

**Elective Home Education**

Information for Parents

St. Helens Borough Council

Education Welfare Service

Revised August 2025

*Reviewed annually*

**ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)**

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

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

*(a) to his age, ability, and aptitude, and*

*(b) to any special educational needs, he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."*

The intention of these guidance notes is to help you understand what may be involved if you are considering or have decided to educate your child other than at school.

The information provides details to parents taking on this legal responsibility in addition to the duties of the Local Authority who must ensure that children educated at home receive an education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

## Introduction

Elective Home Education is where Parents decide to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school.

It is **NOT** home tuition provided by a Local Authority or where the Local Authority provides education otherwise than at school.

This means that parents assume full responsibility for their child’s education. This will include the cost of public examinations along with the responsibility to provide the child with suitable education until the end of “compulsory education” (ie the last Friday in June in the Academic Year in which the child reaches age 16).

Parents are advised **NOT** to educate their children outside the school system in the following circumstances:

1. as a response to short-term disagreements with the Head Teacher or others at the school, the problem should be talked through with the Head Teacher or governors.
2. as a solution to when a child has not been attending school on time or regularly.

It may be even more difficult to provide full-time education for the child at home.

1. as a final or once and for all decision. It may be possible to manage education at home at primary level, but the situation can be very difficult at 16 and when there is a need to study for GCSE, especially in subjects that have a major practical element.

Therefore, before deciding to educate at home Parents should:

1. Consider all the issues very seriously. The responsibility to provide education at home would take a considerable commitment of time and energy.
2. Have a clear plan of how you will deliver the education.
   * Factor in the costs involved of providing the education to your child
   * It is important to be mindful of the elements that your child may not experience whilst being educated at home. They may miss the social aspect of school, contact with other children, joint school activities and the impetus which comes from seeing other children’s work.
3. Fully appreciate the Local Authority’s role in educating your child at home. The Local Authority will only monitor the suitability of the education provided and will not play an active daily role in the delivery of the education. There are no Local Authority grants available to help with education at home, costs of materials, equipment, examination fees etc. will be borne by parents.

## What is a parent’s duty?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (aged 5 to 16) must receive a suitable education. Parents are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering the child at a school or by arranging an effective alternative to school.

The responsibility of Parents is clearly established in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which provides that:

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

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

**What is the Local Authority’s duty?**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty under Section under s.436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to enable it to establish the identities, so far as it is possible to do so, of children in its area who are not receiving a suitable education. The fact that a child is being educated at home does not mean that he or she is not receiving a suitable full-time education. However, in order to fulfil their section 436A duty, local authorities are entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided. When the Education Welfare Service becomes aware of your intention to educate at home, they will discuss with you the arrangements you are making to educate your child and will ask you to complete a proposal form or provide details of the arrangements you are making in your own format. An EHE advisor will arrange to meet with you to discuss your proposal and will complete a report following the meeting. As parents, you are under no legal obligation from education law to agree to such a meeting or to produce specific evidence, but you should carefully consider 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 s.7 requirement and may decide to issue a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of The Education Act 1996. The order requires your child to attend a named school in order to receive an efficient full-time education. However, the advisor may make recommendations and will give you a reasonable amount of time to improve the situation before this action is considered.

After the initial meeting to discuss the first Proposal, the advisor may ask to visit you again to discuss any recommendations and offer further support. Annual reviews of the education that you are providing will take place following the review of the Initial proposal.

**What is ‘efficient’ and ‘suitable’ education?**

An “efficient” and “suitable” education is not defined in the Education Act 1996 but “efficient” has been broadly described as an education that “achieves that which it sets out to achieve”, and a “suitable” education is one that “primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child’s options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so.”

It is recognized that there are many approaches to educational provision and what is suitable for one child may not be for another.

## Compulsory school age:

All children who are 16 on or after 1st September in Year 11 may leave on the last Friday of the following June.

At the other end of the spectrum, children must be educated from the age of five, although Parents cannot be required either to admit the child to a school or educate otherwise until the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday.

## Full-time:

There is no legal definition of “full-time” education. In providing full-time education Local Authorities look to DfES Circulars 7/90 and 11/99 as to the number of hours

recommended for pupils at each Key Stage (KS). Neither imposes any statutory requirements on LAs but provides guidance only.

