



# Children and young people with SEND who are educated at home

A guide for parents & carers

Children and Young People's Services



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## Introduction

Durham County Council (DCC) believes that children and young people can receive a good and balanced education by going to school. It believes that teachers have the skills to help children and young people make the most of their abilities and interests and to achieve their potential. It also believes that going to school lets a child/young person feel they are part of a social and learning community and that this feeling of belonging helps them develop resilience and self-esteem. Going to school gives children/young people the opportunity to mix with others and make friends; develop their ability to make relationships and find solutions to relationship problems with the support of adults.

Most parents/carers choose to send their child to school to be educated, but you are legally entitled to educate your child at home. DCC recognises that some parents/carers may feel that they are able to provide education by educating their child at home (Elective Home Education - EHE). It also recognises that some children/young people may feel strongly that they do not want to be educated at school.

DCC believes that parents understand how challenging it is to provide a suitable education for their child at any age, and we are therefore committed to supporting parents/carers to achieve an educational experience for their child that is positive and successful. The following guidance explains what DCC must do if you choose to home educate your child and what you must do. It also explains how we will work in close partnership with you at all stages, should you choose elective home education (EHE).

## Making a decision

Making a decision about your child/young person's education can be difficult and parents/carers can choose to home educate their child/young person for many reasons. If you are thinking about home education you might want to consider:

- discussing any concerns about your child/young person's current school with the Head Teacher or the Local Authorities EHE office.
- independent disagreement resolution, if you have concerns that cannot be addressed through the school. In County Durham, this is provided by Barnardos Gateshead Disability and Inclusion Support Service (DAISS), details of which are available on our Local Offer website.
- asking to bring forward a review if your child/young person has Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND). That review meeting will give you, your child, the school and other professionals time to consider any amendments that are needed to ensure that your child's needs can be met.

We will always have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of you and your child.

## **What is suitable education?**

It is up to parents/carers to provide a suitable education for their child but it does not have to be the same kind of 'lessons' that school provides. You might want to consider things like educational visits, projects, internet research; activities with other children as well as more formal learning.

There is a broad definition of 'suitable education' in the Children and Families Act. It does not tell us what a child/young person should be taught but it does state that the education should be 'suitable to the child or young person's age, ability and aptitude and to any Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) he or she may have.' The education must not prevent the child/young person from having opportunities later in life.

DCC believes that basic academic skills are very important but that education is also about social development, physical development,

emotional well-being and preparing the child for adulthood. If your child has additional needs, we will consider these alongside the provision the parents/carers intend to provide to ensure that the individual needs are met.

## What is full time education?

Although this term is not defined in the Act, it is stated that this education must be full time. Children/young people in school usually spend between 22 and 25 hours working each week for 38 weeks of the year. Expectations around the number of hours of education being delivered each week and for the across 38 weeks in the year are the same for elective home education.

## What happens in year 11?

All young people are now required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday. \* This does not mean that your son/daughter must be at school. They can choose one of the following options:

- Full time education, such as school, college or home education,
- Work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship,
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

All Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there is an offer of suitable education or training places for 16 to 17 year-olds and to support young people to participate. You will be contacted by a Progression Adviser in year 11 who will ask your son/daughter what they may like to do. This is so that all options that are available to them can be explored and any help or assistance that he or she needs can be given. Alternatively, he or she may not need any assistance if they already have suitable provision in place or you are intending to continue with your home education.

## **Can I have a trial period of home education?**

A 'trial period' of home education is not allowed by law. Children and young people must be on the roll of a school or actively home educated.

## **Can my child take exams if they are educated at home?**

There are some secondary schools within County Durham who may be willing to accept external candidates sitting examinations on their premises by external candidates. This is updated annually and a list is attached at Appendix 1.

You may also wish to contact local Further Education Colleges to enquire as to whether they are willing to allow home educated young people to take exams as external candidates and whether there is any funding available for particular courses of study. The local Further Education colleges are listed in Appendix 2.

## **What must I do if my child is on a school roll and I then choose to educate him or her at home?**

Where a child or young person is on a school roll and the parent/ carer decides to home educate, you must notify the Head Teacher in writing that your child or young person is receiving home education. The school must then remove your child/young person's name from the admission register.

If the school is a special school, Durham County Council must agree that your child/young person's name is removed, but this should not be a lengthy or complex process. The Local Authority would need to see a proposal of how you intend to electively home educate your child/young person in order to determine if the education you intend to provide is suitable.



## **What if my child has special educational needs and/or a disability?**

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; *or*
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

## **Is the Local Authority involved if my child/ young person has Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND) or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?**

Parents/carers may home educate children/young people who have SEND but do not have an EHC plan. If a child has SEND without an EHC plan in school, they would have a SEN support plan to ensure their needs were being met. As with children and young people with EHC plans, we will consider whether to provide support to help you make suitable provision.

