

Swindon Borough Council: Suitable Home Education Guidance

We recognise that parents' home education provision will reflect a diversity of approaches and interests. Some parents may wish to provide education in a formal and structured manner, following a traditional curriculum and using a fixed timetable that keeps school hours and terms. Other parents may decide to make more informal provision that is responsive to the developing interests of their child.

The Law

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents must provide an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, in this case, Elective Home Education.

If your child's EHCP names a school, but as a parent you want to home educate instead, you need to request a change to the EHCP which needs to be agreed with the local authority. According to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) "The local authority must consider whether the home education is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, and SEN. If it is, the authority does not need to provide the special educational provision set out in the EHCP." If you, as the parent, is providing suitable home education, the local authority is not required to arrange the special educational provision in the EHCP. The EHCP should remain in place and must be reviewed annually, even if your child is educated at home. The EHCP should state that your child is being educated at home and that you, as parents, have made your own arrangements.

Suitable Education

There is currently no legal definition of "full-time" however education which clearly is not occupying a significant proportion of a child's life (making due allowance for holiday periods) will probably not meet the section 7 requirement as outlined in section 2.9 of the [DFE EHE Guidance](#).

The type of educational activity can be varied and flexible. There are no legal requirements for you as parents educating a child at home to do any of the following:

- Have a timetable
- Set hours during which education will take place

- Observe school hours, days or terms

What constitutes a 'suitable' education is considered on a case-by-case basis according to age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs a child may have. We recognise there are many styles of teaching and learning and do not endorse any method. Our interest is in establishing that suitable education takes place. Therefore, this may lead to variation regarding the reasons why a Local Authority may reach a decision that home education arrangements are either suitable or not suitable. To assess suitable education, the local authority may:

- Look at records and evidence of work provided by parents
- Speak to the child/parent
- Complete a home visit
- Review provision using the **Local Authority Suitable Education Guidance**

Using a Tutor in Elective Home Education (EHE)

- **Parental Responsibility:** Parents remain legally responsible for their child's education, even when hiring a tutor.
- **Choosing a Tutor:** Look for subject knowledge, experience, and a valid **DBS check**. Ask for references or reviews.
- **Tutor's Role:** Tutors can support specific subjects, exam prep, or special educational needs—but don't replace parental involvement.
- **Safeguarding:** Sessions should occur in safe, supervised environments. Parents are responsible for child safety.
- **Monitoring:** Regularly review your child's progress and adjust tutoring if needed.
- **Local Authority:** You don't have to report tutor use but may be asked how education is delivered. Keep records if possible and use this guide as support.
- **Costs:** Tutors are privately paid; EHE families are not funded for tuition.
- **Exams:** Parents must arrange exam entries and access to venues separately for private candidates.

Learning styles: As a home educator you can choose the best aspects of any learning approach to create a curriculum that meets the needs of your child and family. There are different ways in which people learn, and three styles are commonly identified:

- **Visual** – to see things written down, through diagrams or pictures;
- **Auditory** – through hearing and listening to words, rhythm and music;
- **Kinaesthetic** – being physically involved by music, touch or practical experimentation.

Methods of teaching can also vary:

- **A direct approach** - working alongside your child, teaching by instruction.
- **Coaching** - whereby you demonstrate and give advice on methods of completing a given task.
- **Autonomous learning** - where once the task is set the child works with support where needed.
- **External tutoring** – employing an external tutor to provide learning.

As a home educator, you can choose the best parts of different learning methods to create a curriculum that suits your child's needs and your family's preferences. Whatever style you use, it is always important to recognise the need to emphasise the continual development of skills in literacy and numeracy. The local authority expects a basic level of maths and English, as outlined in the [DFE EHE Guidance](#) (Section 2.10.) The level your child is working at will depend on their age, ability, and needs. For example, a 13-year-old child with additional SEND needs may be working at a level above or below their academic age.

A good curriculum also includes opportunities to develop social skills. Often, the local community offers activities, courses, workshops, clubs and societies that may be of interest.

