This information sheet is intended as a guide to support families who are just starting their journey of home education and those currently considering home education as an approach to meeting the learning needs of their child or young person.

**What are parent’s responsibilities with regard to their child or young person’s education?**

Section 7 of the Education Act states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive **efficient full-time** education **suitable**:-

(a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

This means that a parent can choose to send their child or young person to a state funded school or make other arrangements for their education; this may consist of commissioning private tuition, distance learning, e-learning or providing the education themselves.

**Why do parents choose to home educate?**

There are many reasons why parents decide to home educate. Research suggests the most common reasons are a lifestyle preference, anxiousness about attending school or school phobia, personal, religious or cultural reasons and/or to support children or young people with special educational needs who may not be thriving within a school environment. Some families home educate on an interim basis for personal reasons or whilst waiting for a space to become available in their preferred school.

**What are parents responsibilities when educating their child or young person at home?**

Parents have a right to home educate their child or young person if they wish. When a parent elects to home educate they are **fully** responsible for providing a full time, suitable and effective education. This should be designed specifically to meet the educational needs of the individual child.

Parents who opt to home educate are not required to have a teaching qualification, nor do they have to enter their child or young person for any examinations or follow the national curriculum but many choose to do so at the appropriate stage for the child.

**How do parents de-register their child or young person from school?**

When a parent chooses to remove their child or young person from school to home educate them, they must write to the school to inform them, requesting that the school deregister them and remove his or her name from the school roll (templates are available online from home education websites).

It is recommended that both parents (who hold parental responsibility) agree to home education and ideally both parents should sign the letter prior to sending it to the school, this is to ensure that parents are in agreement regarding the choice of education provision for their child.

Under the Pupil Registration Regulations (2006), the school is required to deregister the child or young person upon receipt of the parent letter and inform the child or young person’s home Local Authority (LA). In addition to informing the school, parents can inform Kent County Council (KCC) directly if they wish, by sending a copy of their de-registration letter to educationathome@kent.gov.uk.

Where a child holds a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are attending a special school, the LA must be involved in the process to ensure the requirements of the statement or EHCP can be met outside of a school environment. In these cases an EHE Support and Advice Officer will visit the family to discuss how they intend to meet the child or young person’s needs and the objectives laid out in the statement or EHCP. Following the visit, a copy of the officer’s visit report is then sent to the SEN Team for consideration.

**How are KCC notified about a child or young person who has never attended school?**

Children and young people who have never attended school are not required to register with the LA however many families make the decision to notify the Elective Home Education (EHE) Team that their child is being home educated. This ensures that there is an accurate record of the educational provision that their child is receiving and enables their entitlement to support and advice from their allocated officer.

**What are Kent County Council’s roles and responsibilities?**

The Department for Education (DFE) has recommended that each Local Authority provides written information about elective home education that is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position, roles and responsibilities of both the Local Authority and parents.

The role of Kent County Council’s EHE team is to support and advise home educating families, not to inspect. KCC have an Elective Home Education Coordinator and 6 locality based Elective Home Education Support and Advice Officers who are available to provide advice and guidance to home educated pupils and their families across Kent.

Local Authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis. However, under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities shall intervene **if it appears** that parents are not providing a suitable education.

**What is the role of the Elective Home Education Support and Advice Officers?**

When a decision is made by a parent to home educate, the school should forward a copy of the parents’ letter to the Elective Home Education Team. Once the referral has been processed, an EHE Support & Advice Officer will make contact with the family. The Officer will offer to visit the family home or a neutral location, to introduce themselves and offer advice and guidance regarding resources and local services to support the family to establish their home education systems. Following the initial home visit, a review visit will usually be offered within three months to enable to the family to settle into home education and develop their provision.

Following the review visit, providing there is evidence of a well rounded education taking place, the allocated EHE officer, will make contact once or twice a year to check that they family are still home educating, that contact details have not changed and a review visit will be offered to the family.

