

# **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

## **Guidance for Parents**

**Revised June 2018**

**Elective Home Education  
PO Box 16524  
Birmingham  
B2 2FP**

**0121 464 7215**

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Welcome to this guidance pack, which aims to explain your parental responsibility and Birmingham City Council's procedures regarding elective home education and to offer advice to parents or carers who are, or who are considering, electively home educating their child.

The guidance includes the perspective of Birmingham City Council in fulfilling its duties and includes extracts from 'Elective Home Education – Guidance for Local Authorities 2007, updated 2013' published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Further information on aspects of home education can be found on our website ([www.birmingham.gov.uk/home-education](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/home-education)).

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE CHOOSING TO ELECTIVELY HOME EDUCATE**

Home educating is a significant decision and you may want to make sure you have considered the issues below:

**Think carefully about your decision.** It is a great responsibility, demanding a lot of commitment, energy and time.

**Consider how you will ensure your child's learning before making a decision.** Research a range of topic areas e.g. what else does mathematics involve apart from number work? Explore local sports facilities etc and consider arranging opportunities for social contact with other children.

**Look at potential costs involved.** There is no local authority funding available for those who wish to Electively Home Educate, even though there may well be costs for books, paper, computer, equipment, educational visits, etc. The Internet and Birmingham's Library Services are good sources of free learning resources.

You will also be responsible for arranging and funding public examinations (such as GCSEs), if appropriate.

**Keep your options open.** Your child's needs change at different ages and stages. Birmingham City Council will always be happy to help you find a school place, should you decide not to continue home educating your child. Make the most of all support and information available.

**Consider carefully any decision to remove your child's name from their school's register.** Should you change your mind, Birmingham City Council CC is unable guarantee that your child could return to the same school. Bear in mind the pressure on school places in your area; local schools may not have places available.

**If you have a difficulty or disagreement with your child's current school, teacher or Head Teacher, you may wish to contact the school's governing body to try and resolve the difficulties before removing your child from the school.** You may decide to consider other local schools for your child and the

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number for Birmingham City Council's School Admissions and Pupil Placements Service is given in the appendix to this document.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **As a parent, what responsibility do I have for my child's education?**

As a parent you have a legal duty, as set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child receives:

*“efficient full-time education suitable*

- *to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- *to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”*

### **At what age is it compulsory for children to receive full-time education?**

Children must receive full-time education from the start date of what would be the school term following their fifth birthday. Compulsory education currently continues until the last Friday in June of 'Year 11' (any child who is sixteen years of age between September and 31 August is of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in that year).

### **Do I need anyone's permission to educate my child at home?**

No, but once you have made the decision to home educate you will need to follow one of the steps below, depending upon your child's circumstances;

- If your child is registered at a school, you must immediately inform, the Head Teacher in writing of your decision. We also do request that parents also inform Birmingham City Council's Elective Home Education Team in writing at the contact address on the front page of this document.
- If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and is registered at a school, you should immediately inform in writing the Head Teacher in writing of your decision. The school will then liaise with the Local Authority's Special Educational Needs and Review Service (“SENAR”) to ensure appropriate procedures are followed and suitable advice is given. We do request that parents also inform the Elective Home Education Team at the contact address on the front page of this document. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and is on roll at a special school, their name will remain on the register of that special school until SENAR are satisfied that the educational provision you have made for your child meets their special educational needs, whereupon your child's Education, Health and Care Plan will be adjusted accordingly.
- If your child is not on roll at a school, you are under no specific duty to inform Birmingham City Council of your decision to home educate.

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However, we do request that you inform the Elective Home Education Team at the contact address on the front page of this document.

### **What is the role of Birmingham City Council (the local authority) in Elective Home Education?**

Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, to make arrangements to enable them to establish, so far as it is possible to do so, of children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education at school or otherwise (for example at home, privately or in alternative provision). Therefore, whilst local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis, Birmingham City Council will ask parents to provide evidence that their child is receiving an efficient and suitable education as outlined in 'Elective Home Education – Guidelines for Local authorities' DCSF 2007/2013.

### **How will Birmingham City Council decide if the education I am providing is suitable?**

If you withdraw your child from a Birmingham school in order to educate them at home, an Adviser from the Elective Home Education team will contact and arrange to visit and meet with you. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the education you are providing, or intend to provide, for your child, to offer any advice required, and to try to answer any questions you may have.

We acknowledge that initially your educational provision may not be fully developed, but we would expect you to be able to provide information regarding your child's educational plan within five days of our request or, if this were to prove difficult, within an agreed timescale.