Record keeping

Parents often find that the level of questions and content of a child's conversation demonstrates their level of understanding and if they are making progress. Other

parents prefer to have a systematic way, through tests or other means of knowing their child is making progress at a pace appropriate to his/her ability.

You may find it useful to look at the **National Curriculum Guidelines** and the **Local Authority Suitable Education Guidance** to give you an idea of what your child is expected to be able to do at different stages or to guide you when planning the next steps in learning. Not every child will be at these levels, some will be in advance, some at the level expected, some are working towards the levels. Our home education advisor can also discuss this with you and make suggestions on how to support your child's education.

However you choose to structure your child's learning and time, it is helpful to keep some records of their progress to make informed decisions about future areas of study and to be able to map progress.

Records can take any form:

- Reports and diaries
- Examples of your child's work (it is helpful if these are dated)
- Photographs, drawings, recordings and so on.
- Plans and programmes of work
- Evidence of achievements and progress made. Any workbooks or textbooks can be placed alongside.
- A reading record can be very useful, but production of recent texts read by the pupil will suffice, especially if supported in a general discussion on likes and dislikes regarding reading matter. Reading material does not always have to include fiction, as there are many who read illustrated reference/interest books containing much in the way of sophisticated vocabulary.
- A timetable
- Curriculum plan
- Progress reports
- Dated work over a period

Unsuitable Education

There may be a variety of reasons why the information/ evidence provided has not been considered suitable by the local authority. This may include:

- Parents share no or extremely limited information and/or only share resources which they may have simply copied from online sites.
- The education provision described lacks sufficient detail, and it is difficult to ascertain what education is being 'received' by the child.
- Parents choose to only share a report of the work that is being covered by their child, without demonstrating how the provision referred to within the report is being 'received' by the child.
- There is no, or very limited information regarding resources used internally and externally
- There is no, or very limited detail of how the child's progress is being monitored or examples of work to demonstrate relevant progression
- There is no clear academic or time structure and the education provision is not occupying a significant proportion of a child's life (making due allowance for holiday periods.)

Where there are concerns about the suitability of the home education provision, a home visit will be offered with the aim of helping you overcome the difficulties within a mutually agreed timescale.

If, after an agreed timescale, the situation has not improved, you should arrange for your child to return to school. Should you need help to find a school place, the Schools Admissions Team and the Attendance & Inclusion Service will help you. If you do not provide suitable education or put your child on roll at a school, the local authority will look to put a School Attendance Order in place. A school attendance order (SAO) is a legal document issued by the local authority naming a specific school and requires you to register your child at that school. Parents are required to ensure their child attends this school regularly. If an SAO is issued by the local authority, it must be complied with, and failure to do so is a criminal offence.

Home Education Road Map: *Suitable Education for Children Aged 4-5*

As a home educator, you can choose the best parts of different learning methods to create a curriculum that suits your child's needs and your family's preferences. The local authority expects a basic level of maths and English, as outlined in the Department for Education's Elective Home Education (EHE) guidance (Section 2.10) [DFE EHE Guidance](#). The level your child is working at will depend on their age, ability, and needs. For example, a 5-year-old child with SEND may be working at a level above or below their academic age.

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development Aim: Help the child develop self-regulation and build positive relationships with others.

- Role-play activities with peers or parents (e.g. "restaurant," "doctor's office") to encourage social interaction and empathy.
- Involve the child in household routines like setting the table, taking turns with chores, and caring for plants or pets to develop responsibility.
- Create a daily chart for morning routines (e.g. "brush teeth, get dressed") to foster independence and responsibility.
- Cooking, gardening, building, and art projects.
- Visiting museums, libraries, parks, and local businesses.

Communication and Language Aim: Develop the child's ability to communicate effectively and expand their vocabulary.

