council, that home educating parents from Solihull are invited to join. It will provide you with the chance to meet other home educating families, learn what good teaching and learning looks like and gather practice ideas for home education. Keep an eye out for more information and the dates on our website.