

Halton Elective Home Education Policy

For parents/carers educating children at home



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Overview

Education is a fundamental right for every child/young person, and we recognise that parents/carers have the right to choose to educate their children other than at school. This guidance is designed to help those who have made the decision to home educate.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child/young person receive a suitable education. Where parents/carers have chosen to home educate, we too want the home educated child/young person to have a positive experience.

We believe this is best achieved where parents/carers and the Local Authority (LA) both recognise the parts they have to play and work together.

These guidelines aim to clarify the balance between the right of the parent/carer to educate their child/young person at home and our responsibilities as an LA to have oversight.

Introduction and reasons for Elective Home Education

Elective home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe a parent/carer's decision to provide education for their children other than at school. This is different to home tuition provided by a LA for those children too ill to come to school or education provided by the LA other than at a school.

These guidelines are intended for use in relation to EHE only and in conjunction with the [DfE's guidance](#). Throughout these guidelines, 'parents/carers' should be taken to include all those with parental responsibility, including guardians and carers as per s.7 of the Education Act 1996.

Where parents/carers elect to educate their children, the child/young person is not usually registered at:

- mainstream schools
- special schools
- independent schools
- academies
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- colleges
- children's homes with education facilities or
- education facilities provided by independent fostering agencies.

However, in some cases parents/carers may make arrangements for a child/young person to receive part of his or her total education at a school ('flexi-schooling') – or at an FE college or other 16- 19 provider if the child/young person is aged 14 or above. The purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home. Schools and colleges are under no obligation to agree to such arrangements, but some are on occasion willing to do so. Some parents/carers may also choose to engage private tutors or other adults to assist them in providing a suitable education; there is no requirement for you to do so but this may be a relevant option.

Parents/carers may choose home education for a variety of reasons. Our primary interest lies in the suitability of parents/carers' education provision and not their reason for doing so. The following reasons for home educating are common, but by no means exhaustive:

- Ideological or philosophical views which you feel would be better promoted through education at home
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Dissatisfaction with the school system
- Distance to a local school
- Bullying
- As a short term intervention for a particular reason
- The child/young person's unwillingness or inability to go to school
- Special educational needs not being met within the school system
- Health reasons, particularly mental health

However, the LA is keen that where EHE results from an issue with the school provision, that assistance is provided to parents/carers to resolve this if possible.

The law relating to elective home education

The responsibility for a child/young person's education rests with their parents/carers. In England, education is compulsory, but school is not. Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that:

"No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents/carers to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions."

Parents/carers have a right to educate their children at home. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that:

"The parent of every child/young person of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable – (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

The responsibility for a child/young person's education rests with his or her parents/carers. An "efficient" and "suitable" education is not defined in the Education Act 1996. But "efficient" has been broadly described in case law as an education that "achieves that which it sets out to achieve". A "suitable" education is one that "primarily equips a child/young person for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child/young person's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so".

Responsibilities

Parental rights and responsibilities

Parents/carers may decide to exercise their right to home educate their children from a very early age and so the child/young person may not have been previously enrolled at school. They may also elect to home educate at any other stage up to the end of compulsory school age.

Parents/carers are not required to register or seek approval from the LA to educate their children at home, but the LA will keep records of those who have chosen to do so and seek to be satisfied that all children are in receipt of a suitable education. Parents/carers who choose to educate their children at home must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility, including bearing the cost of any public examinations.

Local authorities' responsibilities

We will provide written information about elective home education that is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position, roles and responsibilities of both the LA and parents/carers. We forward an EHE Guidance Booklet out to all newly registered families. Please also refer to the EHE Flowchart (included in the booklet) at the end of this document. We recognise that there are many approaches to an educational provision, not just a "school at home" model. What is suitable for one child/young person may not be for another, but all children should be involved in a learning process.

We have a statutory duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, inserted by the 3 Education and Inspections Act 2006, to make arrangements to enable us to establish the identities, so far as it is possible to do so, of children in our area who are not receiving a suitable education. The duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school (for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision).

