

Southampton City Council

Inclusion Services

Advice for parents considering educating their
child at home 2024/25



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PURPOSE

The intention of this guidance is to help you understand your responsibilities and what may be involved if you are thinking of home educating your child. We hope that it will help you to consider all the implications, explain the law as it applies to you and the local authority and give you advice to assist you in reaching an informed decision that is right for you and your child.

We would recommend that before reaching a final decision you:

- Consider the information contained in this document.
- Consider the views of your child.
- Carry out further research via some of the independent websites listed at the end of this document and by reading the [Department for Education guidance documents](#).
- Contact local home education groups to meet other home educating parents and discuss their experiences.
- Consider what is in the best interests of your child.
- Speak with your child's school if they are currently on roll.
- Contact the council Inclusion Services Team ([Useful sources of information and support](#)) if you feel you need further advice, support, or require mediation with your child's school.
- Carry out further research via the independent websites listed under [Useful sources of information and support](#)
- Look at the sections on the [Southampton City Council website](#) page for elective home education and read this document.

SCOPE

This document has been produced by the local authority for families with children of compulsory school age living within the Southampton City Council boundary.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

Parents' rights and responsibilities

It is parents, not the state, who are responsible for ensuring their child is properly educated.

The parents' legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act as follows:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- 1. to his/her age, ability and aptitude.*
- 2. to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

Home education is a form of "education otherwise."

Parents choose to educate their children at home for a variety of reasons, often because they feel it offers their child an advantage to an education in school. It can be very rewarding but is a decision not to be taken lightly. It means that parents take responsibility for the delivery of their child's education and facilitating their learning so that they can achieve their full potential. It also includes assuming financial responsibility.

Parents who choose to home educate are often highly motivated and successful home educators report many benefits for their children, such as:

- Closer family ties.
- Improved social skills.
- More enjoyment of learning in a calmer environment.
- Improved self-esteem and confidence.
- Special educational needs being met.
- The freedom to deliver a more personalised, individual education which moves at the pace of their child.
- The freedom to focus on learning outside of the national curriculum.
- The ability to learn at an individual pace and dive more deeply into topics of greater interest.
- More opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in the real world.

There are many different ways to home educate your child such as autonomous learning, distance learning, classical learning, Montessori. You should research and choose the educational method that is best for your child. It might be influenced by your philosophical, spiritual or religious outlook, or by your child's specific needs. One approach is not necessarily any more efficient or effective than another.

You might decide to teach your child yourself or find a group with other home educators or consider using a tutor as part of a wider educational offer.

Irrespective of who actually teaches your child, you will retain responsibility and whilst what is suitable for one child may not be for another, all children need to be involved in a learning process.

The DfE also state in their departmental guidance for parents 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, 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”

If your child is currently attending school, and you want to home educate, you need to send a letter to the Headteacher advising them of your decision and stating that your child's name should be removed from the school roll. If you simply stop sending your child to school without putting this

in writing to the school, they are unable to remove your child from roll and you could be prosecuted for non-attendance

Whilst the 2019 DfE EHE [guidance for parents](#) document states that you do not need to put your decision in writing, the legislation stating that you must do this remains in force and the August 2020 DfE School Attendance Guidance also confirms the need for parents to do this.

We would urge you to talk to your child's Headteacher before taking this step however. You can also contact Southampton City Council on 023 8083 4779 or e-mail home.education@southampton.gov.uk if you feel you need further advice, support or require mediation with your child's school.

After receiving your deregistration letter, the school must then inform the local authority before deleting your child's name from the school roll.

The only exceptions to this are if your child attends a special school, under arrangements made by the local authority, or is subject to a School Attendance Order or an Education Supervision Order.

Responsibilities of the local authority (LA)

Southampton City Council will seek to support parents who opt to electively home educate, having regard to relevant sections of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [European Convention on Human Rights](#). The LA also holds certain responsibilities which are explained below. The LA authority has no formal powers, or duty, to monitor home education. The list below, however, (taken from the 2019 DfE elective home education guidance documents) explains the situation more fully.

- LAs have a statutory duty (s.436A of the Education Act 1996) to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education.
- In order to fulfil this section 436A duty, LAs are entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided.
- LAs will therefore make enquiries if it becomes aware that you are educating a child at home or may be doing so.
- *"Some local authorities will ask to see the child at home or in another location, as well as seeing examples of work done. As parents, you are under no legal obligation from education law to agree to such a meeting (but see section below on safeguarding) or to produce specific evidence but you should consider carefully the reasons for not doing so, what is in the best interests of your child, and what is the most sensible approach. If you do not do enough to satisfy the local authority about the education being provided at home it may have no option but to conclude that the education does not meet the [Section 7](#) requirement."*
- If the LA feels that it has not had sufficient information about the home education being provided, or has had no information, and it appears to the authority that your child is not receiving a suitable education at home, it must serve a Notice requiring you as parents to satisfy the LA that your child is receiving a full-time and efficient education at home suitable to their needs. You will have at least 15 days to respond which will allow you time to gather suitable

[evidence](#) that you may wish to supply. It would be sensible for parents to respond to such a notice.

- The LA must consider the response, if any, you make to the notice, and decide whether your child is receiving an education which meets your responsibilities under s.7, taking account of any evidence you have provided and any other information it has about the education your child is receiving.
- If parents make no response at all, then the LA is entitled to conclude that the child is not receiving a suitable education and will act accordingly.
- Once the LA is satisfied that your child is receiving a suitable education, it is likely to want to update periodically the information it has on your child and its policy will normally set out the arrangements which it makes for this, often being an annual review (see page 18).
- If you as parents fail to satisfy the LA that your child is receiving a suitable education, and the local authority considers that it is expedient that he or she should attend school, then the local authority has a legal obligation to serve on you as parents a School Attendance Order (SAO). This will name a specific school and require you to register your child at that school within a set timeframe.
- If a School Attendance Order is issued by the local authority it must be complied with. Failure to do so is a criminal offence and the LA will consult with Legal Services regarding prosecution. It would then be for a magistrates' court to consider the case.

The Southampton City Council EHE Policy, which outlines our local process, can be found on our [website](#).

HELPFUL POINTS FOR PARENTS TO CONSIDER ABOUT EHE

Deciding to educate your child at home instead of sending him or her to school is a step which should not be taken lightly because it will mean a major commitment of your time, energy and money. Think hard before making a final decision.

- ✓ If you are concerned about COVID arrangements in your child's school, please talk to the school and share your concerns.
- ✓ Your child should be positive about the suggestion of home education. If they are disengaged from education they may not engage with your plans.
- ✓ If you are considering home education because the school system is not currently working well for your child, or because you have other family problems which make it difficult to ensure school attendance for your child, you should consider what other steps you could take to secure a more satisfactory education and talk to your child's school.
- ✓ If you are considering home education for your child due to a disagreement or problems with your child's school or a member of staff, talk to the Headteacher, if appropriate, before you make your decision.
- ✓ You should consider the nature of the education you intend to provide for your child before you begin to educate him or her at home.

