



Knowsley Council

**Elective Home Education
Policy
2026 -2027**

KNOWSLEY DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Elective Home Education

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures and guidance to enable Knowsley Council to fulfil its statutory functions for those children who are being educated at home under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act.
- 1.2 This policy is based on the legislative framework established by the Education Act 1996 and incorporates the essential principles of the Department for Education (DfE) Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities April 2019. Consideration is also given to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Acts 2026.
- 1.3 This policy aims to achieve an appropriate balance between the rights of parents and the responsibilities of the Council, in the best interests of children and young people.
- 1.4 Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their child at home instead of sending them to school. Throughout these guidelines, 'parents' should be taken to include all those with parental responsibility, including guardians and carers.

2. Knowsley principles for Elective Home Education

- 2.1 Education is a fundamental right for every child and the Council recognise that parents have the right to choose to educate their child at home rather than at school. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children receive a suitable education. Where parents have chosen to home educate, Knowsley want them to have a positive experience based on an informed choice. The Council believe this is best achieved where parents and councils work together to enable the best outcomes for children.
- 2.2 The Council will endeavour to establish positive and supportive relationships, recognising that home educating parents adopt a rich and diverse range of approaches to home education and use a variety of philosophies and methods.

- 2.3 With regard to its involvement in EHE, the Council's primary interest lies in the suitability of the provision which home educating parents make, not their reason to home educate.
- 2.4 A parent may have chosen to home educate in response to a one-off incident at school. In this instance, the Council may suggest to the parent that a meeting be held at the school where the child was previously on roll, in order to confirm that the parent is choosing to home educate for positive reasons. It will also be an opportunity to mediate and ensure that the decision to home educate is being made in an informed and considered way with the child's best interests as the prime consideration. There would be no intention of trying to dissuade the parent from choosing to home educate and the parent's participation in such a meeting would be entirely voluntary.
- 2.5 As well as educational needs, Knowsley take the personal, health and welfare interests of individual children into account at all times. Ensuring that children and young people in receipt of EHE are safeguarded is an essential element of the monitoring role of the Council.
- 2.6 To provide assistance to EHE parents/carers, Knowsley home education team always promotes regular dialogue and partnership work in order to ensure that education is suitable and to signpost and support families to wider services other than just education based.

3. The Law

- 3.1 The responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents.
- 3.2 Parents have a right to educate their children at home. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:
- "The parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-*
- a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
 - b) to any special educational needs he may have,*
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."*
- 3.3 A child's education should be suitable, full time and efficient.
- 3.4 The term 'efficient' can be defined as 'achieving what it sets out to achieve'.
- 3.5 The term 'full-time' has no current legal definition. Children normally, however, attend school for between 22 and 25 hours a week for 38 weeks a year, but this measurement of 'contact time' may not be relevant to EHE where there is often almost continuous one-to-one contact and education may take place outside of normal 'school hours'.

- 3.6 There is no definition of suitable education in law. However as stated in section 7 it must be suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special education needs that they may have. This means that it must be age appropriate, enable the child to make progress according to his/her particular level of ability and should take account of any specific aptitudes (for example if a child is very good at Mathematics it might focus more on that than some other subjects.)
- 3.7 This does not mean that the education must be the same as in school, but children should be able to make good academic progress and develop emotionally and socially.
- 3.8 When parents choose to electively home educate their children, they assume full financial responsibility for their children's education including bearing the cost of any public examinations. Local Authorities do not receive funding to support home educating families.
- 3.9 If a child is on roll at a school because of the Local Authority having previously served a School Attendance Order the parents must apply to have the order revoked before the child's name can be removed from the school roll.
- 3.10 Section 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Local Authority to act if a child/young person is not receiving a suitable education. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act provides the Local Authority with powers of visitation to ensure suitable education is assessed.
- 3.11 "If the child/young person is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise.... (the local authority) shall serve a notice, in writing, on the parent requiring him to satisfy... that the child is receiving such education."
- 3.12 The Children and Families Act 2024 and SEND Code of Practice determines that when a child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is home educated, the local authority must maintain the plan and continue annual reviews, though it no longer a legal duty to secure the specific special educational provision. The Local Authority will seek approval from SEND Team prior to removing any child with an EHCP from roll, if they attend specialist provision.
- 3.13 The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 outlines a requirement for all Local Authorities to hold a Children Not in School Register. This in turn requires basic information to be submitted from parents.
- 3.14 Parents cannot remove a child from school without Local Authority consent if the child is subject to active child protection enquiries or a child protection plan.

