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Elective Home Education Policy and Procedures

Introduction

The Education Act 1996, Section 7, requires parents of children not registered at school, to ensure their children receive education suited to their age ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs.

Parents are not obliged to inform the L A that their children are educated at home. However, if the child attends school they must write to the Headteacher informing him/her that they intend to withdraw their child from school and take responsibility for his/her education.

Education may be provided through a range of means including:

- Teaching by individual parents/guardians/carers
- Co-operatives of home-educators
- Paid professional tutors
- Education Trusts
- Distance learning
- Flexi-schooling

There is no requirement to follow the National Curriculum.

Education may take place in a variety of situations and not just in the home.

Parents of children with a statement of special educational need may elect to provide their child's education. However, if the child is registered at a special school they should seek the agreement of the Local Authority (L A) before withdrawing their child. The L A will wish to ensure that the educational provision set out in Part 3 of the statement can be provided at home.

In Surrey, the Elective Home Education (EHE) Team has responsibility for maintaining the register of children educated at home, and for monitoring their education.

Policy for Education by Parental Provision

Aims

The EHE Team respects the right of parents to provide education for their children and aims to:

- Maintain an up-to-date register of home-educated children.
- Seek information on the education provide by parents for their children.
- Respond promptly to parents who elect to home-educate.
- Support home-educating families.
- Work with other agencies in the best interest of home-educated children.
- Follow the DSCF Guidance To Local Authorities On Elective Home Education.
- Produce an annual report.

EHE Register

The EHE Team holds a database of home-educated children in Surrey that is updated weekly. EHE data is also held on EMS (One) and can be accessed by the Tracking Officer and other professionals in the L A.

It is the responsibility of Headteachers to inform the L A when a child is withdrawn from school for elective home education. The EHE Team requests a copy of the parental letter to the school.

The Connexions Service and Trident are notified, termly, of home educated children in national curriculum years 9, 10 and 11.

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Information is shared with Social Care Departments when there are concerns about a home educated child.

Information is provided to Health Trusts on request.

Seeking Information On Home Education

EHE Advisory Teachers make assessments of the educational provision under the criteria laid down in the Act, which states that a home education programme should be:

- Efficient
- Regular
- Full-time
- Suitable

In the first instance, information is sought after parents have had reasonable time (up to six weeks) to establish education at home. Subsequent requests are made on an annual basis.

The preferred circumstances for assessment are an informal meeting in the home between the parents, child and a member of the EHE Team with examples of the child's work available.

A home visits gives an opportunity to discuss with parents and children:

- The aims of their educational programme in order to assess its efficiency.
- The adaptation of teaching methods to the child's learning style and the textbooks and resources used to assess the suitability of the curriculum.
- The planned work programme to establish that it is regular and full-time.
- The use of assessment and recording to provide the child with on-going targets.
- Planning for continuity and progression of work.
- Opportunities for the child to socialise with others outside the family.
- Looking at samples of work together to enable judgements to be made on the regularity, efficiency, and suitability of the education provided.

However, we respect the right of parents to provide information in other ways. Their preference might be to:

- Invite a member of the EHE Team into their home without the child being present.
- Meet at an alternative location with or without the child.
- Write a report or provide a report from a tutor or other third party involved with the child's education.
- Produce samples of work.
- Provide the information in any other reasonable way.

Supporting Home Educating Families

When requested by parents or when required to improve the educational provision, support is provided to home-educators through:

- Advice on teaching methods and information on the national curriculum or alternative curricula.
- Increased frequency of home visits.
- Sale of textbooks and workbooks at cost.
- Provision of EHE identity cards.
- Involvement of other agencies e.g. The Connexions Service, Trident, etc.
- Advice and support to parents requesting formal assessment.
- Convening a review of statement for children with special educational needs as soon as possible after commencement of home education.
- Attendance at Annual Review meetings for children with a statement of special educational need.
- A 'get together' for home educating families to informally meet each other and the EHE Team. Education Otherwise (EO), the Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS), publishers and resource providers, etc. are invited the meeting.

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- Information sheets on GCSE Examinations, Tuition Agencies, Correspondence Course Providers and General Guidelines for Home Education.
- Contact details for SCC Transport and Admissions Service and contact details for schools for parents whose child is to return to school.