- ✓ Think about the curriculum you will provide and whether it will allow your child to reach his or her potential, both now and in the future.
- ✓ The education you provide must enable your child to make progress so consider how you could evidence this.
- ✓ Consider how your child will sit public examinations if they wish to.
- ✓ You should have enough time to devote to your child's education on a regular basis, as well as developing them as independent learners'. The DfE believe that education which is not occupying a significant proportion of a child's life will probably not meet the s7 requirements of the Education Act 1996.
- ✓ Will you be able to maintain your current work pattern? If you are employed, you could incur a loss of income.
- ✓ You should never feel pressurised by a school to withdraw your child and home educate them. If you have been made to feel pressurised please contact the local authority on home.education@southampton.gov.uk.
- ✓ It is unwise to consider temporary home education as a means of getting your child into a school other than the one he or she is currently registered at.
- ✓ Depending upon your approach, you should have the ability to teach your child effectively, or, to facilitate and support their learning journey.
- ✓ You should be able to ensure that your child is educated to the required level if they wish to take GCSE examinations.
- ✓ You should be prepared to source any materials you require, if you do not already have access to them.
- ✓ You should consider how you will provide social experiences, access to cultural and aesthetic experiences and physical exercise to help your child develop.
- ✓ Consider what support you have from others and how it can be accessed.
- ✓ Do you have a safe home environment that is suitable for learning?
- ✓ Joint activities, interaction with others and developing communication skills are also an important part of child development so you should consider how the individual needs of your child can be met. Depending on the interests of your child some examples of how social interaction with peers could be achieved are:
 - Joining activities\sessions with other home educating families.
 - Joining youth organisations such as the Scouts or Girl Guides.
 - Participation in clubs or activities relating to art, music, dance, drama or sports,
 - The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
 - Getting involved in community activities such as becoming a Junior Neighbourhood Warden.
 - Other suggestions can be found on the [council website](#).
 - [Visit Southampton](#) has a comprehensive list of events and activities. The [What's On](#) free listing has up to date information on events in the city and surrounding areas.

Dissatisfaction with your child's current school is not an appropriate reason in itself for considering elective home education. Schools do vary and we may be able to find an alternative school that you feel is better suited to your child's needs, however, school places can be scarce in some areas of the city.

We would recommend that you always try to resolve any differences with your child's current school before considering applying to a new one. If you have done this and remain dissatisfied with your child's current school and want to pursue a school move, please submit an in-year application on the council [website](#).

HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO START THE LEARNING PROCESS?

Research and planning are important because the DfE acknowledge that parents need a reasonable timescale to demonstrate that all aspects of your provision is in place, but also state that this does not mean that there can be a significant break between the end of schooling and the provision of good education at home.

There is no one style, or approach, that can be recommended and whilst your child may need a period of adjustment if they were previously on roll at a school, you should plan to ensure a continuity of education. Research the different approaches to learning. Examples are:

- Education that is provided in a formal and structured manner in the home.
- Child-led learning, where parents can also explore and learn topics with their child, working with them on their journey like a peer.
- Informal learning that is responsive to the existing or developing interests of the child.
- Learning as part of a small group with other home educators.
- Formal lessons delivered by a tutor who is funded by a group of home educators.
- The use of private tutors for 1:1 tuition.
- Regular participation in activities organised by home education groups.
- Studies of non-traditional areas of interest.
- Flexi-schooling.
- The use of on-line resources.

It is not necessary to decide upon one approach and stick with it, learning can be provided by a mixture of the above approaches, depending on your child's age and ability.

For parents who opt for a structured approach there are text books and resources that will give you ideas about how to make learning interesting and meaningful. Many families use publications from publishers such as Letts, Nelson-Thornes, Collins Schofield and Sims or CGP. Think how you can help your child grasp the ideas in the book, make it seem a game and don't be surprised if your child needs to try the same idea in a variety of ways. There are also a lot of internet-based learning programmes and resources. Parents who take this approach will find planning useful.

Do not be afraid to let your child use toys to work out maths skills, or to inspire writing. Make full use of everyday equipment that you already have in the home and create learning opportunities from routine tasks.

Use resources within family, friends, neighbours, home educators and the wider community to contribute towards your child's learning.

[APPENDIX 1](#) lists resources you may find helpful, both free and subscription.

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN?

Children learn in many ways, at different times, different speeds and from different people. Education does not always need to follow a timetable or consist of a set plan of lessons. This freedom can be particularly useful to children with SEN and those who have become demotivated or anxious in their learning.

Some approaches will suit your child better than others and it will enhance their interest to use a variety of methods. For example, teaching on a subject-by-subject basis may be the most appropriate, especially where examination courses are being followed. A topic method, integrating the knowledge and skills of several subjects can offer another approach. Other families work almost entirely around the educational interests of their child.

The home education charity Education Otherwise produced a helpful document to support families who found themselves having to home-school their children due to school closures during the pandemic. This is different to elective home education, where parents have elected to take on responsibility for their child's education provision, but their document covers many areas of concern for parents. It can be found in the downloads section on our website.

WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT?

As a parent, you must ensure that your child receives a full-time education from the age of 5, but you are not required to follow the [national curriculum](#).

Many parents reach a decision to home educate their child and then experience an initial sense of panic in terms of what to do next. To help your child reach their full potential we would recommend that you research and plan your curriculum before reaching a decision. A good curriculum will:

- Ensure that your child gains in confidence, develops skills and knowledge and is supported to achieve their potential.
- Be broad enough to introduce your child to the skills and knowledge of a range of subjects and types of subjects, as well as attitudes and beliefs, ensuring an opening rather than a closing of the mind.
- Be sufficiently challenging so that there is [evidence](#) of progress, albeit within the child's natural developmental stages.
- Provide balance so that there is opportunity for your child to know about and be able to participate in, a range of subjects, experiences, creative leisure opportunities and have access to the wider community.
- Be relevant to your child's needs, providing real understanding and relevant life skills, not just coverage of a subject.

- Be differentiated to match your child’s abilities and aptitudes.

One of the advantages of home education is that you can move your child along their curriculum at a pace to individually suit them. They can forge ahead on subjects where they have strengths and spend more time on areas that present difficulties, or, where they are particularly motivated and would like to learn in greater depth.

Some families follow their own “home-made” curriculum using the internet and a compendium of published resources, but experience has shown that as the children get older they may need to move to more formal qualifications and learning depending upon their future plans or intentions for further education or employment. The planning may have to become more structured, although this should not lessen the learning experience and the involvement of you as a parent.

We would suggest that a broad and balanced curriculum would probably include much of the following:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Problem solving
- Religious Education
- Modern foreign languages
- Information Technology
- Topic based learning which incorporates History, Geography, Art and Music.
- Personal Social and Health Education
- Outdoor and environmental education
- Citizenship, including careers education
- Home economics and living skills

We also believe that the following features promote effective learning and achievement:

- Regular planning of a variety of activities and tasks, appropriate to the age, ability and aptitudes of the child.
- Keeping records of what work is planned and has been covered, of educational visits or activities undertaken.
- Listening, helping, asking questions and encouraging progress, as well as setting work.
- Regular marking, correcting mistakes, giving feedback on how work can be improved, celebrating achievements and keeping a record of progress.
- A range of resources and equipment e.g. books, materials, paints, educational games and puzzles, TV, computer. Also, things normally available in the home e.g. kitchen utensils for cooking, tools for working with wood, gardening, etc.
- A safe and appropriate environment in which to work.
- Regular use of local facilities and amenities such as libraries, museums, galleries, including sports facilities and parks to provide opportunities for regular physical exercise.
- Opportunities for the child to mix socially with other children of similar age.

EXAMINATIONS AND EXAMINING BOARDS

Exams

GCSEs are important. They can have a dramatic impact on a child's future opportunities, determining what subjects and qualifications they can study next. Some home educated children study for examinations independently, other use a private tutor or access a correspondence course. They are entered as "private candidates".

Parents of home educated children must bear the cost of public examinations and if you want your child to take exams your plan must include:

- The year that your child will sit exams, contacting the exam board 2 years in advance.
- Deadlines for applying as a private candidate.
- Where they will sit the exams. You will need to identify an accredited exam centre and liaise with them directly.
- Obtaining the correct syllabus to follow from the exam board.
- Whether coursework, that will need marking by someone the exam board has approved, is part of the syllabus.

Further information on exams can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/FaregosHEExamCentre/>
<https://edyourself.org/exams/>
<https://home-ed.info/gcse>
<https://www.educationotherwise.org/resources/by-category/>
www.ool.co.uk

If your child has SEND you may wish to consider alternatives to GCSEs. These include functional skills for English and maths. Technical awards are practical qualifications. Each exam board can advise on what alternatives to GCSE are available.

