
Elective Home Education

Isle of Wight Policy and Procedures

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance to parents and carers by:

- setting out the legal position on elective home education;
- explaining the processes involved in becoming a home educator;
- outlining where to find additional information and support;
- answering some of the most frequently asked questions.

2.0 Policy statement

The Isle of Wight Local Authority recognises that there are many equally valid approaches to educational provision and respects the rights of parents¹ to choose to educate their children at home.

Elective home education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to home tuition provided by a local authority or education provided by a local authority other than at school.

Home education is an option that any family may consider for their child or children. The reasons for deciding on this approach are many: for some families, it is a decision based on their philosophical, spiritual or religious outlook; for others it is to meet the specific needs of a child or children. Whatever the circumstances, the Local Authority wishes to work collaboratively with and support parents in their choice. As the best outcomes for children are likely to be achieved when parents and the Local Authority work together, respecting each other's rights and responsibilities, the Local Authority aims to create positive working relationships with home educators.

3.0 The law relating to elective home education:

In England, education is compulsory, but attending school is not. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

“The parent of every child 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.”

¹ 'parents' in this document refers to parents and adults with parental responsibility, including guardians and carers

Some parents choose to do this by educating their children at home. Education is considered efficient and suitable if it enables a child to achieve their full potential and prepares them for adult life in their community and beyond. 'Full time' is not relevant to home education where there is often almost continuous one-to-one contact.

4.0 Deciding to home educate

Most parents think long and hard about taking the step to educate at home and it is worth considering the issues below before a final decision is made:

- educating a child outside the school system will require a major commitment of parents' time;
- it may be difficult for one person to provide a broad education, or the range of subjects a child wishes to learn about;
- attending school is often about more than just schoolwork. Many of the lessons learned are about how to get on with other people and developing other skills;
- there is no financial assistance for home educators so, some expense will be incurred for families, including any exam entries. However, as an "information rich society", there is a vast amount of educational information available for free. Regular use of the library means that parents do not have to buy lots of books, and information can be accessed by using the internet at home and at the library;
- disagreements with a school may be addressed and solved and parents are therefore encouraged to contact the Headteacher or the Local Authority first as it is not advisable to take a child out of school simply because there has been an issue with a school relating to bullying, attendance, or behaviour ;
- if a home educated child wishes to return to school at some point, progress to post-16 education/training or take public exams, parents will need to think about how to make this an easy step for their child.
- The Local Authority employs a Monitoring Officer for Elective Home Education who is available to provide advice to parents considering home education if requested and is happy to talk through the home education process.

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

- teach the National Curriculum;
- provide a broad and balanced education;
- have a timetable;
- have premises equipped to any particular standard;
- set hours during which education will take place;
- have any specific qualifications;
- make detailed plans in advance;
- observe school hours, days or terms;
- give formal lessons;
- mark work done by their child;

- formally assess progress or set development objectives;
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation;
- match school-based, age-specific academic standards.

Parents should be aware however, that certain characteristics of education at home are expected² :

- that parents or other significant carers are consistently involved;
- the child's needs, attitudes and aspirations are recognised;
- there are opportunities for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences;
- there are opportunities for appropriate interaction with other children and adults;
- there is access to resources and materials – such as paper and pens, books and libraries, arts and crafts materials, physical activity, and ICT.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities

Parental rights and responsibilities

Parents have a duty to secure an appropriate education for their children. Parents may decide to home educate their child from an early age and need not enrol them at any school. They may also elect to home educate at any other stage up to the end of compulsory school age³. Parents are required to provide an efficient education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of their child.

Parents are not required to register or seek approval from the Local Authority to educate their children at home. However where a child has been registered at a school, parents are required to notify the school in writing when withdrawing a child for EHE. This is to confirm that provision is being made for the child's education otherwise than at school and to request removal from the school's roll.

Parents who choose to educate their children at home must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility, including bearing the cost of any public examinations. Further education colleges do have access to funding for home educated children to attend college between the ages of 14 and 16. Parents will need to contact the Isle of Wight College to discuss the opportunities available.

Parents have the right to apply for a school place for their children at any time. However, there is no automatic right to return to a school previously attended by a child. Places offered will be dependent on where there are vacancies and normal application and appeal procedures apply. For more information contact the Schools Admissions Team (see Appendix A for contact details).

² DFE : EHE Guidelines for Local Authorities 3.13-3.15):

³ Recent legislation means that since 2013, all young people in England are required to stay in some form of education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. This will increase to age 18 by 2015.

It would be very helpful if parents would contact the Monitoring Officer for EHE to provide any updates such as a change of name/address or if a home educated child starts at/returns to mainstream school.

The Local Authority

The Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that all the children within its area or who are looked after by the authority are receiving a suitable education. It also has a duty to promote the welfare and well being⁴ of children for whom it has responsibility, including children who are home educated. The importance of building positive relationships to support parents in their aim of providing their children with an effective education is recognised.

