



Brighter  
Futures for  
Children

# Elective Home Education

Information & guidance  
for parents & carers

## Brighter Futures for Children

Delivering children's services on behalf of  
Reading Borough Council

---

© Brighter Futures for Children

Brighter Futures for Children  
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,  
Reading RG1 2LU

Registered company in England & Wales:  
11293709

## Introduction

This booklet aims to help you understand what may be involved if you choose to home educate. It explains some of the situations which may arise, the responsibilities of parents and carers and the role of Brighter Futures for Children.

## School or home education?

One of the biggest decisions you will ever make is choosing how your child will be educated. There are different options to consider. Most parents choose local schools and are happy with the



education provided. Brighter Futures for Children has a range of primary and secondary schools and you can find out more about them by telephoning the School Admissions Team on 0118 9373 777. Every school provides its own information and you can telephone them directly to find out more. When parents choose to home educate their child Brighter Futures for Children recognises their right to do so and it seeks to foster positive relationships built on mutual respect so that the educational interests of the child are safeguarded.

## What things should I consider when deciding whether or not to educate at home?

- Home educating is a great responsibility and will take a considerable commitment of time and energy;
- Is it the best option for your child? Talk to him/her about it;
- Contact 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;
- Look at the costs involved – e.g. costs of visits, equipment, books, computer etc.;
- Think about how you could provide opportunities for your child to be involved in social activities, contact with other children and joint activities with other children and groups;
- Keep your options open as your child's needs may change at different ages and stages;
- Plan for a varied programme of activities and study both in the short and long term. Don't take your child out of school because you have a disagreement with the school or a teacher. If this happens, go to see the Headteacher or contact the Education Welfare Service to see if you can solve the problem;
- If your child is currently at school, you can get advice about EHE from the Headteacher, the school's Education Welfare Officer or you can contact Brighter Futures for Children's Advisory Teacher for Elective Home Education.
- 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. You can apply to Reading Borough Council (Education Welfare Service) for a work permit where conditions have been met.

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

No. If you choose to home educate, Brighter Futures for Children will 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 Advisory Teacher for Elective Home Education 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(ren) from other services?

Yes. If you feel your child or family need additional support from Children's Social Care or one of the Children's Action Team professionals, you can self-refer via the online referral form or contact us by phone on the below contacts:



<http://www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralform>



Children's Single Point of Access Team 0118 937 3641

Your health support is unaffected by your decision to EHE. As your child will no longer receive health information about preventative health care on offer via the School Nursing Service, you should inform your GP / Health Centre to ensure your child/ren is/are not disadvantaged. You may also be able to access support from a community group or the voluntary sector.

## Is Home Education legal?

Yes. Home Education is legal in all parts of the UK. You do not need to be a teacher or have any other special qualifications.

## Do children have to go to school?

No, but they do need to be educated and some parents decide to take on the "duty to educate" their children themselves.

## 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:



- (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.”

## What is statutory school age?

This means from the beginning of the school term after his or her fifth birthday, until the last Friday in June where the child is 16 on or between 1<sup>st</sup> September of the previous year and 31<sup>st</sup> August of the current year.

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

The September after the young person’s 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, parents/carers will receive a final letter and questionnaire from the Advisory Teacher for EHE before their details removed from the EHE list. Elevate Careers are the service within Brighter Futures for Children responsible for supporting and tracking all known 16 - 19 year olds and details of all post 16 young people will automatically be transferred to them.

## Who is the parent?

The parent is anyone who has parental responsibility (including guardians and carers) and anyone who has the actual day to day care of the child. Where there is a Care Order, an Education Supervision Order or if the child is a Ward of Court, special rules apply and you should seek further advice from the appropriate professionals.

## 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 s/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. You can get further advice on this by contacting Brighter Futures for Children’s Advisory Teacher for Elective Home Education – 0118 937 3840 / 07779 433763 You can also get information from other organisations that offer support and advice on elective home education.

## What is ‘full time’ education?

Although the length of full time is not specified, children in school normally spend between 22 and 25 hours on work each week, (38 weeks per year) which may be a helpful guideline. However, there is no requirement for parents to do the same.

## Do children have to follow any specific curriculum?

No. There is not just one form of education. Children learn in many different ways, at different times and speeds and from different people. 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 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.

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

Yes, if you contact the School Admissions Team on 0118 9373 777, they will be able to give you advice and support to enable your child to return to school.

## Can my child still take exams?

Yes. You can arrange for children to take exams as external candidates at various exam centres. Other home educators in your area may be able to signpost you to centres they have used successfully. 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.

## Will I have to arrange for my Year 6 child to take the Statutory Assessment Tests?

Statutory Assessment Tests in Year 6 are only a requirement at state schools and therefore not relevant to home education. Your child will not be required to sit the tests.

## Can I home educate a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan?

Yes. There is no law prohibiting the home education of these children. Additional permission is required if they are attending a special school. It is Brighter Futures for Children Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) team's responsibility to conduct an Annual Review. If the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and is being home educated, it is the responsibility of the parent to demonstrate to Brighter Futures for Children SEND team at the Annual Review that the

requirements within the document are being met for as long as the Education, Health and Care Plan is maintained.

Furthermore when home educating, you may still apply for your child to be receive an Education, Health and Care Plan. Brighter Futures for Children will process the request through the normal procedures. Support and guidance is available through Reading Information and Advice Service for SEND (IASS) (contact 0118 937 3421).