The only other option open to electively home educated families to enrol your child into a mainstream school in sufficient time for the curriculum content to be covered for exam entries to be submitted.

COVID impact

The cancelling of exams in Summer 2020 highlighted the drawback of independent study for young people who may have been perfectly capable of achieving a qualification, but the lack of an ability to provide evidence of assessment from a qualified teacher meant that grades could not be awarded by examination boards. Some parents reported that as a result their children lost college and job opportunities.

Faregos is a not for profit group set up and run by home educators with the aim of supporting other home educating families. They are a registered exam centre based in Hampshire and also

offer low cost group tuition. As qualified teachers, they were therefore able to support many families and provide grades for their children. Their contact details are below.

Whilst this was hopefully a unique situation, we would urge parents to be alert to and consider this issue when planning for their child to sit public examinations whilst COVID is still a factor in the UK.

The House of Commons Education Committee report published 26 July 2021, ***Strengthening Home Education***, can be found [here](#) and it gives further background information on this important issue.

Exam centres

You may approach local schools to ask if they are willing to enter your child as a **private candidate**, otherwise, local exam centres are:

Wessex Tutors 44 Shirley Road, SO15 3EU 023 8033 4719

Faregos Fareham exams@faregos.org
<https://www.facebook.com/FaregosHEExamCentre/>

Examining Boards

The main examining boards in the UK are listed below:

OCR	WJEC
AQA	City and Guilds
Pearson Edexcel	

They will be able to provide advice on how to obtain syllabuses for external exams that can be taken which do not require coursework and how to enter for examinations as a private candidate.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND)

Parent's right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan.

No parent, however, should feel forced into EHE because of a lack of support in the school system so if you are concerned about SEND provision, please talk to the SENCo at your child's school. Parents of any child subject to the statutory provisions of an Education, Health and Care Plan who are considering whether to make their own arrangements should discuss this with the named SEN Case Officer to ensure that they are fully aware of the alternatives and their SEN statutory rights of appeal.

Parents considering to home educate may wish to familiarise themselves with 10.3 -10.38 of the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act also applies to parents of children with special educational needs. An Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) is a legal document. It names the type of provision for your child and names that provision.

You can still elect to de-register your child from school to home educate, but it would be advisable to discuss your intention with council SEND Team.

If your child attends a special school, you should contact your Southampton City Council SEND Officer to discuss fully the implications of this decision before you take any action. You will need LA consent in these circumstances, which should not be unreasonably withheld.

It remains the LA's duty to ensure that the educational provision specified in the EHCP is made available to your child and to maintain the plan and review it annually, taking steps should it consider that the home education is unsuitable.

Please also read the full special educational needs section of the DfE [2019 guidance](#) document for parents for more detailed information.

Requesting an EHCP whilst Electively Home Educating

Parents are entitled to submit a request for an EHCP whilst you are electively home educating. The [application forms](#) for this request can be found on the council website.

This website offers a vast amount of information for parents in relation to the EHCP process, as well as information in relation to the right of appeal.

The LA strongly advises that support is requested from Elective Home Education Visitors in the completion of the request.

Each request is considered at an SEN panel, where evidence from agencies and professionals is also required. Evidence from agencies such as CAMHS, Social Care, Elective Home Education Visitors and/or previous schools is considered, along with evidence from yourself in relation to how special educational needs are being met. There is also an expectation that you are able to evidence the progress and academic ability of your child. Advocacy services, such as SENDIASS listed below, can support with this process, as well as Inclusion Services

SENDIASS

[SENDIASS](#) (the Southampton Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service) is a free service which aims to empower children and young people with special educational needs/disabilities and their parents/carers to make informed decisions about education, health and social care.

Should you need independent support or advice their helpline number is 0300 303 2677.

LOCAL HOME EDUCATION GROUPS

Many members of the Southampton home education community regularly meet in groups. This is a great way for your child to meet other home educated children and for you as a parent to access other experienced home educators for advice and support. Another avenue is on-line groups. We would recommend that you try the different groups and find one that works for you. Groups are often listed on line under **Facebook Groups** and on the **Education Otherwise** website, but local groups are listed below.

Southampton Home Ed

Southampton Home Ed are home educators from Southampton and the surrounding area who, during term time, meet up regularly for sports/play/adult-chat and tuition across a range of subjects. Parents can make contact to find out more at:

Southampton Home Ed' - Facebook

Fareham and Gosport Home Education Group (Faregos)

[Faregos](#) home education group covers Fareham, Gosport and South Hampshire. They have an exam centre and are principally an exam tuition group, running classes for KS3 and slightly younger across a range of subjects. Details of how to find out more can be found at:

<https://faregos.org/>

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Many home educating families pursue regular outdoor activities and enrichment opportunities, such as visits to museums, exhibitions etc. They can improve engagement in learning by making learning concepts real and relevant because they are in a realistic context. They can also nurture creativity and imagination, regardless of a child's age or ability and inspire creative writing. Involving your child in the planning of such activities can also be a learning opportunity.

Many attractions offer discounted entry or arrange events for home educators and these can be found by researching on the internet.

Event information can also be found on the elective home education page of the Southampton City Council [website](#).

Other home educators are usually great sources of advice on local events or places to visit. Southampton Home Ed group often advertise events as do other home education groups on social media.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS ALREADY ON ROLL AT A SCHOOL

Once your decision to home educate has been made you must inform the Head Teacher in writing that you have decided to de-register your child and educate him or her at home. If you simply remove your child from school without informing them in writing (verbally is not sufficient) you could be prosecuted for non-attendance, or children missing education investigations may be instigated.

Schools are required to inform the local authority before removal from roll and provide us with a copy of your letter. The local authority may then contact you.

Please note that:

- You will need local authority consent to remove your child's name from the school roll if he or she attends a special school under arrangements made by the local authority.
- If your child is subject to a School Attendance Order the LA would have to agree to withdraw this order.
- If your child is the subject of an Education Supervision Order which names a particular school, your child cannot be withdrawn from the school without the Order being discharged or varied and the final decision rests with the supervising officer.

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURES

Process flow charts are in our EHE Policy which can be found on the Southampton City Council, [website](#).

Once schools receive a signed parental letter indicating that they intend to take personal responsibility for their child's education, a copy will be passed to the Inclusion Services Team at the local authority because schools are required by law to notify the LA before deleting a pupil's name from the register.

We expect schools to invite parents to discuss any underlying issues that could possibly be resolved and to encourage parents to complete an *Overview of Home Education* form if one has not already been completed. Elective Home Education Visitors are also available to provide mediation if required, 023 8083 4779 or e-mail

home.education@southampton.gov.uk

Overview of home education forms are important because they help us to prioritise EHE Visitor resource and determine whether suitable full-time education is in place or planned.

The Inclusion Services Team will write to parents to confirm that their child has been recorded as electively home educated on the LA education database and offer a voluntary visit from an Elective Home Education Visitor. This is an opportunity for home educating parents to share their intentions, discuss resources and any other educational matters with the EHE Visitor. This conversation will generate a report which will be shared with parents.

In some cases we may telephone parents to discuss the reasons for their decision to home educate to ensure that [off-rolling](#) was not a factor.

Where a home educated child has never been enrolled in a Southampton school e.g. you have recently moved to the city, or your child has just become of statutory school age, there is no legal requirement to obtain permission from or notify the LA if you do not intend to enrol your child in a school. If you do not tell us you are home educating, however, we will have to follow children missing education procedures if we become aware that your child is not attending school and we have no other details of the educational arrangements in place.

Where we are satisfied that suitable education provision is in place we will proceed on an annual contact basis, in the absence of any change in circumstances.

Where concerns exist about the provision in place, we will make recommendations on how improvements could be made, but if we remain dissatisfied we would consult Legal Services about a return to mainstream school.