- Read aloud to the child every day and encourage them to ask questions about the story.
- Encourage the child to retell stories in their own words, using toys or puppets.
- Create a simple storybook together with drawings and words.
- Engaging in creative writing.
- Introduce phonics (sounds and letters), early reading, and writing. Use phonics games, and interactive apps (e.g. Phonics Play) to reinforce letter sounds.
- Focus on letter formation, rhyme, and beginning to write simple words.

Math Aim: Build the child's early numeracy skills, including basic counting, addition, and subtraction.

- Use real objects (e.g. fruits, toys) for counting, adding, and subtracting exercises.
- Introduce shapes and patterns using toys like LEGO blocks.
- Involve the child in simple measuring tasks (e.g. measuring ingredients for baking, counting spoons for a recipe).
- Playing math games.

Below are some examples of age-appropriate aims for enrichment subjects you may choose to cover.

Physical Development Aim: Develop both fine and gross motor skills through physical play and activities such as **jumping, running, and climbing**, using scissors, drawing, or threading beads.

Expressive Arts and Design Aim: Engage in creative arts like drawing, painting, and sculpting with clay, music and dance.

Home Education Road Map: *Suitable Education for Children Aged 5-7*

As a home educator, you can choose the best parts of different learning methods to create a curriculum that suits your child's needs and your family's preferences. The local authority expects a basic level of maths and English, as outlined in the [DFE EHE Guidance](#) Section 2.10. The age-range your child is working at will depend on their age, ability, and needs. For example, a 7-year-old child with SEND may be working at a level above or below their academic age.

English Aim: Develop the ability to read fluently, write for different purposes, and communicate effectively.

- Daily Reading: Read books aloud and discuss the content with the child. Ask them questions about the plot and characters. Include traditional tales and stories from different cultures.
- Writing Practice: Encourage the child to write short sentences, simple stories, instructions or fact sheets, using proper punctuation and letter formation. Introduce phonics for reading and spelling.
- Write a postcard or letter to a friend or family member and encourage them to read and respond.

Math Aim: Strengthen understanding of number recognition, basic arithmetic, and mathematical concepts.

- Work with numbers up to 100, focusing on addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- Practice number recognition and counting with everyday objects (e.g., toys, fruit).
- Introduce basic addition and subtraction with real-world examples (e.g., "If you have 3 apples and I give you 2 more, how many do you have?").
- Explore basic geometric shapes, measurement (length, weight, time) and fractions.
- Involve the child in shopping activities to understand money and basic addition/subtraction (e.g., total costs of items).

Science Aim: Help the child explore basic scientific concepts and foster a sense of curiosity about the world around them.

- Understand basic concepts of the physical world (materials, weather, seasons).
- Begin to explore animals, plants, and their habitats.
- Identify and describe different materials and their properties. Conduct simple experiments like mixing vinegar and baking soda to explore reactions.
- Start a plant-growing project and see the process of growth.
- Create a weather journal to track daily observations of temperature, clouds, and other weather conditions.

Below are some examples of age-appropriate aims for enrichment subjects you may choose to cover.

History and Geography Aim: name and locate the four UK countries and surrounding seas. Explore features of their local area, comparing it to others, and identify basic physical and human features like rivers and buildings.

Physical Education Aim: Foster physical health and fitness through structured physical activities.

Art and Design Aim: Engage in creative activities using a variety of materials (painting, drawing, building).

Languages Aim: Start learning basic phrases in a foreign language, understanding key structures and sentence formation.

PSHE Aim: To foster personal, social, and emotional development, promoting self-awareness, building relationships, and beginning to understand the concepts of health and well-being.

Home Education Road Map: *Suitable Education for Children Aged 7-11*

As a home educator, you can choose the best parts of different learning methods to create a curriculum that suits your child's needs and your family's preferences. The local authority expects a basic level of maths and English, as outlined in the [DFE EHE Guidance](#) Section 2.10. The age-range your child is working at will depend on their age, ability, and needs. For example, a 10-year-old child with SEND may be working at a level above or below their academic age.

English Aim: Encourage ability in reading, writing, and oral communication.

