

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers



What is EHE?

Parents and carers can choose to teach their child at home, either full or part-time. This is called home education or elective home education.

With elective home education (EHE), you choose to take on full responsibility for teaching your child at home, by yourself, perhaps using online learning or private tuition you pay for, or activities with a home education group.

Other types of home education

Sometimes EHE gets confused with other forms of home education such as EOTAS. If you are considering home education, it's helpful to be really clear about the differences.

- **Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS)** is a legal term for education provision where the local authority remains legally responsible for educating a child at home, for example when they are too sick to go to school for an extended period or when an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan states that a school setting is "inappropriate" for a child's needs. Read our companion fact sheet on EOTAS for more on this.
- **Flexi-schooling** is where you home educate but your child also spends some time at a school. Though legally allowed, you don't have a right to this, and schools are often willing to agree to an arrangement like this.
- **Home tuition** is not a legal term and is used in a number of ways. For example, it might refer to private tuition that you pay for as part of EHE, or to one-to-one tuition at home provided as part of EOTAS.

Why choose home education?

Some parents of children with SEND choose home education as a positive option for their child. Others find themselves doing it because their child struggles to attend school or there isn't a suitable school place available for them. Some families choose home education because they're not confident that school can support their child safely at the moment, or because their child is too anxious to return.

No one should be forced to home educate or pushed towards home education. Some parents can feel pressured by their child's school to consider home education in situations where the school is not meeting the child's needs. This might be presented as a way of preventing prosecution for non-attendance, or because their child keeps being excluded from school. Sometimes a child is on such a part-time timetable or getting so little support that parents feel they might as well home educate instead.

If you are in a situation like this you can contact our SENDIASS team for advice (contacts below). If your child has an EHC plan, you can also speak to their Assessment and Planning Officer (APO) or Casework Officer (CWO).





Things to think about before choosing EHE

Make EHE a considered choice not a knee jerk reaction. If you are choosing EHE because of problems with school, are there other solutions? Once you take your child off roll, their school do not have to hold a place for them or take them back. On the other hand, you don't need to be committed to home educating for the rest of their school life. Children can and do move back into school or college later as their circumstances and choices change.

Check you have the resources you will need to home educate. Time and energy are the obvious ones, but also think about space, equipment and costs like paying for exams if your child will take these. If you are worried about your knowledge, there are websites, groups and companies you can turn to for learning materials, activities and help in building a home curriculum. Your local authority home education contact may have recommendations too. Social contact can be a concern beforehand, but you should be able to link up with other home educators and you can help your child join out of school, sport and youth groups. Long term home educators usually say social links are not a major issue.

An important question to look at is what does your child think? You will need them to cooperate. Some children thrive with the flexibility of learning at home, others don't respond well to having their parent as their teacher. Make sure they understand what learning at home will mean. You could look together at what their new routine will be, make a visual timetable, or meet other home educated children to help them be ready. This conversation will be particularly important if you are choosing EHE because they are struggling to attend a school setting.

What are the legal duties for parents and carers?

Parents have a legal duty to make sure their children receive a suitable full time education by attendance at school or otherwise. This means you can choose to educate them at home (EHE). You don't have to run this like a school or follow the national curriculum, but you do have to provide them with a suitable education. That includes meeting their special educational needs.

If they are at a mainstream school, you take them 'off roll' there by notifying the head teacher, and the school will tell the local authority. If they are at a special school, you have to get consent from the local authority (LA) to take them 'off roll' at the school. The LA will check in with you to make sure your child is getting a home education that meets their needs. They are expected to check that the education you are offering is suitable to your child's age, ability, aptitude and SEN. You don't have to let them visit or share details of what you are doing, but if you don't this may trigger concern about your child and the LA could pursue a School Attendance Order.

What are the legal duties for local authorities?

If your child has an EHC Plan

If you choose to electively home educate a child with an EHC plan, your local authority is likely to say that you are making your own arrangements for the child's education, and so they will no longer be obliged to make any of the provision in your child's EHC plan. In exceptional circumstances, they might offer some discretionary support, but this is unlikely.

Alternatively, you can ask for your child's EHC plan to be amended to name EOTAS rather than a school. The plan can set out a bespoke package of home tuition and alternative provision because school provision is not appropriate for them. If you want this, you can ask for the EHC plan to be





amended through the annual review process. If the LA does not agree, you could appeal to the SEND Tribunal. However, you will need to be able demonstrate that it would be 'inappropriate' for the provision to be made in a school. Read our fact sheet about EOTAS for more information.

If your child does not have an EHC plan

If your child does not have an EHC plan and you don't want them to go to school, it is likely that the only option will be elective home education, unless they are too ill to attend. If your child is too ill to attend (and this can apply to some children who are 'school refusing' due to severe anxiety), they may be covered by the legal duty on local authorities to "secure suitable, full-time alternative education for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them", and so get EOTAS. In this case they are likely to get a few hours a week of tuition at home or in a local library or centre.

The service that provides this 'for reason of illness' has different names in different areas (see below for details in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove). Speak to your school and ask SENDIASS for advice if you are in this position.

If your child needs an EHC plan

If you are already home educating, you have the same right to ask for an EHC needs assessment as if your child was going to school. Similarly, if your child is getting EOTAS because they have been excluded or due to long term illness, you can (and maybe should) request an EHC needs assessment – although this should not unnecessarily delay them getting back into a school if they can. The key point is that there is no requirement for your child to be in school to be assessed or to get an EHC plan.

Ask about

- **SENDIASS** - Amaze provides the **Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service** to families with children and young people with SEND in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex. Our advisers can offer impartial advice about anything to do with SEND education. Call 01273 772289 or email sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk
- **East Sussex County Council services**
Elective Home Education (East Sussex) <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/education-learning/schools/attendance-behaviour/out-of-school-education>
Teaching and Learning Provision (TLP) - Education for children too ill for school in East Sussex. Visit <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/education-learning/schools/attendance-behaviour/too-sick>
East Sussex Local Offer - services and support for children with SEND
- **Brighton & Hove City Council services**
Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) - Education for children too ill for school in Brighton & Hove <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/absent-school/how-we-help-children-who-are-too-ill-go-school>
Elective Home Education - see <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/home-education/how-educate-your-child-home>





Further reading and useful links

- **Amaze SENDIASS** - see our companion fact sheets about *School avoidance, EOTAS, SEN support in school and EHC needs assessments and plans* at <https://amazesussex.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets/>
- **Contact** - information on home education <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-start/education-learning/home-education/>
- **Gov.uk** - government information about home education <https://www.gov.uk/home-education>
- **Education Otherwise** - charity that promotes and supports the right of a parent or guardian to home educate their child <https://www.educationotherwise.org/>
- **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**- Download for parent carers from Education East Sussex <https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/assets/documents/EBSA-Guidance-for-Parent-Carers-and-Children-and-Young-People.pdf>
- **Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS)** - advice and practical support for families who wish to educate their children at home <https://www.heas.org.uk>
- **IPSEA advice** - <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/getting-temporary-education-put-in-place>
- **Not Fine In School** – support information for families with a child facing barriers to school attendance <https://notfineinschool.co.uk/>
- **NHS advice for parents** on helping their child's mental health <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others/childrens-mental-health/>
- **Place2Be** - online parenting advice from child mental health experts) <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>
- **Sussex CAMHS** - resources for parent carers around mental health <https://www.sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/resources/resources-for-families-carers-and-professionals>
- **Young Minds** - lots of parent advice resources <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent>