Further to this, the LA has a duty to enquire about a child/young person's education if they are of compulsory school age. Enquiries be timely and effective. Therefore the LA does have a duty of oversight, and this will be carried out at least annually.

However, under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, we shall intervene if it appears that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education.

This section states that:

"If it appears to a local education authority that a child/young person of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child/young person is receiving such education."

Section 437(2) of the Act provides that the period shall not be less than 15 days beginning with the day on which the notice is served. Prior to serving a notice under section 437(1), we will try to address the situation informally with parents/carers. If we have information that makes it appear that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education, we will ask parents/carers for further information about the education they are providing. Such a request is not the same as a notice under section 437(1) and is not necessarily a precursor for formal procedures. Parents/carers are under no duty to respond to such enquiries, but it would be sensible for them to do so.

Section 437(3) refers to the serving of school attendance orders:

“If (a) a parent on whom a notice has been served under subsection (1) fails to satisfy the local education authority, within the period specified in the notice, that the child/young person is receiving suitable education, and (b) in the opinion of the authority it is expedient that the child/young person should attend school, the authority shall serve on the parent an order (referred to in this Act as a “school attendance order”), in such form as may be prescribed, requiring him to cause the child/young person to become a registered pupil at a school named in the order.”

A School Attendance Order (SAO) will only be served after reasonable steps have been taken to try to resolve the situation.

At any stage following the issue of the Order, parents/carers may present evidence to us that they are now providing an appropriate education and apply to have the Order revoked. If we refuse to revoke the Order, parents/carers can choose to refer the matter to the Secretary of State. If we prosecute the parents/carers 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.

The court can revoke the Order if it is satisfied that the parents/carers are fulfilling their duty. It can also revoke the Order where it imposes an Education Supervision Order (ESO). Detailed information about SAOs is contained in Ensuring Regular School Attendance paragraphs 6 to 16. Where we impose a time limit, every effort will be made to make sure that both the parents/carers and the officer with responsibility for EHE are available throughout this period.

We also have a duty under section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This section states:

“A local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred upon them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.”

Section 175(1) does not extend local authorities' functions. It does not, for example, give us the powers to enter the homes of, or otherwise see, children for the purposes of monitoring the provision of elective home education.

The Children Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”) provides the legislative framework for developing children’s services as detailed in Every Child/young person Matters: Change for Children.

The background and aims of Every Child Matters can be found on its dedicated website. Section 10 of the 2004 Act sets out a statutory framework for cooperation arrangements to be made by local authorities with a view to improving the well-being of children in their area.

Section 11 of the 2004 Act sets out the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, this section does not place any additional duties or responsibilities on local authorities over and above section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002. Statutory Guidance on Making Arrangements to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 has been updated and published in April 2007.

As outlined above, we have general duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (section 175 Education Act 2002 in relation to their functions as an LA and for other functions in sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004).

These powers allow us to insist on seeing children in order to enquire about their welfare where there are grounds for concern (sections 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989). However, such powers do not bestow upon us the ability to see and question children who are EHE in order to establish whether they are receiving a suitable education.

Section 53 of the 2004 Act sets out the duty on us to, where reasonably practicable, take into account the child/young person’s wishes and feelings with regard to the provision of services. Section 53 does not extend local authorities’ functions. It does not, for example, place an obligation on us to ascertain the child/young person’s wishes about elective home education as it is not a service provided by the LA.

Section 36 of the 1989 Children Act give us the power to consider an ESO as an alternative to, or as well as any prosecution for non-compliance with an SAO. Applying for an ESO may be the proportionate response when parents/carers are not complying with an SAO.

Policies and procedures

Halton Borough Council in line with current government recommendations have reviewed our policy on EHE. We believe it provides clear guidance for parents/carers and reflects the current law and statutory guidance. In addition to this we have taken on board input from home educating parents/carers.

It is important that all parties involved in EHE are aware of their roles, rights and responsibilities. Our policy is to ensure all guidelines are clear, transparent and easily accessible to parents/carers.

All our procedures for dealing with home educating parents/carers and children are equitable, clear, consistent, non-intrusive and timely, in order to provide a good foundation for the development of trusting relationships.