## **What is an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?**

If a child/young person has a significant learning difficulty, they might need a specialist assessment which involves professionals from a range of agencies e.g. school, an Educational Psychologist, a Paediatrician, therapists and, in some cases, a Social Worker.

You have a right to request an EHC assessment. If your child/young person undergoes an EHC assessment, you will be at the centre of that process and involved in making decisions about support.

Following the EHC assessment, DCC might issue an EHC plan. This would be reviewed each year.

## **What if my child already has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?**

If your child has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) and you are interested in home education, an emergency Statutory Annual Review will be held. You will be offered a meeting to discuss the reasons why you are interested in home education and to be given information about what help and support might be available from DCC.

Following that meeting, DCC will issue an EHC plan or if your child/young person has always been electively home educated but you think they have SEND then you have a right to request an EHC assessment.

Following receipt of your intention to electively home educate your child, the council will consider the suitability of what you intend to provide. If it is deemed to be suitable, we will work with you to arrange the special educational provision set out in the plan.

If the EHC plan gives the name of a school or type of school you may still decide to educate at home but DCC does not have to make the special educational provision set out in the plan. However it must still consider whether it is satisfied that your arrangements are suitable.

## **What support is available from Durham County Council for children/young people with an EHC plan who are educated at home?**

Your child's EHC plan must be reviewed every year. A Casework Officer will be available to discuss your child's special educational needs and the review will allow DCC to be satisfied that the provision set out in the EHC plan is still appropriate and that your child's SEND are still being met.

Where the EHC plan stated a school place but DCC has decided that the elective home education provision is appropriate, it should amend the plan to name the type of school that would be suitable but also state that parents/carers have made their own arrangements.

DCC will work in partnership with you to ensure that all of this happens and that you are aware of all options available. In Durham, the review of an EHC plan will be undertaken by the Educational Psychologist. You and your child are central to the process and decision making.

## **What could happen if home education is not meeting my child's SEND needs?**

If Durham County Council decides that home education is not meeting your child/young person's needs, we will want to work in partnership with you to find a way forward.

If this does not work, we will name a school in the EHC plan that your child/young person must attend. If they do not attend, DCC will issue a school attendance order. Issuing this is a last resort and we would want to continue to work with you. If your child/young person has SEND but no EHC plan, the same protocol is followed and a school attendance order is issued if the council is not satisfied that a suitable education is being provided.

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## Appendix 1

There are some secondary schools within Durham County who may be willing to accept candidates sitting examinations on their premises.

### **Consett Academy**

Exams Officer - Ashdale Road

Consett

DH8 6LZ

Telephone: 01207 507 001

Email: [jbowman@consettacademy.org.uk](mailto:jbowman@consettacademy.org.uk)

### **Durham Community Business College**

Ushaw Moor

Exams Officer - Bracken Court

Ushaw Moor

Durham

DH7 7NG

Telephone: 0191 373 0336

Email: [durhamcbc@durhamlearning.net](mailto:durhamcbc@durhamlearning.net)

### **Framwellgate School Durham**

Exams Officer - Newton Drive

Framwellgate Moor

Durham

DH1 5BQ

Telephone: 0191 386 6628

Email: [enquiries@fram.durham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@fram.durham.sch.uk)

### **Fyndoune Community College**

Sacrison

Findon Hill

Sacrison

DH7 6LU

Telephone: 0191 371 0277

Email: [fyndoune@durhamlearning.net](mailto:fyndoune@durhamlearning.net)

**Tanfield School Specialist College of Science and Engineering,**

Stanley

Exams Officer - Tanfield Lea Road

Stanley

DH9 8AY

Telephone: 01207 232 881

Email: [enquiries@tanfieldschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@tanfieldschool.co.uk)

## **Appendix 2 - Local Further Education colleges within County Durham**

### **Bishop Auckland College**

Main Campus  
Woodhouse Lane  
Bishop Auckland  
DL14 6JZ  
Telephone: 0800 092 6506  
Email: [start@bacoll.ac.uk](mailto:start@bacoll.ac.uk)

### **Derwentside College**

Front Street  
Consett  
DH8 5EE  
Telephone: 01207 585 900  
Email: [enquiries@derwentside.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@derwentside.ac.uk)

### **East Durham College - Peterlee Campus**

Willerby Grove  
Peterlee  
SR8 2RN  
Telephone: 0191 518 2000  
Email: [enquiries@eastdurham.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@eastdurham.ac.uk)

### **East Durham College - Houghall Campus**

Houghall  
Durham  
DH1 3SG  
Telephone: 0191 375 4700  
Email: [enquiries@eastdurham.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@eastdurham.ac.uk)

### **New College Durham**

Framwellgate Moor Campus  
Durham  
DH1 5ES  
Telephone: 0191 375 4040  
Email: [help@newdur.ac.uk](mailto:help@newdur.ac.uk)

**SEND & Inclusion Service**

Children & Young People's Services  
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DL17 8AN  
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