

Elective Home Education

Bitesize Guide for Parents / Carers

When is Education Compulsory?

The law requires a child to be educated from the beginning of the school term after his or her fifth birthday, until the last Friday in June where the child is sixteen on or between 1 September of the previous year and 31 August of the current year.

Most parents carry out this legal duty by enrolling their child at a local school. However, for a wide variety of reasons, some parents and carers decide to take on the duty to educate their children themselves at home.

Relationships with the school

If you have a disagreement with the school, this alone should not be a decision to take your child out of school and educate them at home. In these instances, please speak with the headteacher, follow the school complaints policy or contact our Education Welfare Service www.cornwall.gov.uk/ews to help you seek a resolution to the situation that is acceptable to you and in your child's best interest.

What if my child's school has suggested I remove my child from their roll and register as home educated, can they do this?

Schools **must not** seek to persuade parents to educate children at home; the Department for Education states this very clearly. If your child's school does suggest this to you, we strongly recommend you contact the Education Welfare Service for advice and guidance before you make any decisions about home education or write to school to remove your child.

Things to consider when thinking about educating your child at home

- Are you considering EHE as a positive choice or do you feel pressured, or you have no alternative? If the latter, we would strongly advise that you discuss this with the Education Welfare Service before taking further steps to remove your child from school
- Have you discussed home education with your child and is he/she positive about the suggestion?
- Have you read and understood our Elective Home Education Policy and Statement of Suitable Education, at www.cornwall.gov.uk/ehe?
- Have you made contact with any educational organisations that deal with home education matters? They can help to put you in touch with other parents who are home educating so that you can talk to them about the advantages and disadvantages
- Do you any previous experience of teaching or in providing home education?



- Do you have the time to devote to your child's education? Who will supervise him/her during the day? The law requires parents to secure appropriate full-time education, so home education should occupy a significant proportion of a child's life
- Do you feel confident you can teach your child effectively or can you provide a qualified, DBS checked tutor?
- Are you able to provide the necessary resources to support your child's education? Does he/she have safe, supervised access to information technology and the internet?
- Will your child have opportunities to have social experiences with other young people and make friends?
- Can you provide opportunities for your child to take part in physical exercise?
- Do you want your child to take GCSEs or other qualifications? If so, you are responsible for finding an exam centre willing to accept external candidates for the appropriate exam board and for meeting all of the costs which can be expensive and may include travel out of Cornwall
- Is there any likelihood of a future return to school? If so, there is no guarantee there will be a place available at your previous or preferred school. A new application will need to be submitted to the School Admissions Service at Cornwall Council

If I home educate, will I receive any financial or educational support?

No. Cornwall Council does not provide any financial support, schemes of work or programmes of study. Costs for books, equipment, examination fees, outings, tutors etc. will have to be provided by you. The EHE Team can offer appropriate advice and support when asked although it is not their role to provide the actual education. In addition, if your child has been withdrawn from a school, the school is under no obligation to give you any help or assistance.

Can I still access support for my family or child from other services?

Yes. Support for children and young people is available by contacting our Early Help Hub www.cornwall.gov.uk/earlyhelp.

Your health support is unaffected by your decision to EHE. In order to ensure that EHE families receive notification from the School Nursing Team regarding inoculations and medical information normally disseminated through schools, contact details will be shared on a confidential basis. You should also inform your GP / Health Centre that your child is now home educated. You may also be able to access support from a community group or the voluntary sector.

What is the parent's duty?

The law states that "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

What is ‘Efficient’ and ‘Suitable’ Education?

Case law defines education as ‘efficient’ if it achieves what it sets out to achieve and ‘suitable’ if it “primarily equips a child for life within the community of which she or 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 s/he wishes to do so”.

Ultimately, a judgement has to be made in each individual circumstance. Our website www.cornwall.gov.uk/ehe offers further advice and guidance on our definition of suitable education and the reasons why it may deem the education not to be suitable. You can also get information from other home education organisations that offer support and advice on elective home education.

What is ‘full time’ education?

As a guide, children who go to school attend for 190 days a year (38 weeks) and spend between 22 and 25 hours on work each week. Although there is no requirement for parents to do the same, home education should occupy a significant proportion of a child’s life.