All our officers who deal with EHE are fully aware of our policy, government guidelines, and the law.

Contact with parents/carers and children

We acknowledge that learning takes place in a wide variety of environments and not only in the home. However, if it appears that a suitable education is not being provided, we will seek to gather any relevant information that may assist us in reaching a properly informed judgment. This will include seeking from the parents/carers any further information that they wish to provide which explains how they are providing a suitable education. Parents/carers will always be given the opportunity to address any specific concerns that the LA has. The child/young person involved will also be given the opportunity, but is not required, to attend any meeting that may be arranged or invited to express his or her views in some other way. Please note that parents/carers are under no duty to respond to our requests for information or a meeting, but it would be sensible for them to do so because until the LA is satisfied that a home educating child/young person is receiving a suitable full-time education, then the child/young person being educated at home falls under the scope of the powers and duties in relation to children missing education.

There is no definition of 'suitable' education in statute law, although as stated in s.7 as quoted above, it must be suitable to the age, ability and aptitudes of the child/young person, and any Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). This means that it must be age-appropriate, enable the child/young person to make progress according to his or her particular level of ability, and should take account of any specific aptitudes (for example if a child/young person is very good at mathematics, it might focus more on that than some other subjects).

More generally, you should bear in mind that:

- even if there is no specific link with the National Curriculum or other external curricula, there should be an appropriate minimum standard which is aimed at, and the education should aim at enabling the child/young person, when grown-up, to function as an independent citizen in the UK – and furthermore, beyond the community in which he or she was brought up, if that is the choice made in later life by the child/young person.
- to be 'suitable', education at home should not directly conflict with the Fundamental British Values as defined in government guidance (link at end of document), although there is no requirement to teach these.
- LAs may use minimum expectations for literacy and numeracy in assessing suitability, whilst bearing in mind the age, ability and aptitude of the child/young person and any SEND he or she may have.
- education may not be 'suitable' even if it is satisfactory in terms of content and teaching, if it is delivered in circumstances which make it very difficult to work (for example in very noisy premises). This might also affect whether it is 'efficient' and indeed, whether it is 'received' at all for the purposes of s.7; and

- education may also not be deemed suitable if it leads to excessive isolation from the child/young person's peers, and thus impedes social development.

There are no legal requirements for you as parents/carers educating a child/young person at home to do any of the following:

- acquire specific qualifications for the task
- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- aim for the child/young person to acquire any specific qualifications
- teach the National Curriculum
- provide a 'broad and balanced' curriculum
- make detailed lesson plans in advance
- give formal lessons
- mark work done by the child/young person
- formally assess progress, or set development objectives
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation
- match school-based, age-specific standards

However, many home-educating families do some of these, at least, by choice. Furthermore, it is likely to be much easier for a parent/carer to show that the education provided is suitable if attention has been paid to the breadth of the curriculum and its content, and the concepts of progress and assessment in relation to your child/young person's ability.

If it appears to us that a child/young person is not receiving a suitable education, we will write to parents/carers to discuss their ongoing home education provision. This letter will offer a range of ways in which you can choose to tell us about your provision. We would prefer that an officer from our service meets with you in order to discuss your arrangements, however the letter does give alternative options.

Some parents/carers may welcome the opportunity to discuss the provision that they are making for the child/young person's education during a home visit, but parents/carers are not legally required to give us access to their home.

You may choose to meet an officer at a mutually convenient and neutral location instead, with or without the child/young person being present or choose not to meet at all. Where a parent/carer elects not to allow access to their home or their child/young person, this will not of itself constitute a ground for concern about the education provision being made. Where we are not able to visit the home, we should be able to discuss and evaluate the educational provision by alternative means.

If you choose to meet an officer, you will be asked to provide evidence that you are providing a suitable education. If we do ask you for information, you are under no duty to comply although it would be sensible for you to do so given that the LA must be satisfied of suitable education. Following any review of your home education provision, you will receive a short notification from us. If we are satisfied that the education is suitable, you will be notified and advised that we will contact you again in a year's time. If we are not satisfied, you will be notified and given a maximum of 3 months to put plans in place and demonstrate the suitability of education. If we remain dissatisfied, we may take statutory action as set out above.

