



Elective Home Education

A guide for parents and carers

INTRODUCTION

The information in this booklet outlines Calderdale Council's procedures and provides guidance for parents and carers. There are several questions which families usually ask when they are considering home education. The following are examples to help you come to an informed decision as to whether home education is an appropriate alternative to school for your child.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1. Do I have a legal right to educate my child at home?

Yes, you do.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an education. The Education Act of 1996 Section 7 states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full-time suitable education: a.to age, ability and aptitude, and b.to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For most children this means that they will attend school. The word 'otherwise' does allow parents to take responsibility for providing an efficient and suitable full-time education themselves.

Calderdale Council fully supports the right of parents to make this choice and seeks to work co-operatively with them. What is suitable for one child may not be for another, but all children should be involved in a learning process.

2. What is meant by compulsory school age?

This means from the beginning of the term after a child has reached the age of 5 years to the last Friday in June in the school year in which a child reaches the age of 16.

3. What is 'efficient' and 'suitable' education?

These words are not defined in the Act.

However, education that is deemed to be 'efficient' is if it achieves what it sets out to achieve. "Suitable" is "suitable to age, aptitude and ability", and Government guidelines also say that a "suitable" education is one that "primarily equips a child for life, as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years".

Some parents take on the entire task of teaching their own children themselves, whilst others may subscribe to distance learning packages or employ private tutors. Parents are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and think carefully about the costs associated with educating children at home, especially in the longer term when they may wish to take public examinations.

4. How should I inform the Local Authority of any decision to educate at home?

There is currently no legal requirement to inform the Local Authority if your child has never been to school or if you are new to Calderdale.

If your child is registered at a school and you are withdrawing your child from school and s/he is of statutory school age you must deregister your child by informing the Head teacher in writing.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 apply; this requires schools to inform the Local Authority immediately when a child is taken off roll to be Home Educated. It may be useful if you ask for any records and pieces of work which will help you establish the level your child has been working at.

5. Education, Health Care Plans

Children and young people with Education, Health Care Plans (EHCP) can be Home Educated. We would work with the SEND Team to provide a review of the EHCP in these cases in order to ensure the needs of the child and the legal requirements of the EHCP can be met through EHE. It is likely that in this review, elements of the EHCP will have to be changed.

This could mean that certain funding that is named in the EHCP could be withdrawn.

When a child has an EHCP naming a special school, the child's name may not be removed from the register of that school without the consent of the Local Authority. Once notified, the Local Authority will hold an Annual Review to discuss educational plans. The SEN Code of Practice was revised in September 2014.

6. The first visit

When you have informed the Local Authority, the Education Welfare Officer will suggest a meeting. If you wish, this may be at a venue of your choice; alternatively, you may wish to submit a report outlining your plans. The first visit will take place usually within the first few months of you home educating your child/children. This is to enable you time to demonstrate progress at the first visit. Sometimes, where the need is greatest, the EHE Officer will visit within the first few days of you starting EHE, this is done on a case-by-case basis and is in order to provide support to those who need it most urgently.

Meanwhile you will have become responsible for your child's education and should begin the process as soon as they are removed from school. You should prepare to provide a satisfactory education from the outset.

You can contact the EHE Officer for advice or to request a visit if needed. EHE Officer will check that you have all the necessary information from the Local Authority and that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities.

The purpose of the visit is to meet informally and offer any support or guidance that you may need.

7. If I educate my child at home how often will the Local Authority contact me?

Normally, contact will be annual, however, in certain circumstances, further visits maybe necessary to establish that a suitable education is taking place. If a higher level of support is needed, the EHE Officer may visit regularly to provide guidance.

8. What happens if the Officer is not satisfied?

Any concerns that a suitable education is not taking place will initially be addressed through informal enquiries. This will involve requests for further evidence through home visits and or reports.

If the informal enquiries do not satisfy the LA that a suitable education is taking place, the matter will be referred to the Lead Education Welfare Officer to consider whether a s.437(1) letter should be served. This could start the formal procedures for a School Attendance Order under s.437 of the Education Act 1996.

For further information, please see the Local Authority's Elective Home Education policy on the Calderdale Council website

THE CURRICULUM

1. What is the National Curriculum and does it apply to children educated at home?

The National Curriculum does not apply to children educated at home, but you may wish to take its content into account when planning your child's curriculum.

The National Curriculum is the basis of a broad and balanced curriculum in state primary and secondary schools. An education at home should help to prepare a child for adult life; however, what you decide to teach at home and how your child learns is for you to decide. You do not need a timetable, nor do you have to follow the National Curriculum.

2. Some suggestions

A timetable is not required. Try to see the learning process as active, practical, and participative try to take full advantage of all the resources available around you (e.g. libraries, local parks). Provide opportunities which help with physical development and those which allow social interaction to take place make your approaches to learning more enjoyable by varying the style and content as well as the process it involves

Where appropriate, give opportunities for independent study and research and provide a quiet area for sustained study/work.

You can arrange for children to take exams as external candidates at some schools. You will need to contact the schools or colleges concerned and make enquiries with other home educators in your area.

The Local Authority EHE Officer will be able to help and advise you.

Do

- Think long and hard about educating at home. It can be very rewarding, but it is also a great responsibility and a considerable commitment of time, energy and money.
- There is no funding available for EHE, instead all of the financial burden falls upon yourself.
- Work out what you intend to do with your child before making a decision.
- Look at costs involved, e.g. visits, equipment, books, tutors, examination costs etc
- Provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social activities, contact with other children and joint activities with other groups. The impetus which comes from such activities may provide a useful social setting and improve your child's motivation to succeed with his or her learning
- Keep your options open; as your child's needs may change at different ages and stages. It might be, at some point, in your child's interests to return to school.

Do not

Take your child out of school simply because you have a disagreement with the school or teacher. In such circumstances, try and talk to the Headteacher or the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer

Post 16

In Calderdale there is a dedicated Careers Officer assigned to Elective Home Education.

The Careers Officer and EHE Officer can conduct joint home visits for students in Years 10 and 11 to help and advise about post 16 opportunities (these visits are optional).

For more information, please contact EHE@calderdale.gov.uk

USEFUL INFORMATION

What if I wish to re-enrol my child at a mainstream school?

If you are currently educating at home but feel that it might be better for your children to attend a school, please get in touch with Admissions as soon as possible. You will need to complete an In-Year Transfer:

Website: <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/admissions>

Address: Calderdale MBC, Town Hall, Halifax. HX1 1UJ.

Phone: 01422 392617.

Email: cyps.admissions@calderdale.gov.uk.

Resources and Useful websites

The organisations listed below are only a sample of the resources available to you.

Please note that the Local Authority carries no responsibility for the content or quality of the materials or resources from the listed organisations or websites. It is for home educators to judge the suitability and quality of all the materials.

Department for Education

www.education.gov.uk

Useful website that includes information on all public services, including guidelines on education

<https://edyourself.org/>

EHE guidelines SEN Support Services

www.HE-special.org.uk

If you have further enquiries after reading this information and guidance, please contact see contact details below.

Lead Elective Home Education Officers

EHE@Calderdale.gov.uk