The recommended minimum hours per week of taught time are as follows:

Age 5-7 KS1 (Years 1-2) : 21 hours

Age 7-11 KS2 (Years 3-6) : 23.5 hours

Age 11-15 KS3 (Years 7-9)/KS4 (Year 10) : 24 hours

Age 16 KS4 (Year 11) : 25 hours

Children in state-maintained schools attend 380 sessions (190 days) in an academic year.

## Special educational needs:

Children with special educational needs (SEND) are defined as having a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A learning difficulty is defined with regard to children over 5 as:

1. a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age.
2. a disability that either prevents or hinders a child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children at his/her age in schools within the area of the Local Authority.

Parents’ right to educate their child at home applies equally when a child has special educational needs. Some children with special educational needs have an EHCP but others do not.

When a child has an EHCP and is educated at home, it remains the Local Authority’s duty to ensure that the child’s needs are being met.

The EHCP remains in force and the Local Authority must ensure that Parents

are able to make suitable provision including provision for the child’s SEN.

If the parent’s arrangements are suitable, the Local Authority is relieved of its duty to arrange the provision specified in the EHCP. However, if the provision provided by Parents is failing to meet the child’s needs and they are not therefore making “suitable arrangements” and the Local Authority could not conclude that they were absolved of their responsibility to arrange the provision in the EHCP, the LA may decide to issue a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of The Education Act 1996.

If the Local Authority is satisfied with the provision being made it remains under a duty to maintain the EHCP and review it annually following procedures set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

Where the Local Authority is satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place it does not have to name a school in the statement though it should state the type of school

it considers appropriate and then go onto state that “parents have made their own arrangements under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.”

# How to Contact Us

People’s Services

St Helens Borough Council

Education Welfare Service

PO Box 512

St Helens

WA10 9JX

**Email : ehe@sthelens.gov.uk**

**Telephone 01744 673356**

**For further guidance/discussion please contact:**

**Elective Home Education Co-*Ordinator* Helen McCabe**

Telephone: 01744 673356

**More Information**

Below are numerous websites, ranging from educational resources to social interactions, which you may find useful when delivering home education. This list is by no means exhaustive; there is a wealth of further support and resources which can easily be found online or by searching through these sites.

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| **Advice, Support and Information** | |
| Home Education Advisory Service | www.heas.org.uk |
| Education Otherwise | www.educationotherwise.net |
| Family Lives | www.familylives.org.uk |
| Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) | [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk) |
| Ed Yourself | www.edyourself.org.uk |

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| **Educational Resources, Books and Schemes of work** | |
| TES | www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources |
| BBC Bitesize | [www.bbc.co.uk/education](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education) |
| CGP educational workbooks | [www.cgpbooks.co.uk](http://www.cgpbooks.co.uk) |
| Kahn Academy | [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) |
| Twinkl | [www.twinkl.co.uk](http://www.twinkl.co.uk) |
| Reading eggs | www.readingeggs.co.uk |
| Schofield & Sims educational workbooks | www.schofieldandsims.co.uk |
| Collins Books educational workbooks | www.collins.co.uk |
| My Maths | [www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk) |
| Literacy Planet | www.literacyplanet.com |
| Doodle Maths | [www.doodlemaths.com](http://www.doodlemaths.com) |
| Maths Watch | [www.mathswatch.co.uk](http://www.mathswatch.co.uk) |
| Primary Leap | [www.primaryleap.co.uk](http://www.primaryleap.co.uk) |
| Sparkle Box | [www.sparklebox.co.uk](http://www.sparklebox.co.uk) |
| Edplace | [www.edplace.com](http://www.edplace.com) |
| Future Learn | [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com) |
| Oxford Reading Tree: Biff,Chip and  Kipper books. | https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk |
| Science: Whizz,Pop,Bang | [www.whizzpopbang.com](http://www.whizzpopbang.com) |
| MFL:Duolingo | [www.duolingo.com](http://www.duolingo.com) |
| Oxford Home Schooling/Open Learning | www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk |
| Muddle Puddle | www.muddlepuddle.co.uk |
| Oak National Academy – Free on-line teaching resources | www.thenational.academy |

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| **Examinations** | |
| At home education.co.uk | [www.at](http://www.at)homeeducation.co.uk |
| Inter high | www.interhigh.co.uk |

**Enrichment Activities**

Education at home can be flexible and can be enriched with a variety of activities and interests; the list of activities is infinite! The suggestions below are designed to help you think about what you may wish to do. You have the flexibility to decide for yourself what is appropriate for your child, but you may wish to consider some of the following:

**Filling in the gaps**: sometimes lessons may have moved on in specific areas before a child is ready or has grasped the concepts. Consider filling in the gaps in understanding and knowledge.