Definition of suitable education

Definition of suitable education and the reasons why the LA may deem the education not to be suitable

Parents/carers who are home educating their child(ren) are expected to provide evidence of a suitable education that would, on the balance of probabilities, convince a reasonable person that a suitable education is being provided for the age and ability of the child/young person.

In considering the parent/carer's provision of education the LA may reasonably expect the provision to include the following characteristics:

- **Broad:** it should introduce the pupils to a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- **Balanced:** each part should be allotted sufficient time but not such that it pushes out other essential areas of learning.
- **Relevant:** subjects should be taught so as to bring out their application to the pupil's own experience and to adult life and to give due emphasis to practical aspects.
- **Differentiated:** what is taught, and how it is taught, needs to be matched to the child/young person's age, abilities and aptitude, taking into account any SEND.

A good curriculum also includes other aspects at an appropriate level such as personal, social and health education, outdoor and environmental education, citizenship, careers, food technology and information and communication technology.

Opportunities to mix and relate with other children and adults are considered to be important to a child/young person's personal and social development.

There may be a variety of reasons why the information/evidence provided has not been deemed suitable by the LA. This may include:

- The education provision described lacks detail and it is difficult to ascertain what is being taught/what subjects are being studied.
- There is no or very limited examples of work submitted.
- There is no or very limited information regarding resources used internally and externally.
- There is no or very limited detail of how the child/young person's progress is being monitored or examples of work to demonstrate relevant progression.
- There is no clear academic or time structure.

It is important to note that the above is for guidance and by way of example only and is not an exhaustive list. Each case is judged on its own individual circumstances.

The types of information and evidence might include: a timetable; a curriculum plan; photographs; workbooks; progress reports; dated work overtime; conversations with the child/young person and parent/carer; home visits; etc.

The LA needs to be satisfied that appropriate education is taking place and therefore it will be about building a full picture of the individual circumstances rather than rigid adherence to a checklist.

Withdrawal from school to elective home educate

If a parent/carer decides to withdraw their child/young person from school and seeks guidance from us, we will provide an EHE Guidance booklet. In addition to this, we will draw your attention to a range of contacts set out in this guidance.

Whenever possible the LA will encourage parents/carers to discuss an intention to EHE before putting into effect and the parent/carer will be invited to a meeting to discuss such intention. The LA will also be able to offer independent advice to the parent in this situation.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their LA of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Sections 8(1) (d) and 13(3) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 places a duty on head teachers to inform the LA when a parent notifies them of their decision to home educate.

Schools must then return a Pupil Tracking Notification Form (PTNF) giving the child/young person's name, address, list any school intervention if attendance is below 90% and the ground upon which their name is to be deleted from the register, to the LA as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register.

Following receipt of the PTNF, the LA will make initial contact with the parent/carer via telephone to further discuss the main reasons (where they are provided) for their decision to remove their child from roll and offer a mediation service with the parents/carers and school, should this be required.

If a child/young person is registered at a school as a result of an SAO, the parents/carers must get the order revoked by us on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child/young person to receive suitable education otherwise than at school, before the child/young person can be deleted from the schools register and educated at home.

DfE guidance strongly recommends parents/carers notify us so that we can facilitate access to advice and support available. The only exception to this is where your child/young person is attending a special school under arrangements made by us, in which case additional permission is required from us before the child/young person's name can be removed from the register.

We appreciate in the early stages, parents/carers' plans may not be detailed, and they may not yet be in a position to demonstrate all the characteristics of an "efficient and suitable" educational provision. However, families should be aiming to offer satisfactory home education from the outset, and to have made preparations with that aim, as time lost in education a child/young person is difficult to recover.

Schools must not seek to persuade parents/carers to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child/young person has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, they must follow the statutory guidance. If the pupil has a poor attendance record, the school and LA will address the issues behind the absenteeism and use the other remedies available to them.