Where no information exists and we have been unable to obtain any information on the provision in place, we would issue a s437(1) Notice which requires parents to satisfy us within 15 days that suitable education provision is in place. Having followed this process, if we remain dissatisfied, we would consult Legal Services about a return to mainstream school.

EVIDENCE OF EFFICIENT, SUITABLE, FULL-TIME EDUCATION

The DfE recognise that:

- The local authority needs to be able to reach a legitimate conclusion that a suitable education is actually being provided so requests for detailed information about education provision should be made as part of an authority's informal enquiries.
- 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.
- Local authorities are allowed to use minimum expectations for literacy and numeracy in assessing suitability, whilst bearing in mind the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs, as well as their starting point at the commencement of home education. Our approach will therefore be to establish whether a child is **broadly in line with national expectations**.

The European Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines the individual right to a specific education as follows:

'Education must include not only literacy and numeracy, but also life skills such as the ability to make well balanced decisions; to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner and develop health lifestyles, good social relationships and responsibility, critical thinking, creative talents and other abilities which give children the tools needed to pursue their life options.'

Examples of what we would be looking for as either evidence, or an understanding of, are listed below.

- The scope of the learning that takes place across a broad range of subjects or interests.
- How opportunities are created to work with others.
- How the particular talents of the child are met and developed.
- Any groups attended or activities that the child may participate in.
- How the child is provided with opportunities to interact with others to minimise social isolation.
- How the child's SEND needs are met.
- How physical well-being and healthy life choices are encouraged.
- How progression can be measured and evidenced.
- If parents are home educating more than one child, how individual needs are being met.
- Evidence of learning, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy e.g. original or photocopies of work, photographs\recordings, art work, scrapbooks, musical and sporting achievements, on-line blogs, records of online learning.
- The amount of time dedicated to learning and support provided.
- Whether any other education providers are part of the arrangements.
- A written overview or philosophy, an education plan or a diary.
- A report could include, for example, reasons why parents have chosen to home educate, the philosophy\approach to education, resources, details of focussed visits, the short and long term intentions of the education for your child.

We are looking for information and\or evidence that would be sufficient to convince a reasonable person that the education provision is suitable for the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

As parents you are under no legal obligation to respond to requests for information from the local authority but *"If you do not do enough to satisfy the local authority about the education being provided at home it may have no option but to conclude that the education does not meet the s.7 requirement."*

Elective home education. Departmental guidance for parents. April 2019

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROVISION

We will offer visits to families who have been placed on an annual contact schedule but we recognise that parents are under no obligation to meet with us and may choose to engage with this process in a different way. These visits ultimately allow us to deliver the DfE expectation of annual contact so that we can be satisfied as to the current suitability of the education taking place.

Our aim, therefore, is to use annual visits to provide families with an opportunity to showcase the learning that has taken place and the impact this has had on their child's education or wider development. Whilst there will be a focus on literacy, numeracy and progress, we welcome the opportunity to hear about any interests a child is pursuing, achievements they are particularly proud of, or any wider positive experiences.

All engagements with parents help EHE Visitors to support and advise other families and to advocate for the benefits that good quality EHE can offer.

Please refer to 'evidence' section above.

SOUTHAMPTON MUSIC SERVICES

Southampton Music Services is delighted to inform you that they can offer instrumental lessons at your home, subject to teacher availability, should your child\ren wish to learn an instrument. They can also offer lessons where the parent can learn alongside the child.

The current cost of lessons per child is £160 per term, for this the child will receive 11 x 30 minute lessons a term. If the loan of an appropriate instrument is needed there is an additional £30 charge. This offer will remain in place until July 2022. Prices for parent/child lessons are available on request.

If your child is interested in having instrumental lessons, or if you would like to explore proposals for group sessions, then please email graham.hesp@southampton.gov.uk or call 023 8083 4532 for further information.

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICE

Our libraries offer a range of services for free, such as the downloading of eBooks and eAudio books onto a mobile device, computer, laptop or eReader:

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/libraries/services/library-items/>

They also offer a range of free on-line learning opportunities.

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/libraries/digital-library/learn-online>

Individual libraries also offer a range of activities so enquire at your local, or preferred, library to find out what's on offer.

By joining the library you can use one of the library computers free for 4 hours per day.

EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Parents should make us aware that home education is supplemented through attendance at another setting so that account can be taken of the provision when assessing whether you, as parents, are meeting your duty under [Section 7](#) of the Education Act 1996.

Colleges

State funded FE colleges or sixth form colleges can claim funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for home educated 14 - 16s on a part-time basis. It is entirely at the discretion of individual colleges whether to take home educated students.

- **City College Southampton**

In addition to the Further Education provided to school leavers, City College can provide a limited number of infill places to Year 10 & 11 children who are electively home educated. Further information can be found on our website under "What's on".

Enrolment on an infill place means that your child remains recorded as EHE and you are still responsible for ensuring that full-time education is in place over and above the provision from the college.

- Other local colleges who may consider applications on a case by case basis for 14-16 provision are:

- Totton College - Southampton
 - Eastleigh College
 - Sparsholt College - Winchester
 - Brockenhurst College

Professional tutors

As a parent you can choose to engage private tutors or other adults, or online tuition, to assist you in providing a suitable education.

These methods are expensive but may be a solution where you do not feel confident to teach, or support, particular topics yourself. As a parent, however, you continue to be responsible for the education provided and for the well-being of your child.

Please note that Southampton City Council are unable to recommend private tutors as to do so would imply approval. If employing a private tutor it is vital to safeguard your child as well as ensuring their progress, by satisfying yourself that the tutor is a fit person to be with your child. They should also have relevant qualifications, at the appropriate level, in the subject for which you

are employing them. If your child has special educational needs, you would also want to satisfy yourself that anyone you employed had experience of working with SEN children.

Tutors can easily be found online but you should:

- ✓ Ensure that anyone you engage to help you provide home education is suitable to have access to children.
- ✓ Take up references to satisfy yourself of their suitability.
- ✓ Check that any private tutor has a recent [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) disclosure certificate.

Ideally you might find a tutor through personal recommendation however, failing this, there are a number of agencies offering the services of tutors and DBS checks should have been carried out by the agency. You should request confirmation of this from them.

Correspondence courses

There are a number of correspondence courses available and we advise that parents satisfy themselves that any course purchased accords with their own philosophical and educational aims. Southampton City Council are unable to endorse any providers.

Association of Distance Learning Colleges (ADLC)

[The Association of Distance Learning Colleges - for the best in learning. \(adlc.org.uk\)](http://adlc.org.uk)

PO Box 17926, London, SW19 3WB

Tel: 0208 544 9559

e-mail: info@adlc.org.uk

National Extension College

www.nec.ac.uk

0800 389 2839 (free)

An educational charity, NEC offers educational opportunities and second-chance learning to people for whom attending regular classes at a school or college would not be possible. Offers a range of GCSE, IGCSE, A-level and vocational correspondence courses.

We would strongly recommend that you speak with other home educators about their experiences before enrolling your child on a correspondence course and seek independent guidance in relation to exam qualifications.

Home ed support groups

Some groups of home educating parents meet to support each other and teach their children on a communal basis.

There is no reason why this practice should not be used to provide education, but such groups should be aware that they may come under scrutiny by Ofsted who would wish to ensure that they were not operating as an unregistered school.

Unregistered schools

A small minority of parents send their children to establishments that are operating as unregistered independent schools, providing a full-time education to 5 or more children of compulsory school age (or just one if that child has an EHCP or is 'Looked After'). There can also be an issue around registration if a setting is deemed to be providing the majority of a child's education, rather than being part of a wider offer.

The proprietors of these settings may be committing an offence and the settings may be inspected by Ofsted and could be closed down. If you suspect that a setting you are considering for your child falls into this category you should ask the LA if it has any relevant information about the setting or contact Ofsted.