The discussion will vary depending upon the style of education you are providing, but should include:

- Your plan or philosophy for your child's education
- Resources
- How you will assess your child's progress
- How you intend to integrate the fundamental core subjects of English (literacy), mathematics and science into your arrangement.
- Any arrangements for public examinations where appropriate
- How you will meet any special educational needs your child may have

A record of all meetings will be completed and signed by the relevant Local Authority officer and a copy will be sent to you. This will contain one of three assessment outcomes;

- Satisfactory – the Elective Home Education team will maintain contact with you to provide advice and support via an annual visit/assessment.
- Not Yet Satisfactory – where your provision is judged to be 'not yet satisfactory' but the Elective Home Education Adviser believes there is capacity to improve the education your child is receiving, they will

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discuss their concerns and advise you on steps you may take to improve things. Re-assessment will be undertaken after 6 weeks to ensure the education is suitable.

- Unsatisfactory – if following attempts to rectify it, your child’s education remains unsatisfactory; steps will be taken to ensure your child is in receipt of suitable education through the use of a School Attendance Order.

Further to the above, the Adviser’s written report will specify any grounds for concern and any reasons for concluding that the provision is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The Adviser will make some practical suggestions as to how you might address these concerns.

If the education is judged to be not yet satisfactory, the Adviser will set a date 6 weeks on, by which further information is to be provided and will arrange another visit.

If the Adviser still believes the education to be unsatisfactory, you will be asked to register your child at a school and informed of school places available in your area.

As a last resort, if you are unable to satisfy the Local Authority that suitable full-time education is being provided for your child, it may issue a School Attendance Order, which will name a school your child must attend. Failure to register your child at that school may result in the matter being taken to court.

### **What information can I provide to demonstrate a suitable education?**

There is no acknowledged ‘correct way’ to provide an education at home, but suggested below are some examples of the sort of information you may be able provide to demonstrate that your child is receiving a suitable education. These are not exhaustive and may not be relevant to the style of home education you chose to adopt and you may wish to provide other information that demonstrates a suitable education;

- The aims and objectives of the education you are planning, for instance;
  - to ‘keep-up’ with the National Curriculum (e.g. while you are seeking a school place)
  - to prepare your child for specific exams
  - based upon an educational belief or philosophy
- Although the National Curriculum is optional for home educators, you may choose to cover particular subject or topic areas such as: -
  - Literacy (English)
  - Numeracy (Maths)
  - Science
  - ICT (Computers, etc.)
  - Design and Technology (including cooking, textiles, etc.)

- Art
  - History
  - Geography
  - Religious Education
  - Personal, Social and Health Education
  - Citizenship
  - Music
  - Foreign Language
  - Any other subjects or areas of study
- How your child might spend their day, for example: -
    - the number of hours a day / week you are available to help your child
    - the resources you will be using
    - any tutors used, or classes your child attends
    - the sorts of activities your child will be engaged in
    - how you will encourage contact with other children
  - How will you know that your child is making progress? Are your methods and resources achieving your aims?
  - Support available to you: -
    - A description of any support or advice that will be available to assist you with your programme
    - Others who may be able to help (friends, family?)
    - If you are aware of any local support groups who may be able to help you?
  - During any follow up visits or discussions, there will be the opportunity to discuss the education you have been providing for your child and the progress being made.

### **What if my child has an Education, Health and Care Plan?**

All parents, including the parents of children with special educational needs, have an equal right to educate their child at home. However, if a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, Birmingham City Council continues to have a duty to ensure that the child's special educational needs are met.

Birmingham City Council will work in partnership with parents to ensure that suitable arrangements are available to meet the child's special educational needs. However, parents should be aware that they have a duty to provide their child with an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have, in line with section 7 of the Education Act 1996, whilst the Local Authority has a duty:

- to maintain the child's Plan;
- to review the Plan annually; and

- to decide whether its contents are appropriate or whether the Plan should remain in force.

At the annual review of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan, SENAR, on behalf of the Local Authority, will consider the child's progress and whether any changes are needed to the Plan. Parents are always invited to attend the annual review meeting to ensure that the Local Authority can develop as full a picture as possible of the child's progress and to help identify any changes that may be needed.

In addition, a parent who is educating a child at home may ask the Local Authority to carry out a statutory assessment or reassessment of their child's special educational needs and the Local Authority must consider the request within the same timescales as the requests that it receives from any other parent.

When the parents of a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan decide to withdraw them from a maintained school in order to educate them at home, the local authority will ask the parents how they intend to meet the child's special educational needs outside the school setting. If Birmingham City Council is satisfied that the educational provision is suitable, it will amend the Education, Health and Care Plan to specify the type of school it considers appropriate for the child and add that "the parents have made their own arrangements under section 7 of the Education Act 1996".

However, if the school from which the child is being withdrawn is a special school, as the consent of Birmingham City Council is required before the child's name can be removed from the school's pupil roll, the parent will need to contact Birmingham City Council directly about their wish to educate their child at home.

In relation to all aspects of special educational needs, Birmingham City Council's Elective Home Education [EHE] Advisers can offer guidance to parents and will offer to meet you to discuss provision.