In most cases, if you make the decision for your child/young person to return to school within 6 months of deregistration, the LA will require the previous school to place your child/young person back on roll before any change of placement can be considered, as agreed by all schools in the Fair Access Protocol. (FAP).

Providing a full-time education

Parents/carers are required to provide an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child/young person. There is currently no legal definition of “full-time”. Children normally attend school for between 22 and 25 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but this measurement of “contact time” is not relevant to EHE where there is often almost continuous one-to-one contact and education may take place outside normal “school hours.”

The type of educational activity can be varied and flexible. Home educating parents/carers are not required to:

- Have a timetable
- Set hours during which education will take place
- Observe school hours, days or terms

The question of whether an education for a specific child/young person is full-time will depend on the facts of each case; but parents/carers should at least be able to quantify and demonstrate the amount of time for which your child/young person is being educated. Education which clearly is not occupying a significant proportion of a child/young person’s life (making allowance for holiday periods) will probably not meet the s.7 requirement.

We recognise that there are many, equally valid, approaches to an educational provision. We will, therefore, consider a wide range of information from home educating parents/carers, in a range of formats. The information may be in the form of specific examples of learning e.g. pictures/paintings/models, diaries of educational activity, projects, assessments, samples of work, books, educational visits etc.

As per current government guidelines in our consideration of parents/carers’ provision of education at home, we may reasonably expect the provision to include the following characteristics:

- consistent involvement of parents/carers or other significant carers – it is expected that parents/carers or significant carers would play a substantial role, although not necessarily constantly or actively involved in providing education
- recognition of the child/young person’s needs, attitudes and aspirations

- opportunities for the child/young person to be stimulated by their learning experiences
- access to resources/materials required to provide home education for the child/young person – such as paper and pens, books and libraries, arts and crafts materials, physical activity, ICT and the opportunity for appropriate interaction with other children and other adults.

If we consider that a suitable education is not being provided, we will write to parents/carers informing them of this. If we are not satisfied that a suitable education is being provided, and the parents/carers, having been given a reasonable opportunity to address the identified concerns and report back to us have not done so, we will consider sending a formal notice to the parents/carers under section 437 before moving on, if needed, to the issuing of a school attendance order (section 437(1)). See paragraphs above.

Children/young people with SEND

A parent/carer's right to educate their child/young person at home applies equally where a child/young person has SEND. This right is irrespective of whether the child/young person has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or not. Where a child/young person has an EHCP and is home educated, it remains our duty to ensure that the child/young person's needs are met.

We must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Although this document primarily covers special educational needs in a school and early years' settings, it does give information about children and young people with SEND educated at home (paragraphs 10.30 – 10.38). The Code of Practice emphasises the importance of LAs and other providers working in partnership with parents/carers.

The Code of Practice is statutory guidance and schools, LAs and others to whom it applies must have regard to it. This means that, apart from the references to the law, these bodies do not have to follow the Code to the letter, but they must be able to justify any departure from its guidance. The foreword states that the Code is designed to help these bodies to *"make effective decisions but it does not – and could not – tell them what to do in each individual case"*.

Even if we are satisfied that parents/carers are making suitable arrangements, we remain under a duty to maintain the EHCP and review it annually, following procedures set out in chapter 9 of the SEND Code of Practice. In some circumstances the child/young person's SEND identified in the EHCP will have been related to the school setting and the child/young person's needs may readily be met at home by the parents/carers without LA supervision. It may be appropriate, once it is established that a child/young person's SEND are being met without any additional support from us, to consider ceasing to maintain the EHCP. This would usually be following the recommendation of an annual review.

Where the EHCP is reviewed it should be made clear to parents/carers that they are welcome to attend, but they are not obliged to do so. Where we are satisfied that the child/young person's parents/carers have made suitable arrangements it does not have to name a school or college in Section I of the child/young person's EHCP. If the

LA and parents/carers agree that home education is the right provision for the child/young person, the EHCP should make clear that they will be educated at home, and we must arrange the SEND provision set out in the plan. If the EHCP does name a school or type of school and parents/carers decide to educate at home, the LA is not under a duty to make the SEND provision set out in the EHCP as long as we are satisfied that arrangements made by parents/carers are suitable.