What if my child has Special Educational Needs or an EHC Plan?

Before removing your child from school roll, we would strongly recommend that you talk to the Special Education Needs (SEN) team statutorysen@cornwall.gov.uk or 01872 324242.

When a child is removed from school roll, access to some SEN support services is limited or no longer universally available to your child. It is therefore important that you are aware of this prior to removal.

You have a right to electively home educate your child if they have an EHCP. However, it remains the responsibility of Cornwall Council, if your child lives in Cornwall, to ensure that your child’s needs are met. If your child is attending a special school, Cornwall Council Statutory SEN service must give consent for your child’s name to be removed from the school roll and state home education as the named educational provision on the EHCP.

Do children have to follow any specific curriculum?

No. There are many styles of education and approaches to learning. Education does not always need to follow a set plan of ‘lessons’ or even a ‘timetable’. It can be varied and flexible. What you teach and how your child learns is up to you, provided that you can show that the education is suitable, efficient and full time.

Do I have to teach the National Curriculum?

No. It does not apply to children educated at home. However, it is a comprehensive package of subjects with content and coverage ideas for all ages that could be a useful tool for home education. You may wish your child to start or re-enter school at some point in the future and this would be easier for them if the requirements of the National Curriculum have been taken into account.

You may find it helpful to consider the assessment method you will be using to record your child's learning and show progress they have made. We will ask parents for this information when it comes to determining whether the home education is suitable, efficient and full time.

If I decide to educate at home, will my child be able to go to a school later on?

Yes. Applying online is the quickest way at www.cornwall.gov.uk/schooladmissions. They will be able to give you advice and support to enable your child to return to school. Alternatively, complete and submit a paper version then contact Tel. 0300 1234 101.

Can my child still take exams?

Yes. You can arrange for your child to take exams as an external candidate at exam centres. The only available exam centre in Cornwall is Cornwall College who currently provide a limited GCSE exam offer to external candidates. You will need to contact the centres to make enquiries about the subjects they offer, and any exam timetables they have. As there are no grants or other funds available to cover the costs, if you decide to enter your child for any examinations, you will be responsible for contacting the examination boards, for booking the exams and paying any fees incurred.

What if I want my child wants to go to a college for pre-16 learning?

There is no automatic right to a college placement for home educated children and pre 16 provision for students in Cornwall is currently extremely limited. You would need to approach the Colleges and determine whether a suitable course is available.

Young people registered with the Local Authority as home educated, and who will be in Year 11 in the upcoming September, can apply for a place on a range of vocational programmes at Cornwall College to complement their home education. Students can not join these programmes part way through an academic year if parents decide to remove their child from school to home educate. You must check the deadlines for applications prior to considering home education. Be aware that there are no free school meals and no automatic entitlement to transport for home educated children.

What about child employment and work experience

Any employment that your child takes part in will require a work permit issued by Cornwall Council and will be restricted in terms of nature and amount as would be the case for all children of compulsory school age. You must not allow your child to undertake any type of work, paid or otherwise during normal school hours. No child is allowed in law to work below the age of 13 years and all employment must comply with current legislation.

If your child accesses a work experience placement, they must be at least 14 years old, and you would be responsible for ensuring the suitability of the work experience placement including undertaking risk assessments and checking insurance is in place.

Child employment: www.cornwall.gov.uk/childemployment

Work experience: www.cornwall.gov.uk/workexperience

What happens when my child is between 16 and 19 years old?

In the July following a young person's 16th birthday, they cease to be statutory school age. CSW Group are the service for supporting and tracking all known 16 to 19 year old people. Details of all post 16 students on the EHE register will automatically be transferred to them before their names are removed from the EHE register.

Can home educated pupils access post 16 college courses?

Colleges offer a range of courses for post 16 young people. Some courses do not require a young person to have any formal qualifications, however, most courses have entry requirements (GCSE's may form part of the requisite for an offer to be made) and you are advised to attend college open days/contact the college to find out about these requirements.

I've decided to home educate so how do I start?