Parents should be aware that unregistered settings may not be regulated in any way so there is no external assurance that they comply with basic standards, such as proper vetting of staff, safeguarding of children, provision of a safe, secure and appropriate physical learning environment or facilities to support your child.

The LA will carry out enquiries of all potential unregistered schools, in consultation with Ofsted.

Out of school settings

The DfE have produced guidance for providers who run out-of-school settings to help them understand best practice and how to create a safe environment for children in their care. Typically an out of school setting would be:

- A tuition or learning centre.
- Extracurricular clubs or settings.
- Uniformed youth organisations.
- Open-access youth providers.
- Supplementary\complementary schools.
- Private language schools.
- Religious settings offering education in their own faith.

The guidance covers health and safety, safeguarding and child protection, suitability of staff and volunteers and governance. The hope is that the production of this guidance will give parents the confidence that their child is in a safe activity or learning environment. The full guidance can be found here: [Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Keeping_children_safe_during_community_activities_after_school_clubs_and_tuition_-_non-statutory_guidance_for_providers_running_out-of-school_settings_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

We would recommend that parents using the services provided by an out-of-school setting ask the provider if they are aware of and compliant with the advice in the DfE guidance document. If they

are not, parents should give serious consideration to whether the setting is safe for their child to attend.

THE PRINCE'S TRUST

The Prince's Trust work with young people from aged 11, helping them to work towards their personal goals through **Explore**, a free and fun personal development programme to equip young people with the tools they need to move forward.

Whilst the Southampton office is no longer open at this time, the service is still available and offering virtual courses. You can get in touch in one of two ways:

- Call free on 0800 842 842, or
- Use the 'get in touch' function on their website which can be found [here](#).

FLEXI SCHOOLING

Flexi-schooling is where a child is registered at a school (or an FE College or other 16-19 provider if aged 14 or above) and attends part of the time and is home educated for the rest of the time.

The purpose of this is often to provide education in specific subjects, however, schools and colleges are under no obligation to agree to such requests and must still comply with their published admission arrangements.

The school register must mark the child as authorised absence for the sessions when they are home educated and DfE attendance guidance should be complied with.

If you are interested in exploring a flexi-schooling arrangement please approach the Headteacher of your chosen school directly, but please remember that schools are under no obligation to enter into such an arrangement.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ORDERS

Southampton City Council wishes to work in partnership with home educating families, but the simple fact that your child is being educated at home does not enable us to satisfy our duty under section 436a of the Education Act 1996. We will therefore make informal enquiries to establish what education is being provided.

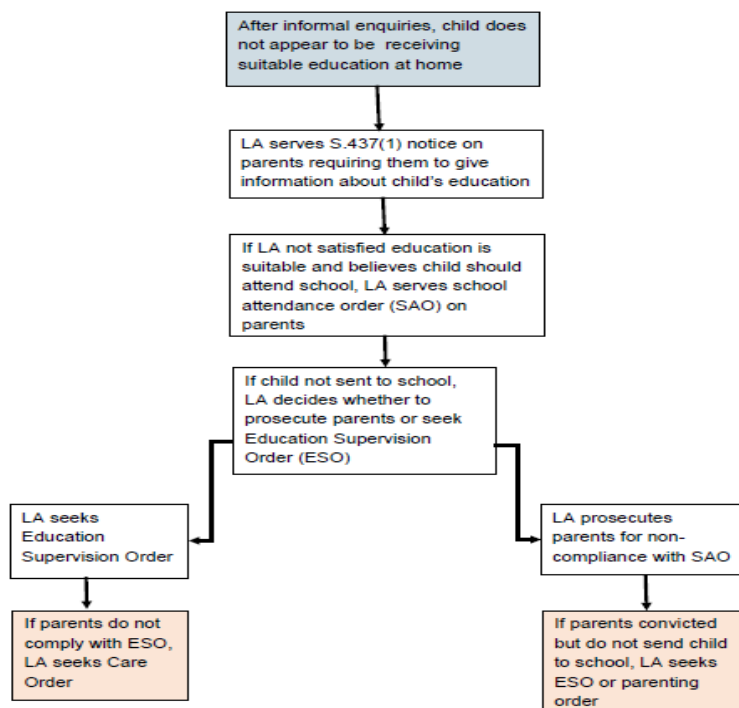
We will always offer to meet with you either at home or a neutral location and we will always give you the opportunity to provide us with information about the home education being provided. If no information is made available, however, or the information provided is not sufficient to satisfy us that suitable education is in place, the Education Act requires us to take further action.

A s437(1) Notice must be issued requiring you (within a period of at least 15 days) to satisfy us that suitable education is in place. If you do find yourself in this position, we would urge you to read sections 5.1 – 5.10 of the [DfE guidance for parents](#).

If we are still not satisfied that suitable education is in place after expiry of the s437(1) Notice and believe that your child should attend school, we will issue a School Attendance Order.

This action will be taken as a last resort because failure to comply with a School Attendance Order is a criminal offence, so please communicate with us because it is not too late to present us with evidence to demonstrate the provision of suitable education and apply to have the order revoked.

The chart below is the summary flow chart from the DfE guidance which contains more detailed information in the sections referred to above.



If we are unable to ensure the suitable education of your child, we are also happy to work with you to support a parental application for a school place, before issue of a School Attendance Order becomes necessary.

VOLUNTEERING, WORK EXPERIENCE & CHILD PERFORMANCES

Article 32 of the UN convention on the rights of the child states that governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

Southampton City Council recognises that volunteering, or work experience placements, can enhance the social and life skills of young people and are likely to be invaluable to prospective college interview panels or employers. Unfortunately, as with so many other areas of law,

government guidelines do not cover home educated children however we would expect that parents:

- Make their own arrangements for volunteering or work experience placements.
- Satisfy themselves that employment law is fully complied with covering issues such as health and safety, insurance and child protection. Further information can be found on our [website](#).
- Only arrange work experience in the last two school years during which the child is of compulsory school age.
- Ensure that their child does not exceed the legal daily hours for their age and does not work for more than four hours, without at least a one hour break for rest and recreation.
- Ensure their child is only carrying out, or participating in, appropriate activities and a risk assessment has been carried out.
- Check that the employer applies for a work permit from the appropriate local authority, stating on the application that the child is home educated.
- Consider seeking legal advice on this issue.

Further information on child employment and work experience, including the Southampton Byelaws can be found on our [website](#).

Volunteering

Employment is defined as working or helping in a trade or occupation carried out for profit, which may or may not involve payment. A work permit is therefore required if the activity is being carried out for profit.

Work experience in Years 10 and 11

Section 6.11 of the 2019 DfE guidance for parents' states that:

Children educated at home have no entitlement to participate in work experience under arrangements made by a local authority or schools, but some local authorities may be able to assist the parents of home educated children who wish to pursue work experience through such arrangements. Where home educated children do participate in such schemes, you should ask about the extent they are covered by, for example, the health and safety, child protection and insurance provision made on behalf of school children, often by intermediary bodies, which are necessary to safeguard the child.

Employers are responsible for carrying out risk assessments in respect of young people on work experience as if they were members of staff.

On receipt of an application for a work permit Southampton City Council will make a judgement on whether it is appropriate to issue a work permit, based on the same criteria as for all other young people.

Part-time jobs

Employers must comply with local byelaws when employing young people and must apply for a work permit. Further information is available on the [council website](#).

Child Performances

Children who perform or take part in a paid activity such as modelling or sport may require a licence and laws exist which are designed to protect children's health, welfare and education, and prevent them from being exploited. The law applies to all children from birth until completion of compulsory education.

Further information on child performance licensing can be found on our [website](#).

RAISED PARTICIPATION AGE

Whilst the end of compulsory school age is the Friday in June of the academic year that your child reaches age 16, the government increased the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until the end of the academic year in which they reach age 18.

Young people can be educated at home in order to meet the requirements to participate in education or training until the age of 18.