- Reading comprehension: Read books or articles on a variety of topics, then ask the child to summarise or discuss the key points. Include fables, moral stories, plays, mysteries and fantasies.
- Expand vocabulary and range of punctuation. Understand and use spelling patterns, common prefixes/suffixes, and rules for adding endings.
- Writing tasks: Encourage children to write short stories, letters and reports, focusing on paragraph structure, spelling, and punctuation.
- Write non-fiction text types including reports, explanations or persuasive texts (e.g. a letter to a local business or a community group about a topic they care about.)

Math Aim: Strengthen understanding of arithmetic, fractions, and basic geometry.

- Develop deeper understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using more formal written methods.
- Introduce more complex shapes, measuring angles and converting measurements.
- Practice multiplication tables and division with real-world problems.
- Study more complex fractions and decimal calculations.
- Use a measuring tape and calculate area/length in home improvement tasks (e.g., measuring for furniture or curtains).

Science Aim: Develop a deeper understanding of the scientific method, why it is trustworthy and key scientific concepts (e.g., forces, materials).

- Animals, Including Humans: Understand the basic needs, growth, and life cycles of animals and humans.
- Plants: Learn about plant structure, growth, and how plants reproduce.
- Materials and Their Properties: Identify and compare different materials and their uses.
- Forces and Magnets: Explore forces like gravity, friction, and magnetic attraction.
- Earth and Space: Understand the solar system, day/night cycles, and seasonal changes.

Below are some examples of age-appropriate aims for enrichment subjects you may choose to cover.

History and Geography Aim: Expand knowledge of historical events and geographical features across time and space.

Physical Education Aim: Encourage a balanced approach to fitness, teamwork, and coordination through physical activities.

Art and Design Aim: Continue developing creativity through drawing, sculpture, and more sophisticated techniques.

Computing Aim: Introduce basic coding, digital literacy, and safe internet use.

Languages Aim: Start learning basic phrases and simple sentences in a foreign language, understanding key structures and sentence formation.

PSHE Aim: To build on emotional literacy, self-awareness, and understanding of personal responsibility while beginning to introduce more complex aspects of social issues, financial literacy, and health education.

Home Education Road Map: *Suitable Education for Children aged 11-14*

As a home educator, you can choose the best parts of different learning methods to create a curriculum that suits your child's needs and your family's preferences. The local authority expects a basic level of maths and English, as outlined in the [DFE EHE Guidance](#) Section 2.10. The age-range your child is working at will depend on their age, ability, and needs. For example, a 13-year-old child with SEND may be working at a level above or below their academic age.

English Aim: Develop advanced reading, writing, and speaking skills for deeper analysis and critical thinking.

- Focus on understanding a wider range of texts (pre 1900 texts, non-fiction, poetry, plays, stories from different cultures). Discuss themes, character development, and settings.
- Develop writing and critical thinking skills across genres, with an emphasis on structure, argument, and analysis. Include persuasive, transactional, analytical and expository genres.
- Use a range of tools to check and improve spelling independently.
- Essay writing: Choose topics of interest and write essays to improve writing skills.
- Create a debate club at home with family members to practice presenting arguments on various issues.

Mathematics Aim: Deepen understanding of algebra, geometry, and statistics.

- Number: Develop fluency with integers, fractions, decimals, percentages, and ratios.
- Algebra: Use expressions, equations, sequences, and graphs to model and solve problems.
- Geometry and Measures: Understand properties of shapes, angles, area, volume, and apply measurement.
- Statistics: Collect, represent, and interpret data using charts, averages, and probability.
- Mathematical Reasoning and Problem Solving: Apply maths to real-life problems and reason logically using mathematical language.

Science Aim: Develop a solid foundation in physical sciences and the scientific method.

