

London Borough of Hounslow

Elective Home Education Policy

This policy outlines the legal framework and approach of the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) to Elective Home Education (EHE), in accordance with the Education Act 1996, Children Act 1989, the Education Act 2002, Children and Families Act 2014, and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025.

It reflects local procedures and responsibilities, ensuring that all children receive a suitable education in a safe environment. It sits alongside our Elective Home Education Guide for Parents and our Elective Home Education Guide for Professionals.

1. Principles

Parents have the legal right to educate their children at home.

The London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) has a duty to ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, whether at school or otherwise.

This policy aligns with national legislation and local safeguarding responsibilities.

2. Policy Statement

The Department for Education (DfE) "*Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities*", published in April 2019, emphasises the importance of Local Authorities building effective relationships with home educators to safeguard the educational interests of children and young people.

The EHE team will always seek to build positive relationships with home educators to protect the educational and safeguarding interests of children being electively home educated. The team focus on the positive and enabling aspects of legislation related to EHE that foster an approach of working together with the families in our borough.

The EHE team recognise that there are many approaches to elective home education and parents/carers education provision will be diverse.

The EHE team liaise with families to fully understand the education that is being provided and ensure that this aligns with Section 7 of the 1996 Act. Section 7 requires parents to provide an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs which the child may have.

Parents may home educate children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). If the child attends a special school, LBH must consent to the removal from roll. This is considered at our EHC Panel. If approved, LBH remains responsible for ensuring the child's needs are met and will reach out to families to ensure that provision is aligned to Section 7 (above).

The EHE team have clear criteria to evaluate the suitability of education and take a consistent approach with all families in terms of building a mutually positive relationship.

Procedures for registering for elective home education are set out in our Elective Home Education Guide for Parents. This guide sets out the right of parents in relation to elective home education.

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3. The Legal Framework

LBH has 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) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. This duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and do not appear to be receiving a suitable education other than being at school.

This duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and when we do not know if a child is receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school. The parents/carers of all children identified as such will receive a letter from us with our Elective Home Education Guide for Parents.

Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Under Section 42 of the Children and Families Act (2014) the Local Authority is responsible for securing the specified special education provision within a child's Education, Health and Care Plan. This applies if the child's parents have not arranged a suitable education in some other way.

A further statutory duty exists, which requires us to serve a formal notice under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, if it appears that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education. Prior to initiating any legal intervention, we will always endeavour to work with parents/carers to gather relevant information that will assist us in reaching an informed decision regarding the suitability of the education being provided. Any decision will be aligned to the criteria used to evaluate the suitability of education.

If, after all reasonable steps have been taken to consider the situation, we believe that there is insufficient evidence that a suitable education is being provided by the parents/carers, and a Notice (which gives no less than 15 days to respond) has been served, we may serve a School Attendance Order (SAO) under Section 437(3) of the Education Act 1996. The EHE team work with our Children Missing Education (CME) team in these circumstances to ensure every reasonable step has been taken.

4. Elective Home Education and safeguarding

The welfare and protection of all children, both those who attend 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 Hounslow.

The EHE Team will always follow Hounslow Children Safeguarding Partnership (HCSP) safeguarding procedures. They work with relevant agencies and individuals to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

If an officer or teacher has any safeguarding concerns, this will be reported to the appropriate team or partner agency. We share information in line with our Privacy Notice found at [Education & Early Years | Privacy notice | London Borough of Hounslow](#)

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LBH acknowledge that parents can declare to EHE at any time; however, it considers that where a child is made subject to a Child Protection plan, currently subject to a child protection plan, or is a child in need, the conference chair/chair of the child in need meeting will make clear that if the parent/carer has already declared EHE, or states an intention to do so, the risk will be re-considered in light of this information with the likelihood that the child could be considered unsafe as a consequence. The EHE team will immediately contact the allocated social worker should they be informed that a child open to children's social care has elected to home educate.

5. Elective Home Education and 'suitable' education

The EHE team are very proud of their strong, successful relationships with our home educating families and look forward to working with you. The EHE team offer:

- Friendly advice, guidance and support
- Signposting to education links, websites, groups, other services
- Advice around public examinations

It is our duty to keep in touch and determine that the education being provided is efficient, suitable, and full-time. In Hounslow we feel the best way to do this is to have a clear understanding of the following:

- The time set aside for education
- The work on literacy and numeracy
- The skills, aptitudes, and challenges of the child(ren)
- Understanding of any SEN and/or disability
- The physical activities and social opportunities
- Resources used and the learning space or environment

To make sure we do this in a timely and effective way, we expect to see you and your child(ren) regularly and will maintain frequent contact to support you and your family.

We consider meeting the child(ren) and parent(s) an important part of our duty and our approach. This often presents an opportunity to gather further and in-depth information regarding the education being provided. It strengthens our assurance that the child is enjoying and thriving because of the full-time and suitable education in place.

We expect to see every child being home educated at least once a year.

This approach is an appropriate, timely, and reasonable response to our statutory duties and presents the opportunity for us to support, extend, and share good practice.



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6. Data Protection and Information Sharing

All personal data is handled in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Information may be shared with relevant professionals where necessary to safeguard children or ensure educational provision.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to legislative changes. We will continue to engage with home educating families to improve services and support.

8. Contacts

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