Local authorities should involve parents, as appropriate, in the reviews of EHC plans of home educated young people who are over compulsory school age

Information on when your child can leave school can be found on [gov.uk](#).

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding and EHE

The welfare and protection of all children, both those attending school and those who are educated at home, is of paramount concern and the responsibility of the whole community. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 imposes a duty on the local authority to make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred on them are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children resident in Southampton.

The DfE 2019 [guidance for parents](#) outlines how the safeguarding role of the LA affects home educating parents. We would recommend that all parents read this document.

The EHE Team will:

- Follow SCC safeguarding procedures at all times and work with relevant agencies to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and in the event of any concerns about the welfare of a home educated child, initiate and follow the established procedures.
- Contact parents when MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) have notified us of any referrals for home educated children of compulsory school age, or the MET (missing, exploited, trafficked) Team have notified us of any children they are working with of compulsory school age.
- Attend safeguarding training and Elective Home Education Visitors will attend child protection and child in need planning meetings to ensure an appropriate focus on the provision of efficient, full-time, suitable education.
- Ensure that single assessments, child protection and child in need plans reflect that home education is in place and explore whether the educational and development needs of the child are being met through the provision of efficient, full-time, suitable education.
- When children who are home educated move into the city, contact previous local authorities to establish whether any safeguarding concerns existed.

Participation in activities outside of the home

Please read this DfE guidance aimed at giving advice to parents so you can be more confident that your child is in a safe activity or learning environment: [Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-children-safe-during-community-activities-after-school-clubs-and-tuition-non-statutory-guidance-for-providers-running-out-of-school-settings)

Online safety

There is information for parents on our EHE page on the Southampton City Council website under 'support for home educating families' about online safety, including a list of useful websites to support parents.

DYSLEXIA ASSESSMENTS

Some schools may carry out dyslexia screening exercises, which may give an indication of possible dyslexic difficulties. This is not the same as a dyslexia diagnosis.

Southampton City Council does not offer a dyslexia diagnosis service, so parents must make arrangements for this themselves.

The [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk) provides advice for parents on dyslexia diagnosis as does the [British Dyslexia Association](https://www.bdad.org.uk).

USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

[APPENDIX 1](#) contains a list of useful resources to support learning.

Southampton City Council:

Eliza Johnson	Children Not In School Manager	023 8083 3889
Aude Pengas	Home Education Family Support Worker	023 8254 5720
Catherine Yeates	Home Education Family Support Worker	023 8083 3701
Craig Toop	Team Standards Coordinator	023 8083 4779

The e-mail address for Home Education is home.education@southampton.gov.uk

SEND Team 023 8083 3004

Service Manager - Southampton Attendance Support Service 023 8083 4229

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) 023 8083 3336

Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS)

Tel: 01707 371854

E-mail: enquiries@heas.org.uk

A national charity dedicated to the provision of advice and practical support for families who wish to educate their children at home.

Education Otherwise

Helpline – 0845 478 6345

A registered charity providing information and resources for home educating families including a general resource list.

ACE Education

Advice Line: 0300 0115 142

enquiries@ace-ed.org.uk

Independent advice for parents/carers of children in state-funded schools who are experiencing difficulties in the following areas; bullying, SEN, admissions, exclusions and attendance.

Ed Yourself

This website is the work of Fiona Nicholson who has given evidence to Government Committees on the subject of elective home education and can provide you with a clear up-to-date analysis of the key areas of elective home education practice and policy in England and Wales.

Child Law Advice

Provides legal information and advice on education law in England. The information ranges from the law on bullying, transport and home education to school admissions, exclusions and the duties of schools and local authorities to children with Special Educational Needs.

[Everyone Can](#)

0808 800 0009

Everyone can (formerly known as The Aidis Trust) is a Charity specialising in computer technology to help disabled people.

[HE Special](#)

The web site of the HE-Special-UK mailing list. Run by a group of families who Home Educate children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities.

[The National Curriculum](#)

[Department for Education \(DfE\)](#)

[Christian Home Education Support Service \(CHESS\)](#)

Founded in 1992 by a group of parents, who were themselves involved in Christian home education in the UK, to provide help and advice for those who were treading the same road or thinking of doing so.

[The Resources of Islamic Homeschool in the UK](#)

A website dedicated to Muslim parents especially mothers who home school their children or who are considering home schooling. Provides free worksheets and other materials.

[Educational Freedom](#)

A non-profit organisation with the primary purpose of ensuring all Home Educators have access to free information and support.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is it legal to educate my child at home?

Yes, in England education is compulsory but school is not. The parental duty under [Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act](#) however applies whether your child is enrolled in a school or educated at home.

Do I need anyone's permission to educate my child from home?

Generally, you do not need permission unless the following circumstances apply:

- Your child attends a special school under arrangements made by the LA (LA consent is required)
- Your child is enrolled at a school in accordance with a School Attendance Order (the LA must revoke the order or amend it to replace the school with a different school, before the child can be removed from the roll).
- Your child is the subject of an Education Supervision Order (the supervising officer would make the final decision).

If your child has never attended school, no permission or notification is required, although in these circumstances we will follow our children missing education procedures if we become aware that your child is not attending school and receive no details of educational provision. It would, therefore, be helpful if you could let us know. 023 8083 4779 or home.education@southampton.gov.uk

You must however put your decision in writing to your child's Headteacher if they are already on roll.

If your child is subject to child protection or child in need planning there would be a focus on education provision in the plan to ensure that s.7 requirements are being met.

Will the local authority visit my home?

The role and expectations of the local authority have recently been clarified in the 2019 DfE guidance document which states that

"Until a local authority is satisfied that a home-educated child is receiving a suitable full-time education, then a child being educated at home is potentially in scope of this [children missing education] duty)".

It also recommends that local authorities make contact with home educated parents on at least an annual basis.

Parents are not, however, legally required to give EHE Visitors access to their home and do not have to agree to meet at all. We will respect this decision and offer to meet in a neutral location but will then ask parents to provide evidence that their child is receiving an efficient and suitable education.

We believe, however that visits deliver benefits that cannot be achieved by other means, such as:

- They facilitate a personal connection that can be lost during virtual meetings and which is non-existent when the process is reduced to a form filling exercise.

- They enable a two-way dialogue to take place, so parents also have the opportunity to ask questions of EHE Visitors and provide their own feedback on issues.
- Wider discussions enable EHE Visitors to learn more about the provision of elective home education so that we can better support and advise the wide range of families who are part of our EHE community in the city.
- They are focussed so can minimise our contacts with experienced home educators who do not require advice or support, for example by removing the need for us to re-contact parents with further questions following submission of written information.
- We can gain a broader understanding of some of the wider issues facing home educators. This is really important because it is our team that seeks to challenge misconceptions about home education and to improve the understanding of colleagues.
- They mean that parents can form a view of our service which is informed by direct personal experience.

What is classed as full-time education?

Parents do not have to provide home education for the same number of hours as a school and school hours don't apply to children being educated at home.

Whilst there is no legal definition of full-time the [DfE Guidance](#) for Parents outlines that parents should be able to quantify and demonstrate the amount of time their child is being educated, which should occupy a significant proportion of their life.

How do I know if education is suitable?

There is no definition in statute law because it will depend upon your individual child and must be suitable to his\her age, ability and aptitudes and any special educational needs.

You may find the following extracts from the DfE Guidance helpful:

- Education must be age-appropriate, enable the child to make progress according to his or her particular level of ability, and should take account of any specific aptitudes.
- Even if there is no specific link to the National Curriculum or other external curricula, there should be an appropriate minimum standard which is aimed at.
- Education should aim to enable the child, 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.
- Education should not directly conflict with the fundamental British values as defined in government guidance.
- Local authorities may use minimum expectations for literacy and numeracy in assessing suitability.
- 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.
- Education may not be deemed 'suitable' if it leads to excessive isolation from the child's peers and thus impedes social development.

