



25 May 2021

Over this last challenging year of the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a significant increase in notifications from parents and carers wanting to home educate their children. The most common reason cited by parents for this decision in this period was due to health reasons directly related to COVID-19. Of course, we sympathise with these anxieties, particularly those who have been shielding due to being clinically extremely vulnerable. However, now that infection rates have fallen substantially, and against the background of the success of the vaccination programme, we are confident that these concerns can be addressed and mitigated so that your child/children can continue to attend – or re-attend – school.

If you are home educating primarily for health and/or safety reasons, we would suggest you discuss these with your local authority and school, to see what measures have been, or could be, put in place.

We support the right of parents to educate children at home when they wish to do so and can provide a suitable education. The Government's aim is to ensure all young people receive world-class education to allow them to reach their potential. There is no reason why a child cannot receive a high-quality education at home and it works well when it is a positive choice and carried out with proper regard for the needs of the child. But there is no doubt that it is a very demanding commitment for parents to undertake.

We are both writing to you to help you ensure that your child gets the best education possible and to make sure that your recent decision to electively home educate, or any potential future decision, is one that can achieve the best educational outcome for your child. If your child's educational needs is not the primary reason for you choosing to electively home educate, then we would encourage you to consider sending your child back into school as we think this is the best place for them.

If your child is not currently enrolled at a school, to have them (re)admitted, please [contact your local authority](#) for advice on the admissions process in your area including information on vacancies in schools, whether there are local re-admission agreements and where to get an application form.

Parents can apply for a place at any mainstream school, at any time, outside the normal admissions round. Where a school, who manages their own in-year admissions, receives an in-year application, they should process the application in accordance with their usual in-year admission procedures. Parents must not be refused the opportunity to make an application, or be told they can only be placed on a waiting list rather than make an application.

Where a school receives multiple in-year applications, and does not have sufficient places for every child who has applied for one, they must allocate places in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in their determined admission arrangements. With the exception of designated grammar schools, all schools that have places available must offer a place to every child who has applied for one, unless admitting the

child would prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources. If a parent is refused a school place, they must be offered the right to appeal that decision. Schools should also ask parents to contact the local authority, who will be able to advise them of other schools in the area with places available. Again, your local authority should be able to guide you through this process.

As mentioned, Elective Home Education (EHE) can produce impressive results for some children, but it can be a challenging undertaking for parents. The vast majority of EHE parents do not need to be told this! However, some parents may go into home education with a view that they will receive a form of support – particularly if they are thinking in terms of the home tutoring that parents did while schools were closed during the pandemic, where parents' role was to assist schools with delivering their curriculum remotely. There is a world of difference between this and EHE where there is no relationship with any school and no assistance from a school with the education that parents offer. It is for parents to be certain that home education is right for their child. Local authorities can provide support and guidance to families who elect to home educate but this is discretionary.

This discretionary support from local authorities also applies should your child have special educational needs (SEN). If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), it is the local authority's responsibility to ensure that the special educational provision specified in the EHCP is made available to your child. If the home education arrangements are deemed suitable, then the local authority is under no duty to arrange any provision for your child. However, discretionary support may still be available and so we would suggest opening discussions with your local authority. If you are educating a child at home and feel he or she may have SEN, you can still request an (re)assessment from a local authority as if your child were attending a mainstream setting.

Guidance on EHE, including for parents, can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and a short '[what you need to know](#)' blog for parents and carers is also available.

If you are continuing with EHE, we would encourage you to familiarise yourself with these, if you have not done so already. If you do have any concerns that the education you provide at home may not be the best and fullest for your child, then we would strongly encourage you to talk to your local authority and school about a return to school education, and the arrangements that are now in place to keep everyone safe from the coronavirus.



**BARONESS BERRIDGE OF THE  
VALE OF CATMOSE**

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-  
SECRETARY**



**VICKY FORD MP**

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**