Local authorities do not receive funding to support home educating families but the Isle of Wight Local Authority will be as supportive as possible where there are no resource implication. The Local Authority employs a full-time Monitoring Officer for Elective Home Educated children to support families and to carry out its monitoring responsibilities in relation to home education. In its dealings with all parents it seeks to be as respectful, timely and non-intrusive as possible.

Once informed that a child is home educated, the Isle of Wight Local Authority will make informal enquiries to establish that an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child is being provided.

The following procedure will be implemented:

- when notified by the child's previous school or the School Admissions Team, this booklet will be sent to parents, including a Contact Information form to be returned to us (Appendix B);
- an initial visit will be offered within 3 months and then at least annually after that;
- where a parent prefers to provide a report of the home education of their child, this will be requested within 3 months of starting home education and then at least annually after that (see Appendix E : Guidelines for presenting evidence of home education);
- if parents do not return the Contact Information form after two letters home, a third letter will be sent notifying parents that a Child Missing Education form will be completed and sent to the Education Welfare Service who will make further enquiries as to whether the child is receiving a suitable education;
- the Monitoring Officer for EHE will provide advice by telephone or e-mail as availability allows;
- the Local Authority is keen to highlight the rich and varied nature of home education on the Isle of Wight and will ask parents to let us know the outcomes and progression routes for home educated children at the end of each academic year.

⁴ Section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002) Section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002)

While there is no statutory duty to monitor the quality of home education on a routine basis, the Local Authority will make contact with all EHE families and offer to visit within 3 months of a child starting to be home educated and then at least annually after that. The Monitoring Officer for EHE will be seeking evidence that satisfies the Local Authority that the child/children are receiving suitable educational provision. The Local Authority acknowledges that learning takes place in a wide variety of environments and formats and that evidence can be provided in a variety of forms.

In the majority of cases, home education is positive and rewarding for both children and parents. However, occasionally concerns regarding the education of a home educated child emerge and these can come from a variety of agencies, including the general public. Accepting a visit from the Monitoring Officer for EHE and/or other Local Authority officers can provide an opportunity for parents to show that their child is receiving an appropriate education and is safe and well.

In line with EHE Guidelines, if it appears that a suitable education may not be being provided, the Local Authority will endeavour to gather relevant information that will assist it to reach an informed judgement. This will include seeking from parents further information that explains how they are providing a suitable education. If the Local Authority is still unable to satisfy itself that a child is receiving a suitable education, then a formal letter outlining concerns will be sent to the parents who will have the opportunity to address any specific concerns. Whilst parents are under no duty to respond, we hope that parents will take the opportunity to explain how they are meeting their child's entitlement to education. If, however, concerns remain unresolved and the Local Authority continues to have concerns that a suitable education is not being provided, this could lead to the Local Authority seeking to issue a School Attendance Order, enforceable by law.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has the statutory responsibility for ensuring that all agencies within the Isle of Wight promote the safeguarding of children in **ALL** settings.

The Local Authority also has a specific responsibility to identify children missing education (Section 436A of the Education Act 1996). It is for this reason that, as well as those children who are withdrawn from school to be home educated, it is very helpful for parents to also inform the Local Authority of children who are being home educated who have never been registered at a school, as we will not then deem them as 'missing education'.

The LSCB expects all agencies working with parents who elect to home educate their children, to promote the children's wellbeing, support children being adequately safeguarded in their educational setting and, where appropriate, to notify other agencies of any concerns.

6.0 Frequently Asked Questions

- **What should I do if I am thinking about educating my child at home?**

No educational choice should be taken lightly and before deciding to electively home educate, you should consider the time, resources and energy you will need to put into this very important part of your child's life. As well as the demands that providing for subjects that you may not be as interested in as your child, parents who home educate, take on the full financial responsibility. It is advisable to contact the Local Authority's Monitoring Officer for Elective Home Education who will be able to provide advice and signpost you to other organisations that might be able to help as well as explain the procedure for becoming a home educator.

If your child currently attends a school, you will need to inform the school, in writing, that you intend to home educate and for him/her to be de-registered. It would be helpful if you also informed the Monitoring Officer for EHE too, although you do not have to do this.

If your child has never been registered at a school, you do not have to inform the Local Authority of your decision to home educate. Although it is helpful if you do, as the Local Authority has a duty to identify children 'missing from education' and if we know that your child is being home educated, then we will not deem them 'missing'.

- **What if my child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs?**

You are able to home educate a child with a statement of special educational needs. If your child is registered at a special school, however, you will need the consent of the Local Authority before your child can be de-registered from the school.

You will be expected to make sure that the education you provide meets their needs. For as long as the statement is in place, the Local Authority will continue to hold an annual review to consider whether the statement needs to remain in place. You will still have the right of appeal to the SEN Tribunal.