How is education judged to be efficient?

There is no definition in statute law, but it can be interpreted as meaning education which 'achieves what it is intended to achieve'. See [DfE guidance](#).

It is appropriate that parents and children choose a type of education that is right for them. It is equally important that EHE Visitors understand and are supportive of the many differing approaches or ways of educating which are feasible and legally valid. One aspect of the role of the EHE Visitor is to respond to concerns that a child is not receiving suitable education for his or her age, ability and aptitude and, where appropriate, provide support and information for parents. Where there is ambiguity in making a judgement defining the suitability of the education, SCC will refer to the UNCRC Articles 28 and 29, and as a minimum expect to see evidence of literacy and numeracy progress

Do I need to follow the national curriculum or teach specific subjects?

EHE does not have to be identical to school education; no specific curriculum is laid down and you do not have to follow the national curriculum. You will, however, need to ensure that the education you provide for your child prepares him or her for their future life and is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.

If you would like your child to go on to further education, however, or take public examinations such as GCSEs, we would recommend that you follow the relevant curriculum. We have listed [examining boards](#) in this document and would recommend that you contact them before you begin studies so that you can decide which examination board and which syllabus you wish to follow.

Some parents introduce or re-introduce their children to school after a period of home education. If, at the outset, parents feel that this might be a possibility it may be helpful to follow a curriculum broadly similar to the national curriculum followed in schools.

What will an EHE Visitor be looking for?

The EHE Visitor will understand that you may need sufficient time to set your arrangements in motion and that a range of approaches are taken to meet the individual needs of children, but they will be seeking evidence of:

- A serious intent by you to ensure that your child is educated.
- Your consistent involvement or that of other significant carers.
- The provision enabling your child to make progress.
- Whether your curriculum will allow your child to reach their potential now and in the future.

Where young people are entering elective home education during Key Stage 4, there is an expectation that clear plans will be in place for achieving recognised qualifications at age 16 and securing progression to post 16 learning (e.g. college) or employment in order to avoid becoming NEET ("not in education, employment or training").

Do I need to be a qualified teacher to educate my child at home?

No. You need no formal qualifications, nor do you have to employ a qualified teacher to educate your child.

What should I do if I do not want to home educate my child but am being encouraged or pressurised to do so by my child's school?

DfE guidance on Elective Home education states that schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record.

If you feel that you are being pressurised to home educate by your child's school please contact the Children Not In School Manager on 023 8083 3889, or e-mail home.education@southampton.gov.uk for support.

At what age is it compulsory for my child to receive full time education?

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday.

- If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March.
- If they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August.
- If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December.

A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

Will my child's views be taken into account?

We would recommend that you as a parent take your child's views into account because they may impact upon how successful home education will be.

We will also ask about your child's views in line with the DfE elective home education guidance for parent's states that:

The United Kingdom has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC requires states to provide a right for children to express their views and for due weight to be given to those views, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. This does not give children authority over parents, and a decision to educate a child at home is a matter for you as parents. You should, however, consider whether home education is realistically possible in your family's particular circumstances, and if your child is happy to be educated in this way. The local authority may wish to gain the child's opinion on the suitability of the home education received (as distinct to the question of the child's preference for being educated at home rather than at school), as this can be relevant to any decision it needs to make on whether the s.7 requirements are met.

Can I educate my child at home whilst I wait for a place at my preferred school?

Your child does not get a school place any quicker if they are out of school and it is your responsibility to fulfil your legal obligation to provide your child with suitable full-time education whilst waiting for a school place

In terms of waiting lists for school places you should be aware that:

- Waiting list positions are subject to change and can go down as well as up.
- Waiting lists can have a significant number of children on them.
- Waiting lists are terminated at the end of every academic year so if you wish for your child's name to be carried forward, at the end of the summer term, you need to contact school.admissions@southampton.gov.uk

If your intention is to enrol your child in school, we would recommend that you establish what position your child is on a waiting list and then make an informed judgement as to whether the particular school is an effective and realistic use of a parental preference i.e. if your child being offered a place requires two whole classes to leave the school, for example, then this is unlikely to happen.

What if the local authority is not satisfied that suitable education provision is in place?

This could happen for one of two reasons:

- Where no information or evidence is available to us.
- Where we have highlighted concerns.

No further steps would be taken without your knowledge. Attempts would be made to discuss the concerns, or potential concerns, with you and recommendations made about how improvements could be made. You would be given a reasonable period of time to make the improvements considered to be necessary. As part of this process we will ask for evidence that a suitable (s.7 Education Act 1996) education is being provided and this request may be made in the form of a letter or issue of a s437(1) Notice under the Education Act 1996.

A s437(1) Notice requires parents to satisfy us within 15 days that suitable (s.7. Education Act 1996) education provision is in place. Having followed this process, if we remain dissatisfied, we would consult Legal Services about a return to mainstream school and the process for this would be the issue of a School Attendance Order.

What will it cost to educate my child at home?

As a parent you must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility for your child's education so should consider how you can do this as part of your decision making.

Direct costs include things such as public examinations, books\paper\writing materials, IT and other equipment, educational visits, participation in sporting activities and the cost of tutors, should you choose this as part of your provision.

An important indirect cost to consider for parents may be a loss of income because good home education, helping your child to reach their full potential, requires a substantial time commitment from parents.

There is no financial support available from the local authority or the Government for parents to educate their children at home. Families do, however, successfully home educate on any budget by making good use of public libraries and resources around the home. If you are part of a home education group(s) you will be able to take advantage of a range of activities, discounts, opportunities and also gain access to resources.

Will my child miss the social aspect of school?

We would recommend that you consider the social development of your child, which would be enhanced through sharing activities with other children. Joining a variety of clubs, home education groups, special interest societies for example can be enriching, as can mixing and sharing skills with other people of all ages.

Would my child still be able to take exams?

Yes, although it is your responsibility to plan for and arrange this. See [Examinations and examining boards](#).

What if I want to return my child to school?

Your child can be returned to mainstream education at any time, particularly if at any stage it becomes apparent to you as parents that you are unable to provide suitable home education, or, your child is not engaging with EHE.

You should make an in-year application [online](#) as soon as possible to minimise any interruption to learning but please note that it may not always be possible to get a place at your child's previous, catchment or nearest school.

EHE Visitors can give you support and advice but are not able to make the application on your behalf. To discuss an application the School Admissions Team can be contacted on 023 8083 3004. Southampton City Council Gateway (base in Guildhall Square) and local libraries can also support parents in making applications.

Applications that meet the criteria listed in the Fair Access Protocol will automatically be identified and processed via this route by Admission Officers.

What is the school leaving age?

The school leaving age is the last Friday in June of when a child turns 16.

The government has, however, now increased the age to which all young people in England must participate in education or training up to age 18, known as the [Raised participation age](#).

Further Post 16 information and sources of advice and support can be found on the Southampton City Council [elective home education web page](#).

Do I have to keep records and provide evidence of education taking place?

As a way of keeping some record of your child's learning for your own benefit as well as for any future discussions with the local authority, it is useful to keep an informal education diary or for your child to build up a portfolio to record some of their club activities, conversations, certificates or achievements, books being read, photographs, leaflets and samples from trips, drawings of experiments, TV and radio programmes being followed, information about writing competitions, progress in on-line learning, participation in community events, building projects and so on.

Records such as these become reminders of something that went well (so you can return to it and take it further) or something that didn't go so well that may need more practise and are a good method of evidencing your child's progress.

This evidence could become important if the LA has concerns about the suitability of education provision because evidence would then be requested. See [EVIDENCE](#) section.

Do I need to have a separate room for educating my child?

Whilst you do not need a specific or dedicated space for home educating, recent guidance from the charity Education Otherwise published during the COVID 19 crisis reinforced that the home environment does influence learning and it might be helpful to consider the environment when choosing a task. The natural environment also has a role to play in home educating and can be a stimulating choice for a wide range of activities.