EHE Procedures

1. Providing Information On Home Education To Enquirers.

1. Information on elective home education including contact details for the EHE Team and a link to the E O website is on the Surrey County Council website www.surreycc.gov.uk.
2. All members of the EHE team are available to answer queries about elective home education. A rota for responding to telephone enquiries is arranged during the school holidays.
3. Surrey's booklet on Elective Home Education and covering letter (Letter 1) are sent to parents enquiring about home education or on receipt of information from a Headteacher that a child has been withdrawn from school.
4. Parents are requested to confirm either they have chosen to educate their child at home or their child will remain at school. (Reply slip and SAE provided)
5. If no response within 4 weeks the letter is sent again.
6. If no response after a further 4 weeks enquiries are made by telephone to school and/or parent to establish if child is attending school. Time scales may vary towards the end of term.

2. Requesting Information In Order To Assess The Education Provided For A Child.

1. The options letter (Letter 2) is sent to parents suggesting a time and date for an informal home visit within 6 weeks of child being added to EHE register.
2. Parents respond using enclosed reply slip and SAE.
3. If no response, EHE advisory teacher continues with visit.
4. If visit fails a note is left asking for contact so visit or alternative can be agreed.
5. If there is no contact or second visit fails child is referred to Education Welfare Service (EWS).
6. If, at any time, the Advisory Teacher believes there are grounds for referral to Social Services under the Child Protection Procedures, a referral will be via Surrey's Contact Centre.

3. Following Home Visit Or Alternative Receipt of Information.

i) Home visit.

1. If, at a home visit, the provision is seen to meet the criteria parents are told at the time and a written report follows by post or email.
2. If the provision is deemed to be unsatisfactory parents are told at the time and suggestions are made to improve the situation. A date, within 2-6 weeks, for a second visit is agreed. The suggestions and the appointment are confirmed in writing.
3. If the situation has not improved at the second visit step 2 is repeated.
4. Should there be insufficient or no improvement after three visits parents are advised that the child should return to school. The child is referred to EWS* and his/her name is removed from the EHE register.

ii) Alternative Receipt Of Information.

5. If parents provide information in another way and the provision meets the criteria a letter confirming the suitability of the provision is sent by post or email.
6. If the account of the provision is deemed to be unsatisfactory further enquiries are made.
7. If the EHE Advisory Teacher is not reassured steps 2-4 are followed.

*EWS will negotiate a return to school; in some cases an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a School Attendance Order (SAO) may be sought by the Courts' Officer.

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4. Subsequent Requests For Information.

Once education meets the criteria, an annual request is made for updated information (Letter 3).

5. Children With Statements Of Special Educational Need Registered At A Special School.

- The parents of a statemented child registered at a special school, must obtain the consent of the L A before withdrawing their child from school.
- The L A will wish to be satisfied that the home provision meets the objectives set out in part 3 of the statement.
- In order to be satisfied an EHE Advisory Teacher would arrange to meet parents and child, preferably at home, to discuss the proposed provision.
- An Educational Psychologist (EP) and/or L A Support Service representative who know the child could be asked to attend the meeting.

6. All Statemented Children

- The EHE Team will convene an Annual Review inviting parents, child and professionals involved with the child. This will include the person responsible for planning and delivering the education programme and could include an educational psychologist, representatives from health, social services, the Connexions Service and Trident.
- The person responsible for planning and delivering the educational programme will be asked to submit a written report.
- The LEA will be satisfied with the educational provision if the child has made progress in relation to the objectives set out in the statement of special educational need.
- If there is disagreement about the child's progress or the nature of the arrangements, as detailed in the statement, parents may contact Partnership With Parents and have access to independent mediation. If agreement cannot be reached it may be possible for parents to appeal to Tribunal regarding the content of the child's statement.

EHE Files

Paper and electronic files are created for every child added to the EHE register. Hard copies of letters, emails and reports sent and received are retained in the paper file. Copies of letters and reports sent by the L A are retained in the electronic file. Files are available for parents to inspect if the request is made in writing.

Appendices

1. Flowchart of procedures
2. Elective Home Education Booklet and covering letter (Letter 1)
3. Letter 2 – the options letter
4. Letter 3 – annual request for information.

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Elective Home Education

Flowchart of Procedures