From September 2014, statements will be replaced by Education, Health and Care plans that will have the same legal status as statements.

- **Will I receive funding for home education?**

The Local Authority does not receive money to fund parents/carers who home educate. Parents who choose to home educate will have to assume the full responsibility of any costs, including for any examination entries. There is a vast amount of educational information available for free: regular use of the library means that parents do not have to buy lots of books; information can be accessed by using the internet at home and at the library; colleges are now able to access funding for young people aged 14 to 16 to attend courses.

- **What will happen now that my child is being home educated?**
Once your child is registered as home educated, you will be contacted by the Monitoring Officer for EHE who will provide information and offer you a visit to offer guidance on education, teaching and learning. The visit could be at your home or one of the Council's offices or somewhere else if you prefer,
- **What do I do if I want to return my child to school?**
Parents have the right to apply for a school place for their children at any time. However, there is no automatic right to return to a school previously attended by a child. Places offered will be dependent on where there are vacancies and normal application and appeal procedures apply. For more information contact the Schools Admissions Team (see Appendix A for contact details).
- **What further help is available after compulsory school age?**
The Government is increasing the participation age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training. From September 2013, this means that all young people born on or after 1st September 1996 are required to continue until the end of the academic year 2013/14, with those born on or after 1st September 1997, continuing until the end of the 2014/15 academic year.

This raising of the participation age means young people must choose one of the following options :

- full time education, such as school, college or home education;
- an apprenticeship;
- part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering full time (defined as 20 hours or more per week).

Further information and support are provided by the Choices Team which supports young people aged up to 19 (25 for those with a learning difficulty and/or disability) to access education, employment and training opportunities. The Choices Team can be accessed through County Hall or their website (see Appendix A).

Appendix A – Useful contacts and information

Local Authority:

- Isle of Wight Council: www.iwight.com/
- Monitoring Officer for Elective Home Education: Louise Tatton
Tel: 01983 821000 or 07581571832 louise.tatton@iow.gov.uk
- Commissioner for Alternative Provision and Virtual Head Teacher: Jackie Boxx
Tel: 01983 821000 jackie.boxx@iow.gov.uk
- Special Educational Needs Team: Tel: 01983 821000
www.iwight.com/Council/OtherServices/Special-Education-Needs-SEN/About
- School Admissions Team: Tel: 01983 821000
www.iwight.com/Residents/Schools-and-Learning/School-Admissions
- Choices Team: County Hall Tel: 01983 823888 www.iwight.com/Choices
- Family Information Zone (FIZ): 11 Orchard Street, Newport PO30 1JZ
Tel: 01983 821999 WightCHYPS website: www.iwight.com/

Other organisations:

- Parent Partnership (provides advice and guidance for parents and carers whose children have special educational needs): 11 Orchard Street, Newport PO30 1JZ
Tel: 01983 825548 www.iwpp.co.uk/
- Department for Education:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
- Learndirect: www.learndirect.com/
- National Association of Gifted Children: www.nagc.org/
- National Extension College: www.nec.ac.uk/
- BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/learning
- Disclosure and Barring Service:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about
- Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus): www.familylives.org.uk/

Home education:

- The Isle of Wight Learning Zone (an Island-based support group for home educating families): www.iwlearningzone.co.uk/
- Open Choice Learning (an educational resource centre for home educating families, based in Shanklin): ocl@ceyp.org
- Education Otherwise: www.educationotherwise.net
- Home Education Advisory Service: www.heas.org.uk
- Ed Yourself: www.edyourself.org
- Home education in the UK – SEN: www.he-special.org.uk/

There are many organisations, groups and websites which provide information and support for home educating families which can be easily accessed through a search on the internet or through the links pages of some of the above groups. Whilst these organisations, groups and websites may provide helpful advice, guidance and support relevant to home education, their inclusion in this document does not imply an endorsement of them by the Isle of Wight Local Authority. The views expressed within external websites are those of the site's owners and, unless specifically stated, are not those of the Local Authority.

Appendix B

Elective Home Education Contact Information

Child:

First name Surname Date of birth

Ethnicity Previous School

Does your child have a Statement of Special Educational Needs? Yes/No

Details:

Parents/Guardians:

First name Surname Relationship to child

First name Surname Relationship to child

Address

Telephone number Home: Mobile

Email address

GP Name Address

I confirm that I am educating my child at home. In order to tell the Local Authority about the education that I am providing for my child I should like (please tick your preferred choice):

- to write a report
- to meet the LA's representative for discussion with or without the child present

Is there another person with parental responsibility (if so, please give details)?

Continued overleaf:

It would be helpful if you would provide in writing an outline of how you plan to home educate your child. Please write your report in the space below (continue on a separate piece of paper if required).