In some cases an LA will conclude that, even after considering its power to provide support to home-educating parents/carers, the provision that is or could be made for a child/young person with an EHCP does not meet their SEND. The LA is required to intervene through the school attendance order framework 'if it appears that a child/young person of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education'. This is a last resort if all attempts to improve provision are unsuccessful. 'Suitable Education' means efficient full-time education suitable to the child/young person's age, ability and aptitude and to any SEND they may have.

The EHCP should also specify any provision that we have agreed to make under section 319 of the Education Act 1996 to help parents/carers to provide suitable education for their child/young person at home. If the child/young person who is to be withdrawn from the school is a pupil at a special school, the LA must give consent for the child/young person's name to be removed from the school roll and before amending Section I of the EHCP.

Parents/carers may also home educate children who have SEND but do not have EHCP. As with children and young people with EHCP, LAs should work with parents/carers and consider whether to provide support in the home to help the parents/carers make suitable provision. Information about the right to request an EHC needs assessment and the right to appeal is available to all parents/carers including those who are considering home education because they feel that the SEND support being provided in the school is insufficient to meet the child/young person's needs. However LAs do not have a duty under section 22 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to assess every home educated child/young person to see whether or not they have SEND.

Young people may also be educated at home in order to meet the requirement to participate in education and training until the age of 18. Local authorities should involve parents/carers, as appropriate, in the reviews of EHCPs of home-educated young people who are over compulsory school age.

Developing relationships

As noted in our overview and introduction to these guidelines, the central aim of this document is to assist the LA and parents/carers in carrying out our statutory responsibilities/duties with respect to elective home educated children. We hope that this will enable us to build effective relationships with home educators that function to safeguard the educational interests of children and young people: relationships that are rooted in mutual understanding, trust and respect.

While there isn't a legal obligation on us or home educators to develop such relationships, doing so will often provide parents/carers with access to any available support. This allows us to better understand parents/carers' educational provision and

preferences. A positive relationship will also provide a sound basis if we are required to investigate assertions from any source that an efficient and suitable education is not being provided.

Acknowledging diversity

Parents/carers' education provision will reflect a diversity of approaches and interests. Some parents/carers may wish to provide education in a formal and structured manner, following a traditional curriculum and using a fixed timetable that keeps to school hours and terms. Other parents/carers may decide to make more informal provision that is responsive to the developing interests of their child/young person. One approach is not necessarily any more efficient or effective than another. Although some parents/carers may welcome general advice and suggestions about resources, methods and materials, we will not specify a curriculum or approach which parents/carers must follow.

Children/young people learn in different ways and at different times and speeds. It is appreciated that parents/carers and their children might require a period of adjustment before finding their preferred mode of learning and that families may change their approach over time. Parents/carers are not required to have any qualifications or training to provide their children with a suitable education. It should be noted that parents/carers of all educational, social, racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds successfully educate children outside the school setting and these factors should not in themselves raise a concern about the suitability of the education being provided.

Providing information for parents/carers

The provision of clear information has an important role to play in the promotion of positive relationships. We will provide, where reasonably practical, written information and website links for prospective and existing electively home educating parents/carers that are clear and accurate and which set out the legal position, and roles and responsibilities, in an unambiguous way (**see Support and Resources**).

Safeguarding duties

The welfare and protection of all children, both those who attend school and those who are educated at home, are of paramount concern and the responsibility of the whole community. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, 2013, 2018 and 2023 states that all agencies and individuals should aim proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As with school educated children, child/young person protection issues may arise in relation to home educated children. If any child/young person protection concerns come to light in the course of engagement with children and families, or otherwise, these concerns will immediately be referred to the appropriate authorities using established protocols.

In the event of any concerns, in line with local safeguarding procedures, LA officers will discuss them with parents (provided that this does not pose an increased risk to the child) and signpost/link the family into sources of support, including Early Help.

