



Elective Home Education
Children's Services
John Hadfield House
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Derbyshire
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For all primary and secondary schools

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Elective Home Education (EHE) – Update and reminder about processes

I am writing to provide an update about EHE as well as a reminder of the Local Authority's Elective Home Education (EHE) processes, in time for the new academic year.

Elective Home Education continues to have a high profile, both locally and nationally. At the end of the spring term, we introduced a revised de-registration form for schools to complete. Please make sure that others in your school are aware of this. We also requested that parents are provided with the information sheet for parents and that you confirm this action on the de-registration form. The revised form and parent information sheet are included.

During the summer term, the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) requested information in relation to EHE and admissions policies in schools. The OSA works with the Department for Education. In addition, the Children's Commissioner requested that the LA provides school level-data on the number of children being withdrawn from school to be electively home educated. This has been requested for most LAs including for every school in Derbyshire local authority area, for the following academic years: 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. This statutory information request (Under Section 2F of the Children Act 2004) has come about due to the Commissioner's concerns about possible pressure on families to home educate when their child has additional needs or vulnerabilities.

It is worth repeating some of what was included in our April 2019 letter to all schools:-

"...These changes are needed due to the increasing number of young people who are being removed from schools under circumstances where it is not a genuine choice being made by well-informed parents. The LA has evidence that some parents are not well prepared for their legal duty and as a result, the young people miss out on a suitable education with any associated consequences. The LA has duty to intervene where it appears the education is unsuitable. We are also concerned that some vulnerable young people with welfare needs are increasingly represented in the EHE cohort."

And "...You will be aware that across the country, including Derbyshire, there is a range of reasons why some young people are removed from schools to become home educated. This includes SEND and mental health, avoidance of fines/legal action for non-attendance, avoidance of exclusion and so called 'gaming' regarding the impact on schools' performance. We understand the complexities and recognise the significant efforts made by schools to protect the education and welfare needs of Derbyshire young people...."

And "...We acknowledge that parents can exercise their right to home educate. We are focusing on the education entitlement of all Derbyshire young people and including the impact on those with already-known vulnerabilities. Once we are informed about a young person's vulnerability, we undertake a number of actions, including contact with schools as well as other services. In some circumstances, please allow more time for us to manage the removals, making additional enquiries where appropriate...."

PUBLIC

Derbyshire County Council's Children Missing Education (CME) policy section 9.2 includes "Where a child is in their last year of school (Year 11), school should allow the Elective Home Education team to consult with the parents prior to removal." We are paying due regard to Department for Education (DfE) guidance regarding there being no 'cooling off period' as well as their views regarding continuation/stability in education and about good practice in preparation for EHE – link here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>)

Derbyshire LA was invited to take part in an Ofsted research project earlier this year about the move from secondary school to home education. Our LA processes and experiences were questioned as well as those from a small number of secondary schools, parents and young people. We expect to be informed of key messages and lessons from this research and will update you in due course.

Finally, EHE was inspected by Ofsted at the end of the summer term as part of LA Children's Services. The LA processes were scrutinised in particular what we do with regards to the quality of education as well as the safety of home educated children. Our links with other early help and safeguarding were also considered. The published report will be here in September <https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/inspections>

Thank you for your on-going support. Your efforts in supporting the young people of Derbyshire are very much appreciated. Do please contact if you have any suggestions – we are always ready to listen to your views especially with the sometimes complex area of EHE. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me 01629 532803 or Orlinda.dias@Derbyshire.gov.uk Or cs.ehe@derbyshire.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Orlinda Dias

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Manager – Elective Home Education