This could include:

- the reason why you have chosen to educate your child at home e.g. philosophical, religious, bullying, attendance, dissatisfaction with school, medical or other reason;
- any resources and activities you have considered e.g. people with particular skills/interests, places, libraries, computer/internet, books, museums;
- your ideas about developing social skills, such as activities your child may attend which take into account their individual needs e.g. scouts, sporting activities, local choir, local EHE groups, friendship groups;
- any plans for entering your child for qualifications.

We fully understand that if you are new to home education you may require more time to consider and establish suitable arrangements and this can be discussed further at the initial EHE visit or report (within 3 months of home education starting).

Thank you for completing this form. We hope you find your home education experience both enjoyable and rewarding.

Please return this form to Louise Tatton
Monitoring Officer for EHE
Thompson House, Sandy Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 3NA
Tel: 01983 821000 / 07581571832 E-mail: louise.tatton@iow.gov.uk

Once we have your reply we will contact you again.

Appendix C – E-safety advice to parents

(from <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/internetsafety/>)

- Help your children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends they do not know offline;
- Explain to your children what information about them is personal: i.e. email address, mobile number, school name, sports club, arrangements for meeting up with friends and any pictures or videos of themselves, their family or friends. Small pieces of information can easily be pieced together to form a comprehensive insight in to their lives and daily activities;
- Make your children aware that they need to think carefully about the information and pictures they post on their profiles. Inform them that once published online, anyone can change or share these images of them;
- It can be easy to forget that the internet is not a private space, and as result sometimes young people engage in risky behaviour online. Advise your children not to post any pictures, videos or information on their profiles, or in chat rooms, that they would not want a parent or carer to see;
- If your child receives spam or junk email and texts, remind them never to believe their contents, reply to them or use them;
- It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They won't know what they contain – it could be a virus, or worse, an inappropriate image or film;
- Help your child to understand that some people lie online and that therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust;
- Always keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

For more information and answers to frequently asked questions visit <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> On this website you will find advice for parents and children of different ages on a wide range of issues relating to e-safety.

Appendix D – Privacy Notice (Data Protection Act 1998)

The EHE Service based at Thompson House, is a department of the Isle of Wight Council and, as such, the Isle of Wight Council is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. We collect information from you, and may receive information about you from your previous school and other agencies. We hold this personal data and use it to:

- support our duties in line with the DfE Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities (2007) and any new government guidance we are obliged to follow.

This information includes your contact details, and may include national curriculum assessment results, attendance information ^A, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical and safeguarding information.

We will not give information about you to anyone outside Childrens Services without your consent unless the law and our rules permit it. We are required by law to pass some of your information to the Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education.

If you want to see a copy of the information we hold and share about you then please contact Louise Tatton, Monitoring Officer for EHE, at Thompson House. Alternatively, please contact the Corporate Information Unit, Legal Services, County Hall, High Street, Newport, IW PO30 1UD.

If you require more information about how the LA and/or the Department for Education store and use this data please go to the following website:
http://eduwight.iow.gov.uk/the_lea/communication/fairproc.asp

In addition for young people over 13

Once you are approaching 16 or over we pass on certain information to the Isle of Wight Council's Choices Team which supports young people aged up to 19 (25 for those with a learning difficulty and/or disability) to access education, employment and training opportunities. We provide names and addresses for both you and your parents, and any further information relevant to the Choices Team's role.

However, you (if you are over 16) or your parents can ask that no information beyond name and address be passed to the Choices Team. Please inform Louise Tatton if you wish to opt out of this arrangement. For more information about the Choices Team, please contact the Local Authority as shown above.

^A Attendance information is not collected for pupils under 5 at Early Years Settings or Maintained Schools

Appendix E – Guidelines on presenting evidence of home education

The Local Authority seeks to understand that the education being provided is suitable for the age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that a home educated child may have. When visiting a family or looking at reports provided, evidence is looked at in this light.

If parents choose to provide a report, this could include:

- the reason why you have chosen to educate your child at home e.g. philosophical, religious, bullying, attendance, dissatisfaction with school, medical or other reason;
- your philosophy of/approach to education;
- any resources and activities you have used e.g. people with particular skills/interests, places, libraries, computer/internet, books, museums;
- activities which help to develop social skills, such as activities your child may attend which take into account their individual needs e.g. scouts, sporting activities, local choir, local EHE groups, friendship groups;
- plans for/outcomes of entering your child for qualifications.

Possible ways to provide evidence in your report include:

- original work (or photocopies of this);
- photographs;
- art work;
- scrapbooks;
- musical and sporting achievements (certificates);
- diary of events and activities;
- recordings;
- on-line blogs.

There are as many ways of demonstrating examples of education provision as there are home educators. The Local Authority will always be happy to listen, add to the above list as new ideas are suggested and share good practice