### What if my child is in a special school?

If your child attends a special school, you will need permission from Brighter Futures for Children's SEND team to de-register him / her and you will need to show that you can provide for his/her special needs as detailed in the Education, Health and Care Plan. Permission cannot be unreasonably withheld.

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

If your child has never been to school, there is no action for you to take prior to starting home education, although it is helpful to let your local School Admissions Team (contact number 0118 9373 777) know that you have decided to home educate in preference to requesting a school place. If your child is in school you must formally de-register him/her by writing to the Headteacher and saying that you intend to "withdraw your child to electively home educate him / her".

### What happens when I withdraw my child from school?

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 Brighter Futures for Children and send them a completed a School Exit Form. The Advisory Teacher for EHE will send you an EHE pack and then 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 Brighter Futures for Children's role?

Brighter Futures for Children recognises every parent's right to choose to home educate. Their responsibility is to make sure that all children living within the Borough are receiving a suitable education. Every parent chooses different ways to home educate, so the Advisory Teacher for EHE will endeavour to look at each child's programme 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, Brighter Futures for Children will ask you to provide evidence that your child is receiving a suitable education.



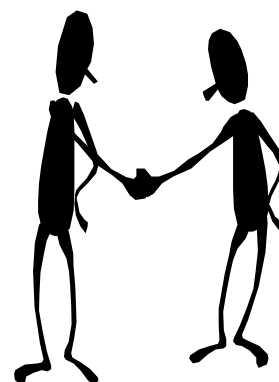
This may be done in a number of ways e.g. parents might:

- Accept a home visit from the Advisory Teacher for EHE with or without the child being present;
- Write a report;
- Provide samples of work which may be written, pictorial, photographic etc.
- Meet the Advisory Teacher for EHE elsewhere, with or without the child being present;
- Have the education provision endorsed by a recognised third party;
- Provide evidence in any other appropriate form.

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

### How often will Brighter Futures for Children contact parents?

The company accepts that all contact with EHE families is on a voluntary basis. Following any agreed contact, as long as the Advisory Teacher for EHE decides that the education provided is suitable, then a mutually convenient follow-up date can be arranged, usually between 3 and 6 months later. After that, any agreed contact will normally be on an annual basis. Parents can request additional advice / contact if they wish.



### What if Brighter Futures for Children is not satisfied?

The vast majority of parents home educate their children successfully and often to a very high standard. However, occasionally following a report from the Advisory Teacher for EHE, Brighter Futures for Children may not be satisfied with the provision of education a child is receiving. In such cases, the parent will be informed in writing of the concerns and a timescale given for changes to be made before further contact is arranged. If Brighter Futures for Children is still not satisfied it may issue a notice requiring the parent to satisfy them that the child is receiving suitable education. If a parent fails to satisfy Brighter Futures for Children within the specified time stated in the notice, the company may issue an order known as a School Attendance Order requiring the child to become a pupil at a named school. Failure to comply would be an offence. This is a very rare occurrence and Brighter Futures for Children would hope to work with parents so that this route is avoided. However, it must be borne in mind that Brighter Futures for Children has a legal responsibility to act to safeguard and promote the educational well-being of the child.

### In summary

Brighter Futures for Children's Advisory Teacher for EHE can offer advice to parents who are thinking about withdrawing their child / children to home educate to enable them to make a fully informed decision.

Once Brighter Futures for Children becomes aware that a parent has decided to electively home-educate:

- The child will be placed on the EHE register
- The Advisory Teacher for EHE will contact the parent in writing and send an Elective Home Education pack to them
- A follow up phone call will be made to offer support in any form that is acceptable to the family
- The Advisory Teacher for EHE will consider any evidence you choose to present including any plans you may have.
- If the Advisory Teacher for EHE is satisfied that you are providing, or have clear plans to provide a suitable education for your child, s/he will tell you and a mutually convenient follow-up date will be made, usually between 3 and 6 months later. After this, contact will normally be on an annual basis. Parents may request additional meetings if they wish.
- If the Advisory Teacher for EHE considers that you are not providing, or cannot provide a suitable education, s/he will tell you and arrange to contact you more frequently. In the rare cases where this happens, a report will give the reasons for this decision and will outline what will happen next.
- Where the educational provision is considered to be unsuitable, parents will be given time to adjust their plans. If the education continues to be unsuitable, Brighter Futures for Children continues to be dissatisfied with the educational provision, they may serve a School Attendance Order requiring the child to attend a named school. Failure to comply is an offence and Brighter Futures for Children would then seek legal advice.

If, as a result of any contact the Advisory Teacher for EHE has major educational, health, welfare or social concerns about your child, they may, in the interest of the child, refer them to the appropriate Education department / Children's Social Care.

### If I want to make a complaint, what should I do?

Brighter Futures for Children would hope to resolve any problems with you but if you still wish to make a complaint, there is a complaints procedure. To find out more, please contact the Pupil and School Support Service Manager on 0118 937 4148

## Further Information

### General

This Guidance is made by Brighter Futures for Children pursuant to

The Education Act 1996

Department for children, schools and families, Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities 2007 and 2013



Department for Education, Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities. September 2016.

Department for Education, School Attendance – Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. October 2014

The Equality Act 2010

## Definitions

### Case Law

- R v Secretary of State For Education & Science, Ex Parte Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School Trust - Times, April 12 1985
- Phillips v Brown 1980