EHE Officers meet with large numbers of home educating families on a regular basis and are therefore well placed to share new ideas, resources and promote good practice. The remit of the EHE Officers is not to police, but to support families where necessary and offer advice to enable home educators to provide the best possible education for their child and satisfy the local authority’s obligation to establish that a child is in receipt of suitable education.

A parent may choose not to meet with their allocated home education officer, they would then be asked to provide examples of the education that their child or young person is receiving; this could be in the form of a written overview or philosophy, an education plan, a diary, photographs or copies of the child’s work.

**Do parents receive financial assistance to deliver home eduction?**

When parents make the decision to home educate, they take on full responsibility for their child’s education and any associated financial implications.

There is **no** funding available to the parent from the Department of Education (DFE) or the Local Authority to assist with the related costs in delivering education at home.

**What are the main costs associated with home education?**

Home educating is likely to incur costs that include the purchase of workbooks, exercise books, stationery, art and craft materials, printer ink, educational days out, exam fees, licenses/ subscriptions to online educational sites and tutors if required.

However, home educating need not be overly expensive, discount stores, supermarkets and charity shops often have educational materials at reduced prices. The Internet is a valuable resource and there are a range of free educational websites available to support learning learning at all levels. Links to some of these can be found on the KCC website.

A responsible adult will need to be available to oversee the education and supervise the child or young person; this may require changes to an established lifestyle.

**What resources and support is available to home educated families?**

A major aspect of the EHE Support and Advice Officers’ role is to signpost home educating families to resources and services that will support them to home educate effectively.

Kent County Council has collated a wealth of information regarding educational resources and local services that home educating families may find useful. Your allocated EHE Support & Advice Officer will be able to discuss this and provide you with copies of this information during their visit. Copies of these materials and additional information can also be found on the KCC website.

The main sources of information and support for home educators are:

* **Our website –** [www.kent.gov.uk/ehe](http://www.kent.gov.uk/ehe)

There is a variety of information available for parents on the EHE webpage. Copies of KCC’s EHE policy and this guidance document can be accessed and downloaded. There is also a resources section that includes useful links, information and resources regarding a number of topics.

Please note, KCC cannot and do not accept any responsibility for the quality or content of external websites parents may access.

* **Our Facebook Page –** <https://www.facebook.com/KCCEHE/>

The Elective Home Education Kent Facebook page is a platform for the EHE team to provide home educating parents with up to date information regarding national and local themed days and events. It is also used to share any relevant information and resources that home educators may find useful,

* **Home Education Groups**

There are many home education groups set up to support home educating families. These offer educational activities, classes, and provide social interaction with a network of likeminded families. There are links to some home education groups on our webpage; others can be found on social media platforms like Facebook.

* **Youth Hubs -** <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/young-people/youth-hubs>

Youth hubs are places for young people to meet friends, hang out, have fun, try new things and also get information, support and advice. They offer a wide range of activities, clubs and day trips and the staff are on hand to provide information and advice about education, training and employment.

* **The Kent Libraries Service -** <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries>

The Library is a valued resource and is widely and regularly used by home educating families to borrow books, access computers, online educational materials and use their printing facilities free of charge. Libraries also offer a number of clubs and activities to children and their families.

Parents of home educated children can apply for a Home Education Library Card which will allow you to borrow more books than standard users; your assigned EHE officer can tell you more about this when they visit.

* **Kent Children’s University -** <http://www.kentchildrensuniversity.co.uk/cukent/home/>

The Children's University believes that children can and do learn anywhere, when doing all sorts of activities, and that children learn best when they decide what they want to learn, when and where, and most importantly, have FUN whilst learning.

They organise a range of enrichment activities and events for all children aged 5-14. Every child taking part in the Children's University has their own special 'Passport to Learning' which they use to collect activity stamps each time an event or venue is attended, or when a learning activity is undertaken.

Home educating families can purchase a family membership. The price of annual membership is dependent upon the number of children in the family and ranges from £25 - £60 per year. Your assigned EHE officer can tell you more about this when they visit.