If your child has never attended school, there is no action for you to take prior to starting home education. Whilst parents are under no legal obligation to register or seek approval to home educate, to avoid unnecessary Child Missing Education enquiries Cornwall Council expects parents to inform them of your decision to home educate your child at the following times:

- if they do not intend to apply for a place in a Reception class
- if they do not intend to apply for a school place at secondary transfer or infant/junior transfer
- when they move into the area

If your child is enrolled at a school, then you must notify the school in writing making it clear you are electing to home educate your child and are accepting full legal responsibility for their full-time education otherwise than in school. If parents do not provide written notification to their child's school, then the child cannot legally be deregistered (removed) from school admission register. In these circumstances Cornwall Council will expect schools to conclude that the child is missing or is not attending school.

Cornwall Council maintains a record of education provision for all compulsory school age children, this included those that have elected to home educate.

What happens when I withdraw my child from school?

Your child will no longer have a school place and you are immediately responsible for the education of your child. Once you have informed the school that you are home educating, the school will inform the Education Welfare Service and send them a completed EHE Referral form. We will send you an EHE pack and contact you to talk about the work you are planning to undertake and your longer-term educational plans for the child. You may wish to meet face-to-face or prefer to provide information over the telephone, by email or in writing. All of these ways are fine.

What is Cornwall Council's role?

We recognise every parent's right to choose to home educate. Our responsibility is to make sure that all children living within Cornwall are receiving a suitable full-time education. Every parent chooses different ways to home educate, so we will endeavour to look at each child's provision to see if the education is suitable and meets the requirements of the law.

What is the parent's role?

In order to carry out its duty, Cornwall Council will ask you to provide evidence that your child is receiving a suitable full-time education. This may be done in a number of ways e.g. parents might:

- Accept a home visit from the EHE Team with or without the child being present
- Write a report
- Provide samples of work which may be written, pictorial, photographic etc.
- Meet with a member of the EHE Team elsewhere, with or without the child being present
- Provide evidence in any other appropriate form

After any agreed contact, we will discuss whether or not the education provided meets the requirements of the law, any concerns and if requested, will make some suggestions and recommendations for further progress.

How often will Cornwall Council contact parents?

We accept that all informal contact with EHE families is on a voluntary basis. Following any agreed contact, as long as we decide that the education provided is suitable, then any further contact will normally be on an annual basis. Parents can request additional advice / contact if they wish.

What if Cornwall Council is not satisfied?

The vast majority of parents home educate their children successfully and often to a very high standard. Where our enquiries find the education provided is not suitable, or where parents do not respond to enquiries, you will be informed in writing of the concerns and a timescale given for changes to be made before further contact is arranged. If we are still not satisfied, we will issue a notice requiring parents to satisfy the Council that their child is receiving suitable full-time education.

If a parent fails to satisfy us within the specified time stated in the notice, the Council may issue an order known as a School Attendance Order requiring the child to become a pupil at a named school. Failure to comply with the school attendance order would be an offence and may result in a prosecution. This is a rare occurrence, and we would hope to work with parents so that this route is avoided. However, Cornwall Council has a legal responsibility to act to safeguard and promote the educational well-being of all children in its authority.

How will the Education Welfare Service Team support me?

We have an experienced and dedicated home education team with a wealth of information regarding educational resources and local services that home educating families may find useful. The allocated home education officer will be able to discuss resources and provide information during their visit or contact. Resources and information can also be found on our elective home education website and Facebook page.

Our website

www.cornwall.gov.uk/ehe

There is a variety of information available including Cornwall Council's EHE policy, statement of suitable education, EHE Records, and this guidance document. The resources and services sections include useful links and resources regarding a number of topics.

Our Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/groups/ehcornwall/

Our Elective Home Education Facebook page is a platform for the home education team to provide you with up-to-date information regarding national and local themed days and events. It is also used to share any relevant information and resources that you may find useful, including post 16 provision.

Support groups

You can contact national and regional support groups for advice and guidance about elective home education:

www.cornwall.gov.uk/ehesupport#support

Legal advice

[Children's Legal Centre](#) is a charity that promotes and protects the rights of children in the UK and worldwide.

Contact us

Email: ehadmin@cornwall.gov.uk

Call **01872 324298**