**Using your child’s own interests**: talk to your child and find out what his / her interests are. Use these as starting points for research projects and topic work. Working on subjects that are interesting is far more motivating and exciting.

**Get to know other home educating families**: consider joining parental groups on Facebook, MADCOW or Yahoo. The Local Authority EHE contact can often put you in touch with other home educating parents. Sometimes families meet to work or do practical and craft activities.

**Social Activities**

* Allow time for meeting the extended family and for social events
* Churches or The Youth Service have events and activities for young people
* Visit the theatre, go bowling, go to museums, etc.
* Plan regular visits to the library and plan some time for reading. Consider choosing both fiction and non-fiction books
* Find out about activities planned for children at the library. (Story reading sessions, puppets, etc.)
* Internet access is available at the library

**Getting Out and About**

* Plan some time to get ‘out and about’; allow for breaks
* Use the local library or websites to do research about what is going on locally or places to visit
* Join local clubs or groups. (Ramblers, brass bands, drama groups: anything that interests your child.)
* Visit museums or local places of interest

**Physical Activities**

* Plan to do some physical activity each day: swimming, cycling or walking. Consider joining a gym, using a sports centre or getting some equipment or fitness DVDs
* Join a sports team. (Netball, basketball or football team.)
* Practice gross and fine motor skills, such as brain-gym activities

**Art and Craft**

* Plan some time for Art and Craft activities: make things with different materials
* Improve drawing skills: design clothes or other items

**Local Issues**

* Find out about your locality
* Read local papers and write letters to newspapers and councils
* Find out about how things have changed locally over the years. Look at old maps and contrast to today

**The World**

* The world is waiting to be discovered!
* Draw flags and find the countries on a map of the world
* Find out about a country: its people, history and culture

**The Natural World**

* Watch wildlife programmes
* Draw and write about different animals and birds
* Find out about environmental issues: locally, nationally and globally
* Take temperature measurements and keep a weather log
* Find out about natural disasters. (Tornados, floods, earthquakes, etc.)

**First Aid / Health**

* Look for First Aid courses
* Find out about the human body and how it works; learn how to keep healthy
* Learn about Health and Safety Issues. The HSA produce some good workbooks for children with quiz style activities

**Careers**

* Find out about different jobs, working conditions, qualifications, hours and wages: look at advantages and disadvantages
* Contact the Careers Connect Service. If you are educated at home and over 15, you can still access careers advice and be provided with a personal adviser

**Cooking / Entertaining**

* Plan healthy menus: try out new recipes
* Cook family meals

**Shopping**

* Play shop: price-up tins and other items from the kitchen cupboard. Develop a feel for the cost and price of things
* Count money in a purse or money box
* Make up a shopping list of basic items and compare the cost between supermarkets to find out the cheapest. Track the cost over time to see increase in prices
* Find out about Consumer Rights
* Use ‘WHICH’ for research to work out which is the best value for something your family is buying

**Finance**

* Banks have lots of leaflets. Find out about saving, credit and interest rates and the difference between accounts.
* Learn about finance and budgeting 
* Find out the cost of running a home
* Track stocks and shares

**Work Experience**

* You may wish to use work experience as part of your child’s education. However, there are regulations about young people and work, so do your research first
* Ensure any work meets the regulations and there is insurance: Careers Connect may be able to advise you regarding work experience

<https://www.sthelensheritagehub.org.uk/>

St Helens Heritage Hub includes information on a variety of heritage attractions, local groups and organisations, information on the Archive Service, volunteering opportunities and education resources as well as a ‘Community Archive‘, offering the opportunity to browse or upload and add to over 5000 contributions that document, celebrate and promote heritage across St Helens.

**Open University have just launched the** [**Elective Home Education, produced by the Open University on OpenLearn**](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/elective-home-education-hub?filter=date/grid/all/all/all/all/all/all)**. This hub is a collection of free resources, including articles and badged open courses tailored to support home educators, home-educated young people, and other stakeholders.**