Kent Children’s University also have an active Facebook page that is a useful source of information regarding upcoming challenges and events <https://www.facebook.com/KentChildrensUniversity/>

**Are parents required to have an education plan?**

It is considered good practice and it is highly recommended that the family have an education plan in place, this does not have to be complex or detailed and can remain flexible, some parents decide to deliver academic subjects in the morning and practical and creative subjects in the afternoon. The plan should ideally include opportunities for social interaction (some children can become quite isolated at home), social and emotional development and physical education. Parents do not have to deliver all of the curriculum areas, the KCC recommend that parents should continue to deliver core subjects – Maths, English, Science and IT.

**Are parents expected to follow a particular educational approach?**

Families educate in a variety of ways. For families who fully engage and immerse themselves in the learning process everyday activities become an opportunity for learning to take place. Being home educated offers freedom outside of the classroom and parents can make use of local amenities and the great outdoors. Education can be more hands on and suited to kinaesthetic learners.

Some parents decide to assign a room within the home where education takes place; this suits some children and young people and allows them to distinguish between ‘school time’ and ‘home time’. Being in a separate room from the TV and computer games can also help aid concentration and provide a more structured learning environment.

Other children and young people will thrive in a creative ‘hands on’ environment, preferring alternative educational methods such as ‘discovery learning’, learning through play or student led learning. Parents will want to explore different approaches to establish what works best for their child and circumstances.

**How can parents evidence that their child or young person is making progress?**

It is good practice but not compulsory to ensure that work is marked and dated and organised in folders. A diary of learning and photographs will help monitor, track and evidence progress of the child or young person. Feedback is an important part of the learning process to help build self esteem for the child and allow their efforts to be recognised. It is also important to be able to capture the progress being made. If children educated at home are not progressing in their education then one must question whether it is suitable to meet the child’s needs.

**What do parents need to consider with regard to safeguarding and health & safety?**

If parents and carers choose to employ tutors as part of their educational provision, KCC recommend that these tutors are vetted prior to starting work with the family (DBS checked, references etc).

Activities should be risk assessed to ensure that the child or young person is safe carrying out the task that has been set and that younger children are properly supervised.

Health and Safety is important, for example, if teaching cookery it is important to learn about kitchen safety, how to handle knives, avoid burns and scalds and ensure that they avoid cross contamination which could lead to food poisoning. Children and young people with special educational needs will often require more supervision and support.

**Can children and young people who are home educated complete work-experience?**

KCC do not carry out risk assessments nor do they have insurance to cover work experience carried out by home educated young people and as such unless the employer can evidence they have risk assessed and have the appropriate level of insurance required to have a young person on their premises; work experience ***is not*** recommended**.** Children can benefit greatly from experiencing a real work environment, however, parents must be assured they can do this safely and with the right level of support and guidance to hand.

**Are children and young people who are home educated allowed to work?**

Children are of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16. Child employment legislation means that a child can only work for a set amount of hours and that work can only take place before or after school, at the weekends or during school holidays, this applies to all children. Any employer would need to apply for a license for the child prior to employment and ensure that risk assessments and appropriate insurance is in place. For more information about child employment (hours of work, prohibited employment etc). go to <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/activities-outside-school/child-employment>

It is important to stress that a young person who has had their 16th birthday and leaves school during Year 11 **is not** able to engage in full time work until the end of the academic year.

**What is the process if a parent decides that they would like their child or young person to return to school?**

If circumstances change and the family require the child or young person to attend school, an In Year Casual Admission form needs to be completed and sent to each school of preference. If a place is unavailable the school will write to the parent advising of the option to join the waiting list and the school must advise parents of their right to appeal. If parents are not offered this opportunity contact should be made with the EHE team who will be able to signpost families to officers in the Fair Access Team who can help them find a school place.

If applying for a school place at the normal point of entry (Reception, Junior or Secondary), an application can be completed on-line or a reception/Junior/Secondary common application form can be downloaded and returned to the LA.

To be considered for a place at a grammar school the child or young person will need to be assessed as suitable for grammar school. This is achieved by the child sitting an entrance test to establish if the learner is working at a level where they could cope in a grammar school setting. The Kent test registration is open for 1 month in June and the test will take place in September.