If the concerns appear to present an immediate and serious risk of harm to the child, LA officers will discuss with the ICART Team, which may lead to an assessment by Social Care.

Parents/carers may wish to employ others to educate their child at home. Parents would, therefore, be responsible for ensuring that those they engage are suitable to have access to children.

References should be taken, and parents/carers need to ensure that they have undertaken checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Parents/carers may choose to employ other people to educate their child/young person, though they themselves will continue to be responsible for the education provided. They will also be responsible for ensuring that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children. Parents/carers will therefore wish to satisfy themselves by taking up appropriate references and we strongly advise you do this. Tutors employed by the LA, or an agency may also undertake work for home educating parents/carers, in which case DBS checks will have been made.

The paragraphs above give details of our duties to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Reviewing policies and procedures

The LA reviews the procedures and practices in relation to elective home education on a regular basis to see if improvements can be made to further develop relationships and meet the needs of children/young people and their parents/carers. Home education organisations and home educating parents/carers can be involved in this process of review.

We do bear in mind that Ofsted reports on the way we cater for elective home educating families within our area. Reports of our local inspections are available on the [Ofsted section of the gov.uk website](#).

Support and resources

When parents/carers choose to electively home educate their children they assume financial responsibility for their children's education.

We do not receive funding to support home educating families, and the level and type of support we offer will be based upon our limited resources.

We do provide written information (which is also available through the internet) on elective home education that is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position (see guidance below).

<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Documents/education%20and%20families/Schools/EHE%20Guidance%20Booklet%20for%20Parents.pdf>

In line with the legislation around Raising the Participation Age (RPA) information will be provided for parents and children of Year 11 age advising them of their options and

responsibilities for post 16 education provision. This advice is provided by the Career Connect Service and alongside support from Caseworker's based within the LA's 14-19 Team.

Health advice, information including support with immunisations is available to home educating parents and is provided through the NHS, School Nursing Service.

In addition to this we provide contact details for elective home education organisations and colleges.

The National Curriculum

Although home educated children are not required to follow the National Curriculum a number do. National Curriculum tests and assessment arrangements are developed and administered by the Standards & Testing Agency (STA) on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Information to support these arrangements can be found on the [Government's website](#).

National Careers Service

The [National Careers Service](#) is a free careers service for adults and young people aged 13 and over in England. Advice and guidance can be accessed via the telephone and online. They provide confidential advice and guidance to help you and your child/young person make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children

We have an understanding of and are sensitive to, the distinct ethos and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These families who are electively home educating are treated in the same way as any other families. Home education should not necessarily be regarded as less appropriate than in other communities. When a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family with children of school age move into our area, they are strongly encouraged to contact us for advice and help to access local educational settings.

Further guidance can be obtained from the [Department of Education](#).

Complaints Procedure

If you are unhappy about the way the EHE team has delivered it's services, the Council has a corporate complaints procedure, for general complaints against the council please contact us on 0303 333 4300 and ask to be put through to the relevant department or complete the corporate complaints form and return it to corporatecomplaints@halton.gov.uk or in hard copy to –

Performance and Improvement Team (Corporate Complaints),
Halton Council, Municipal Buildings, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF

A copy of the Councils Corporate Complaints Procedure Privacy Notice is available [here](#). The Privacy Notice explains how the personal data you provide when making a Corporate Complaint, will be processed.

Organisations

There are organisations supporting parents/carers who educate at home and website details of a range of these are included below. These offer a variety of advice and support to parents/carers educating at home.

We cannot recommend a particular organisation; it would be for the parents/carers to ensure the organisation best suits the needs of the education provision. This list is not exhaustive, but is meant for guidance only:

Education Otherwise educationotherwise.org

Education Advisory Service www.heas.org.uk

Home Education UK www.home-education.org.uk

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Ltd www.ace-ed.org.uk

Other useful Websites:

Halton Local Offer <https://localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/>

Halton SEND Parent Carer Forum <https://haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk/>

Department for Education
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

[Department of Education EHE guidance](#)

Education Welfare Service Elective Home Education Flow Chart

