



POLICY ON ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION 2016

(CHILDREN BEING EDUCATED AT HOME BY PARENTAL CHOICE)

Leeds is a child friendly city and we wish to ensure that all children have positive opportunities and the best outcomes.

The Education Act 1996, Section 7, states that it is the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The word “otherwise” affirms parents right to educate their child themselves instead of sending them to school.

The majority of children of compulsory school age attend their local school in Leeds. Some parents for a wide variety of reasons, choose to exercise their right to home educate, and as such take on responsibility to provide an efficient and suitable education.

Parents do not need to seek permission from Children’s Services to educate their children themselves but, if the child currently attends a school, they must inform the school in writing. The school will then take the child off the school roll and have no further responsibility for their education.

Parents of pupils who have attended a Special school and who have a statement of special educational need, which in Leeds are known as Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs), do require the consent of Children’s Services if it is their intention to educate them at home. If a child has a statement of Special Educational Needs, Children’s Services has a legal duty to ensure that the child’s needs are met and to undertake annual reviews. This continues if the child is home educated.

Responsibilities of the Local Authority

Children’s Services as the local authority has two duties relating children that are home educated.

Firstly, under section 175 (1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and “to make arrangements for ensuring the functions conferred upon them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children”.

Secondly although local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis, under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities shall intervene **if it appears** that parents are not providing a suitable education:

"If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in



their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education."

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

At the point that a child becomes home educated, Children's Services will:

- gather information from the referring school
- check whether the named child or any other child living at the address is known to social care, Families First or has/had a recent Early Help Plan
- undertake a safeguarding and information giving home visit within a 2/3 weeks of the referral

Where the child

- has a statement of SEN, this visit will be carried out by the SENSAP officer attached to the statement.
- is GRT and living on the Cottingley site, the visit will be carried out by the GRT team and/or Children's Services Officer
- is neither of the above, the visit will be undertaken by an Children's Services officer

All officers complete the same initial visit form and assess the safeguarding risk at that meeting. Any follow up safeguarding actions are undertaken by the officer, with support from their managers or local targeted service leaders and lead officer for EHE. The officer may also provide local information on services in the area. Before the meeting, they are advised to check on space in local schools with admissions, should the parents decide that EHE is not in their child's best interests or circumstances have now changed.

Suitable Education

Parents are sent either following their enquiry or at the point when a referral to home education is received a document called "Information and Guidance for Parents" which clearly outlines the responsibilities of parents in terms needing to provide an "efficient, suitable and full time education". Parents are requested to complete and return a "Child Information Form" where they are asked to outline their philosophy and plans for educating their child/children. They may also provide this information in an alternative form – such as a letter or statement

While there is no nationally agreed frame work to determine suitable education, it would be assumed that parents need to show what they are providing for their child is helping them to learn, that education is appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and that any special educational needs are being addressed. Provision should cater for the child's physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development. Importantly, it should prepare the child for life in modern society.

Parents are not required to provide any particular type of education and, if a child has special educational needs, the parent does not need to have special qualifications or training to assume direct responsibility for the child's education. Arrangements for part-time or flexi school schooling are matters for parents and schools to negotiate.

As outlined below, Officers may contact parents and seek to arrange either to meet with them and their child at home, or some other mutually acceptable venue, or seek written information from the parents in order to identify home education. If it would appear that a child is not receiving suitable education, we will offer support and information. If this does not lead to a suitable education, then



we may proceed to an attendance order and/or refer to child missing education team.

If parents do not respond or their response is unsatisfactory, the Local Authority may assume that a child is not receiving appropriate education and may then issue a School Attendance Order (under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996). Local Authorities may also apply to the Court for a child assessment under the Children Act 1989, if they have reasonable cause to do so.

Children's Services Procedures Related to Elective Home Education (EHE)

1. Parents may request written information or request to speak to an officer regarding EHE. Information is also on the website www.familyinformationleeds.com
2. If a parent/carer decides to educate their child at home they must inform the child's current school in writing.
3. Once a school receives written confirmation from the parents/carers to this effect the child's name can be removed from the school roll. Section 12 (3) of the "The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006" makes it a duty of head teachers to inform the Local Authority that a parent/carer has confirmed to them in writing that they will now educate their child at home and that the child is no longer on the school roll. The person to be informed in Children's Services is the Senior Administrative Officer (EHE).
4. Schools are requested to send on to Children's Services at EHE@leeds.gov.uk a copy of the parents letter and complete a referral form outlining any information relevant to the child re level of achievement, attendance, FSM. Schools are encouraged to call the lead officer for EHE if they have any concerns with the child becoming home educated.
5. If a child has a Child Protection Plan, Children's Services and Leeds Children and Young People Social Care must be notified immediately by the designated teacher for Child Protection at the school at which the child was previously on roll. The EHE Officer will contact the cluster social care team to discuss this action. A professional's meeting may be called.
6. Children's Services will add the child's details to a central database and will check with Integrated Processes Team for any social care/ EHP prior to creating pre populated initial meeting forms for these meetings with from the information from the school referral form.

A booklet entitled "Information and Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers considering Home Education" together with a Child Information Form (CIF) will be sent to parents/carers once a referral is received. The Child Information Form, completed by parents/carers, informs Children's Services of the education provision they are making for their child. Some parents/carers may prefer to provide this information in a different format. They are requested to return the CIF form or other documentation to the Senior Administrative Officer (EHE) within 15 working days of the CIF form being sent to them. If the form or other documentation is not returned within 15 working days a follow-up letter requesting this information will be posted. A Case worker will call parents within the first week following notification and discuss the responsibilities and options. If possible the initial visit will be arranged in this call.



7. Requests to the EHE team/attendance/SENSAP or GRT will be sent to undertake initial meetings within 3 days of the referral arriving with Children's Services. It is anticipated that these safeguarding and information visits will take place within a month of the referral to the service – dates of the meeting are organised with parents as far as possible and will be confirmed by letter. Parents will be offered support from their local cluster at this meeting. Following the visit, the completed form will be returned to educ.eotas@leeds.gov.uk
8. The returned CIF forms will be assessed initially as a desk top exercise by a trained teacher. Should further clarification on the education be needed, parents will be contacted to provide this information within a suitable time scale. If the planning is viewed as sufficient, and information from the initial visit does not give rise to concerns, further contact with the parents/carers would usually take place in 12 months to seek updated information. In the meantime, information from the clusters and from Children's Services will be sent to the parents as relevant to year group or children's interest.
9. Children with a statement of SEN will continue to have support from SENSAP officers and suitably trained teachers who will assess in terms of the statement or work seen the suitability of their education on a regular basis.
10. Where the CIF is not returned and there are concerns about home education provision following the initial visit and parents/carers will not consider sending their child to school, a referral is made to the Children Missing Education (CME) Team. Subsequently action might be taken, under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996 School Attendance Orders, to secure the child's attendance at a school. If parents/carers do not comply with this Order, Children's Services may institute court proceedings.
11. 12. The EHE team work closely with attendance, locality clusters, Area Inclusion Partnerships, Admissions, health visitors, Families First and social care. Any concerns will be addressed through contact appropriate services and agencies. As appropriate, parents and carers will be informed of this.
12. All referrals, information from schools, requests for visits, email and telephone contacts with parents are recorded with date and time on the PSS system.

Contact details for the EHE team

Administration Office -Elective Home Education

Children's Services

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