There is no right or wrong environment for learning, but parents should consider the availability of space and resources and the suitability of the chosen activity for the location. Parents should also consider the possibility of over stimulation – a room where there is a lot of activity or too many pictures on the wall could prove distracting if a child needs to focus on a challenging task. The environment should also be safe.

Should I encourage my child to use the internet?

The use of technology is an important aspect of learning and should be included as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. There are great resources for home educators available on the internet and an endless supply of learning opportunities. There are also educational websites that allow your child to keep track of their learning and progress. There are, therefore, definite benefits for your child with the following provisos:

- We also strongly advise that home computers, laptops and mobile devices have appropriate filters to protect children from inadvertently accessing inappropriate content.
- You should read the [online safety](#) advice on our website, carry out further research then talk to your child about how they should keep themselves safe whilst online.
- You should ensure a healthy balance of online and offline activities.
- You should intervene if you believe that excessive internet usage is affecting your child’s mental health and causing or exacerbating social isolation.

Do I need to tell the local authority if I move to a new house?

Please let us know your new location because we are required to maintain accurate records on the education database. If you are moving out of the city we will put you in touch with the Education Department in your new area.

CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

Parents who wish to report a concern or register a complaint about any aspect of our service should do so by contacting the Children Not In School Manager in the first instance. E-mails with a subject heading of “Concern” or “Complaint” will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

If, after the concern or complaint has been dealt with, parents remain dissatisfied with the response the formal Southampton City Council complaints procedure should be followed which can be found at:

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/have-your-say/comments-complaints/complaints.aspx>

GOVERNANCE

This guidance has been produced to support parents and will be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis by the Southampton City Council Inclusion Services Team.

APPENDIX 1 - RESOURCE LIST

This is a list of websites that may be helpful to home educating parents. Southampton City Council does not, however, endorse any of the organisations listed below and our strong recommendation would be that you contact other home educators to find out their experiences and look in more details at these websites and apps before allowing your child to access them.

We also strongly advise that home computers, laptops and mobile devices have appropriate filters to protect children from inadvertently accessing inappropriate content.

FREE RESOURCES	
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize	Bitesize is the BBC's online study support resource. It provides interactive content for all key stages which can now be personalised so children can add subjects and exam boards, see their most recent learner guides and save learner guides to their favourites.
https://www.senteacher.org/	Provide learning materials for those who teach children and young people with special educational needs .
https://www.southampton.ac.uk/courses/free-online-learning.page#podcast	Online learning packages. Their MOOCs (massive open online courses) are study programmes designed to be studied online by large numbers of students. In addition to the usual course materials such as video lectures, reading material, coursework and tests, MOOCs provide forums that help students and tutors build an online community.
https://www.sats-papers.co.uk/	Free downloads of KS1, KS2 and KS3 SATS papers.
https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/	Provides online games, songs, stories and activities for children to have fun and learn English too.
https://www.rigb.org/christmas-lectures/watch	The Royal Institution of Great Britain. Science lectures.
www.nrich.maths.org.uk	Provide interesting mathematical games, problems and articles with the aim of enriching the mathematical experiences of all learner
www.iop.org	The Institute of Physics aims to inspire people of all ages about physics. They list the best physics sites on the internet, provide games, experiments, revision and

	exam help and list answers to common questions.
https://www.theschoolrun.com/	<p>For primary age children only. As a registered user receive free:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles and advice about primary education. • Access to a small selection of free worksheets. • Official past SATs papers for KS1 and KS2. • Access to the history, geography and science homework helper. • Year-by-year English and maths termly progress checks. <p>Further resources are available on subscription</p>
https://www.schoolscience.co.uk/sciencelink	Resources and news for science education, primary and secondary. Also an index of useful sites with resources for science teaching
www.primaryresources.co.uk	Provides free lesson plans, activity ideas and resources in a number of subject areas for primary school children.
www.primaryworksheets.co.uk	Maths worksheets and apps.
http://www.muddlepuddle.co.uk/	Resources and information for home educating families.
www.khanacademy.org	A non-profit making educational organisation that produces short lessons in the form of videos, articles, practice questions and lessons across a range of subjects.
https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/	Has expert advice, top tips and activity ideas so you can help your child with reading and maths .
http://www.free-teaching-resources.co.uk/	Points you in the direction of free teaching ideas, lesson plans, worksheets and more, all produced by UK companies, charities and museums and galleries. All key stages .
www.youtube.com	Videos aimed at home educators and across a range of subjects and interests to supplement a home-school curriculum.
https://www.marwell.org.uk/education/free-resources/	Free resources to download that link directly to their Education Workshops but

	they still have value and interest used independently.
https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/teacher-category/primary-resources/	Primary resources across a range of subjects tied in to the national curriculum.
https://www.sustainablelearning.com	Free resources with a focus on the environment.

SUBSCRIPTION\CHARGEABLE RESOURCES OR PROVISION	
https://www.recordingstudiosouthampton.co.uk	Southampton Home Education Music at River Studios has been developed from engaging with the local community, offering families from the Southampton and Hampshire areas who home educate their children the opportunity to learn and experience music making in a safe and creative environment.
https://readingeggs.co.uk/	A reading programme for children aged 2–13, designed to help them become fluent and proficient readers.
https://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/	An educational publisher selling revision guides, study notes, work books, practice papers etc. across a range of subjects, exam boards and key stages.
<u>HomeMade Education – Delightfully Unique, Distance Learning.</u>	Online provision offering live lessons, opportunities for independent learning and materials that can be accessed 24 hours a day.
www.structuredhomelearning.com	Curriculum Packs for both primary and secondary phases, giving a comprehensive and balanced syllabus which closely follows the National Curriculum.
https://www.educationquizzes.com/	All key stages. Education quizzes to help children consolidate their school work, closely aligned to the National Curriculum.
www.teachingandlearningresources.co.uk	Provide learning games and activities across a range of subjects.
https://www.aquila.co.uk/	A subscription magazine for children who enjoy challenges, with every issue covering science, history and general knowledge.
www.edplace.com/	Thousands of online worksheets, assessments and revision materials from year 1 to GCSE.
http://www.whizz.com/	Online maths tutor.

https://parentsintouch.co.uk/	Primary. Provider of online worksheets .
www.diy.org	A on-line learning community providing in-depth courses, hands-on projects and how-to videos. Children learn new skills and earn badges.

Apps for you to try:		
Duolingo	Doodle Maths	Endless Alphabet
Symmetry School	Dr. Seuss Book Apps	My Times Tables

RESOURCES SUGGESTED BY THE EDUCATION OTHERWISE CHARITY DURING LOCKDOWN	
Online education resources	
Oak National Academy	Government-backed collection of lessons and resources
Teachers Pet	Weekly resource packs available free of charge
Education Quizzes	Subscribers can create 30 free accounts for friends and family
PlanBee	Free teaching resources
BrainPOP	Free access during school closures
Mystery Science	Free science lessons
Class Central	Free online courses
British Sign	Discounted online sign language courses
World Book	Free access to eBooks
Kids Activities Blog	List of more free resources
Activity Village	Free activity packs
Collins	Free online resources while schools are closed
Twinkl	Unlimited downloads and resources
Little Angel Theatre	Free online shows and learning packs
Council for British Archeology	Publications available to download free of charge

Virtual Tours	
<i>Adventures in Familyhood</i>	20 Virtual field trips
<i>Wind in the Willows</i>	Free online streaming of the West End production
<i>Whats on Stage</i>	Other stage shows and operas for free online streaming
Other Sites	
<i>Amazon Audible</i>	Free Audio Books
<i>Climb the Walls</i>	Free online dance classes
<i>The Body Coach</i>	Kids workout videos
<i>First news</i>	Children's newspaper. Free downloadable issue weekly