Further information can be found online at [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)/schooladmissions

**What happens if it appears that home education is unsuitable?**

Under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, KCC **must** act if it appears that a child or young person is not receiving a suitable education. If an Officer visits and is unable to establish that a suitable education is taking place, they will discuss this with you and recommend ideas/suggestions (time limited) or a return to school. Where a suitable education is not taking place, the Officer will support families that wish their child to return to school. Kent’s In Year Fair Access Protocol dictates that the child or young person should return to the home school, unless the In Year Fair Access’ (IYFA) panel deems it not to be in the best interests of the pupil and/or the school. If the parents/carers do not take up the offer of a school place a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education team, who may, as a last resort raise a School Attendance Order which could mean that the child or young person could be directed to attend a named school.

**Are home educated young people required to sit formal exams?**

A child or young person who is home educated is not required to sit formal examinations; however parents and carers should be aware that if they wish to register their child for examinations they will need to identify an educational setting where this can be facilitated and charges will apply. Information regarding exam boards and a list of schools that accept private candidates are available online at [www.kent.gov.uk/ehe](http://www.kent.gov.uk/ehe)

In most cases it will be important for learners to be registered to sit examinations because most colleges have entry requirements for the majority of courses and prospective employers will expect to see evidence of a good standard of literacy and numeracy if they are seeking to identify someone for a workbased learning opportunity.

Whilst KCC would not advocate a young person is removed from school in Year 11, we realise that there are exceptional circumstances in which this may happen. Parents will want to be mindful that the school has no obligation to register a student who is no longer on their school roll for exams.

Parents/carers can enter their young person for exams; they are required to source an exam centre, provide the syllabus, pay for examination fees and in some cases cover the cost of invigilators, room rental and administration costs.

Home educating families often opt for International GCSE known as i-GCSEs, these are exam based and do not have a requirement for coursework or controlled assessments, distance learning companies have i-GCSE packs available to purchase.

Some families may prefer to deliver functional skills as opposed to i-GCSEs and these can are offered at entry level (pre-GCSE), level 1 (the equivalent of grade D-F or a 3-1 at GCSE) or level 2 (equivalent of GCSE grade A-C or 9-4).

Some colleges with pre-16 units offer courses to young people who are home educated during Years 10 and 11 allowing the young person access to exams.

Most exam boards (City and Guilds, Edexcel, OCR etc.) have past exam papers available on their websites that can be downloaded and used as practice papers prior to sitting exams.

At most colleges, functional skills are offered alongside vocational subjects, courses are available in English, Maths and ICT, there is a speaking and listening element to the English course which can be difficult for home educated young people to achieve without the support of a college or educational establishment.

When applying for a post 16 place at a college, students may be offered an assessment by a college and dependent on the results the college may allow the young person to sit entry level exams for literacy and numeracy once on roll.

**What post 16 options are available to young people who are home educated ?**

Young people are required to engage in education, training, or employment with training, until the age of 18. This includes college, apprenticeships, employment with training, attending sixth form or volunteering. It becomes the young person’s responsibility to engage in education after the last Friday in June in the acadmic year in which they turn 16, however, it is expected that parents will continue to support their young person with identifying and accessing their chosen pathway.

During Year 11 all young people who are registered as EHE, receive a login and password to allow them to access UCAS Progress, this is an online search engine that can be used to search and apply for college and sixth form courses. Further information can be found online at [www.kent.gov.uk/ehe](http://www.kent.gov.uk/ehe)

Some colleges offer courses that do not require the young person to have any formal qualifications, however, most courses have entry requirements and a set number of GCSEs may form part of the requisite for an offer to be made.

The EHE Support & Advice Officers can signpost the young person to the Skills and Employability team who can offer careers advice and to help find a suitable post 16 placement for a young person. The referral would usually be submitted in the later stages of Year 11 if a young person is unsure of their options for the next academic year.

Young people can continue to be registered as home educated until they are 18 and KCC will continue to liaise with the family about an onward route to prevent the young person from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).