### **Are there organisations or groups of other home educators who may be able to offer advice and support?**

There are several organisations aimed at helping and informing Home Educating families and there are also several informal networks in the Birmingham area. Some organisations, including Education Otherwise and the Home Education Advisory Service, will be able to put you in touch with members who are happy to be contacted to give support and answer questions.

Talking to others who are already educating their children at home may well save you reinventing the wheel. A few of these organisations are given below, but this is by no means a complete list;

Education Otherwise - [www.education-otherwise.net](http://www.education-otherwise.net)

0845 478 6345

EO Local Contact Site - [www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk/](http://www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk/)  
EO\_LC\_bham@yahoo.co.uk

Home Education - [www.heas.org.uk/](http://www.heas.org.uk/)  
Advisory Service Tel: 01707 371854

Education Everywhere - <http://www.educationeverywhere.co.uk/>  
Helpline: 01942 897779

Home Education - <http://home-ed.info/>  
in the UK

Home Education UK - [www.home-education.org.uk/](http://www.home-education.org.uk/)

Ed Yourself - <http://edyourself.org/>

### **'HELM'**

Another source of ideas for trips, visits, resources and activities is the Home Educators Local Magazine (HELM) and this is available by email (via the Education Otherwise Local Contact from the website, [www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk/](http://www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk/), or email EO\_LC\_bham@yahoo.co.uk if you wish to receive this).

### **Can I educate my child part-time at home and part-time at school?**

This is no longer permissible.

### **Can I change my mind about elective home education?**

Yes. If at any time you wish your child to return to school full time, then you can seek a place in a school and contact the Elective Home Education Team, who will then seek advice from the School Admissions and Appeals Service, or you may contact the Admissions Service directly. Their contact details may be found in the appendix to this document. Parents / carers need to be aware that the normal admissions procedures will apply and your child's admission to your preferred school will be subject to a place being available in the appropriate year group at the school. Waiting lists for certain schools, and in some areas of the city, are very long. In addition, it may be very difficult to find a place in year 10 or 11, as schools are part-way through GCSE courses.

### **Do I have to teach the National Curriculum?**

The National Curriculum only applies to state schools. It is up to you and your child what, how and when you study providing it is appropriate for their age, ability and aptitude.

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### **Will I have to arrange for SATS testing?**

No. It is only state schools that are required to carry out SATS tests. The Local Authority will not test your child.

### **Can my child still take GCSEs and other examinations?**

It is possible for young people to take examinations, as external candidates at various examination centres. As the parent / carer, you will need to find a registered centre at which your child may take the examinations. It would be advisable for you to also contact individual examination boards (see appendix) to discuss the arrangements for private candidates. You will have to pay for any examination registration fees, examination centre fees and assessment of coursework, by an accredited person / body.

A wide range of apprenticeships and work based learning programmes are available to young people with good GCSEs. They are also required for many college courses. Alongside qualifications like 'A' levels and National Diplomas, Universities often require GCSEs, particularly in English and mathematics (Grade C and above). Once a pupil is 16 years of age, they can enrol in a wide range of adult courses including A / AS level examinations. The Open University is a good source for a range of study. Details of examination bodies are included in the Appendix.

### **Will my child be entitled to careers advice?**

Yes, impartial careers advice is now offered to young people in education through the National Careers Service at:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

### **Will the Local Authority help plan lessons or provide practical / financial support?**

Birmingham City Council receives no funds from central government to support Elective Home Education.

The Adviser will not be able to direct the learning that is taking place nor can he / she accept any responsibility to plan your child's education and carry it out. Information and advice can be given including websites and useful contacts but we are unable to provide any books or equipment.

### **Can I use private tutors or send my child to an out of school setting to supplement my child's education?**

Yes you can but Birmingham City Council urges you to consider the importance of ensuring your child is effectively safeguarded. The current guidance document, 'Elective Home Education – Guidance for Local Authorities, states:

*“Parents may choose to employ other people to educate their child, though they themselves will continue to be responsible for the education provided. They will also be responsible for ensuring that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children. Parents will therefore wish to satisfy themselves by taking up appropriate references such as an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and local authorities should encourage them to do this”*

Similarly, if you wish to use another setting, often referred to as a supplementary school or out of school setting, you should check that it meets all acceptable health and safety standards and that it is officially registered with the Department for Education if it meets the requirement to register as an Independent school - i.e. if it is giving full-time education to 5 or more students of statutory school age, or to 1 pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan, or to 1 pupil who is Looked After (in the care of the local authority).

## APPENDIX

### **Advisers for Elective Home Education**

Gary Carruthers  
Telephone: 0121 464 7215

Laura Ige  
Telephone 0121 464 7215

Iwona Morris  
Telephone 0121 464 7215

Nurges Khanam  
Telephone 0121 464 7215

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/home-education](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/home-education)  
email: [home.education@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:home.education@birmingham.gov.uk)

### **Manager for Elective Home Education**

Tarlochan Singh  
Telephone: 0121 464 7215

**School Admissions and Appeals**  
0121 303 1888