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**Wandsworth Elective Home Education Guide for Children’s Social Care and Early Help**

Official

**What we mean by home education -** Elective home education (EHE) is a term used to describe a parent’s decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. It is not home tuition provided by the LA, or where the LA provides education otherwise than at a school.

Electively home-educated children are those aged 5 – 16 (Reception class to Year 11 pupils) who, for a range of reasons, are being educated at home and in the community by parents, or tutors. Many parents choose to home educate their child/ren because they are generally dissatisfied with school, for philosophical and cultural reasons and, more recently, due to circumstances related to the COVID pandemic.

Home educated children are those not registered full time at mainstream schools, special schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), colleges, or children’s homes with education facilities or education facilities provided by independent fostering agencies.

**Initial actions by the Education Welfare Service (EWS) -** When the EWS first becomes aware that parents have elected to educate their child at home, an early intervention EHE school meeting is convened before any de-registration of the pupil concerned. The EHE lead or the school’s Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the EWS will attend the meeting.

If a Social Worker or Early Help practitioner is working with the family, it is very helpful if they can also attend the EHE school meeting. The meeting enables discussion about any concerns the school or professionals working with the family have about a child being home educated.

Concerns may be related to safeguarding and/or parents’ capacity to teach at home, or because of the child/ren’s specific social, emotional and learning needs. The meeting also allows parents to understand their responsibilities once they withdraw their child/ren from school.

**Safeguarding** - A situation in which a child is not receiving a suitable full-time education requires action by a local authority under education law. But it is important to bear in mind that unsuitable or inadequate education can also impair a child’s intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, and may therefore bring child protection duties into play. This includes children educated at home as well as those attending school. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires authorities to make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare.

There is no proven correlation between home education and safeguarding risk. In some serious cases of neglect or abuse in recent years, the child concerned has been home educated but that has not usually been a causative factor and the child has normally been known anyway to the relevant local authority. However, a child being educated at home is not necessarily being seen on a regular basis by professionals such as teachers and this logically increases the chances that any parents who set out to use home education to avoid independent oversight may be more successful by doing so. Several recent Serious Case Reviews have illustrated this

Local authorities should approach all cases where the suitability of home education is in doubt using their powers in the Education Act 1996, but they should also be ready, if a lack of suitable education appears likely to impair a child’s development, to fully exercise their safeguarding powers and duties to protect the child’s well-being, which includes their suitable education.

**What you can do -** If you become aware that there is one or more electively home educated children in a family you are working with, please share details via the EHE email inbox: homeeducation@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk.

If a CP conference, CIN or core group meeting or strategy meeting to consider the threshold for a section 47 enquiry is held for a home educated pupil or pupils, please contact the EHE Lead as the child(ren)’s education representative, who will attend the conference or meeting. You can also email the MASH Education inbox, educationalwelfareofficers@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk. If you become aware of any parents considering home education for their child/ren still attending school, please encourage them to speak to a teacher or the head teacher about their intention to home educate in the first instance

**Information, advice and guidance -** You can also signpost parents to the EHE page on the WBC website, which contains useful information and a link to the Wandsworth EHE ParentGuide:

<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/schools-and-admissions/schools/types-of-school/elective-home-education/>

The Department for Education (DfE) Elective Home Education Guidance for Parents also includes useful information for parents and professionals working with families: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791528/EHE_guidance_for_parentsafterconsultationv2.2.pdf>

**For further information, please contact Biddy Macintyre, the Elective Home Education lead for Wandsworth, on 07870545676 or at** **homeeducation@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk.**

**Should parents require further information after reading the parent guide online, please feel free to pass on Biddy’s contact details.**

*Please note: ‘EHE’ will be included as an education option in the schools list on Mosaic in the near future. Please make use of this option once available as it will ensure that the EHE lead receives an automatic alert for any EHE pupil with involvement with CSC or Early Help.*