- **Cells and Organisms (Biology):** Understand cells as building blocks and how body systems function.
- **Ecosystems and Variation (Biology):** Explore food chains, environmental changes, reproduction, and adaptation.
- **Particles and Chemical Reactions (Chemistry):** Learn about atomic structure, states of matter, and types of chemical reactions.
- **Forces and Motion (Physics):** Study different forces, motion, gravity, and how to interpret force diagrams.
- **Energy, Electricity, and Waves (Physics):** Understand energy transfer, build circuits, and explore light and sound behaviour.

Below are some examples of age-appropriate aims for enrichment subjects you may choose to cover.

History and Geography Aim: Expand understanding of world history and geographical processes by learning about world history, key events, and global issues. Analyse historical sources and evaluate different types of evidence and understand how interpretations are formed.

Physical Education Aim: Develop fitness, endurance, and team-building skills through a range of physical activities.

Technology and Computing Aim: Study digital design, programming and to debug programmes. Gain knowledge of how computers operate, including hardware, software, and networks, plus safe and responsible use of technology.

Art and Design Aim: Work on more complex artistic projects using different media and techniques. Study artists, styles, and cultures to inform and inspire creative work.

Languages Aim: Develop more fluency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

PSHE Aim: To deepen understanding of personal development, relationships, health issues, and economic awareness, while introducing more complex concepts of citizenship, rights, and responsibilities.

Home Education Road Map: *Suitable Education for Children aged 14-16*

As a home educator, you can choose the best parts of different learning methods to create a curriculum that suits your child's needs and your family's preferences. The local authority expects a basic level of maths and English, as outlined in the [DFE EHE Guidance](#) Section 2.10. The age-range your child is working at will depend on their age, ability, and needs. For example, a 15-year-old child with SEND may be working at a level above or below their academic age.

English Aim: Develop the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate texts, as well as write analytically and persuasively.

- Literary analysis: Read and analyze a wide range of literary texts (e.g. novels, plays, poetry), identifying themes, characters, and structure.
- Essay writing: Write in-depth essays focusing on critical analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literature.
- Be able to summarise key information from a range of sources.
- Writing for purpose (e.g. to complain, debate or explain.)
- Speaking and Listening: Engage in debates and presentations, developing clear, coherent arguments and improving verbal communication skills.

Math Aim: Develop a deep understanding of algebra, geometry, statistics, and problem-solving.

- Study quadratic equations, trigonometry, and probability to build on higher-level mathematical concepts.
- Practice applying algebraic skills and functions in real-world contexts (e.g. calculating income tax or simple interest).
- Engage in more complex geometry problems, such as solving problems with angles and circles, and study coordinate geometry.

Science Aim: Deepen understanding of scientific principles, including biology, chemistry, and physics, with a focus on experimental design and analysis.

- Cells and Organisms (Biology): Cell structure, organ systems, health, and microbes.

- Ecosystems and Inheritance (Biology): Photosynthesis, food webs, biodiversity, genetics, and evolution.
- Atomic Structure and Periodic Table (Chemistry): Atoms, elements, compounds, and periodic trends.
- Chemical Reactions and Energy (Chemistry): Reaction types and energy changes in chemistry.
- Forces and Motion (Physics): Movement, forces, and Newton's laws.
- Energy, Electricity, and Waves (Physics): Energy use, circuits, sound, light, and waves.

Below are some examples of age-appropriate aims for enrichment subjects you may choose to cover.

History Aim: Develop an understanding of key historical events, figures, and movements, and improve critical thinking through source analysis.

Geography Aim: Build an understanding of the physical and human aspects of geography, focusing on environmental issues and global development/impact.

Physical Education Aim: Improve physical fitness, participate in organized sports, and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Aim: Develop knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about health, relationships, and financial well-being.

Languages Aim: Achieve a good level of proficiency in both understanding and communicating in the language.

Art and Design Aim: Develop and master techniques to produce high-quality, individual artwork. Analyse and evaluate artists' work and use this to inform your own creative decisions.

Computing Aim: Design, develop, and evaluate algorithms and programs efficiently and effectively. Explore how computing affects society, including data security, privacy, and ethical issues.