4. Knowsley Process and Procedure

- 4.1 If a child is already enrolled at a school, the parent should write to the Headteacher formally requesting that his/her name be removed from the school roll and stating the intention to “electively home educate” their child.
- 4.2 Schools should not advise or recommend that parents home educate, especially if a child is experiencing difficulties at school.
- 4.3 If a parent notifies a school that he/she intends to home educate, the school should notify the Elective Home Education Team of this information and ensure that this request is confirmed in writing by the parent.
- 4.4 Upon receipt of this written request the school should remove the child's name from the school roll and formally notify the Local Authority that it has done so, using Knowsley's EHE notification form.
- 4.5 If a child is not enrolled at a school, it is requested that families notify Knowsley Council of the intention to home educate. The contact address to inform of the intention to home educate is below.

FAO Elective Home Education Service
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
School Attendance Service
Nutgrove Building
Second Floor
Westmorland Rd
L36 9UX

electivehome.education@knowsley.gov.uk

- 4.6 Once a decision to home educate has been received, parents/carers will be contacted by phone, by the Elective Home Education Team to make sure they fully understand the commitment of the decision and to make arrangements to satisfy the suitability of the education provided. It is important for parents to understand that once removed from roll a child is subject to the admissions procedures and should they wish them to return to school and this can be a timely procedure. There are no guarantees that a child can be admitted to the school of their choice at this stage or that this is a process to enable families to secure their preferred school choice.
- 4.7 An elective home education officer will be assigned to the family and will arrange an initial informal meeting. This occurs for all families except those who choose to provide a written report. If there are any safeguarding concerns the Officer will insist on meeting in person. At this initial meeting, the following areas may be discussed:

- The background to the family's decision to home educate.
- The legal duties of parents and the Council.
- Who will educate the child.
- The broad educational programme being followed.
- How they will be able to show that their child is making progress.
- The child's recreational and social contact.
- Any other alternative provision which could be considered if the decision to home educate is a negative, rather than a positive choice.
- The frequency of support visits or meetings with the Council and any signposting that may be appropriate.

4.8 In order to enable the Council to make a judgement on the suitability of the education being provided by home educating parents, the EHE Officer will ensure annual contact. This can be either completed as a home visit, virtual visit, by phone or report. The Local Authority will always seek to visit the family either virtually or at home if possible.

4.9 Once provided with evidence of the home education, the Education Improvement Officer will decide as to whether the education which the child is receiving is suitable.

4.10 If education is deemed suitable, parents/carers will be told at the visit, and they will receive an annual review appointment for the following year.

4.11 If education is deemed unsuitable, recommendations will be provided, and a review visit arranged within a 4–6 week period.

4.12 If the officer has other concerns such as health or emotional wellbeing, the family may be offered support through local services such as Family First or School Nursing Service.

4.13 For cases where there have been three failed attempts to make contact with parents and there has been no response to the Council's informal enquiries or, in the case of point 4:11, where education provision remains unsuitable following a return visit, then the Council will assert its duty under Section 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996. In these circumstances, parents receive formal written notice that there are fifteen days, from receipt of the letter, to satisfy the Council that the home education is suitable. The letter also informs parents that failure to follow this requirement results in being served a school attendance order which

would require the child to become a registered pupil at the school named in the order.

5. Children with special educational needs:

- 5.1 Where a child is attending a special school under arrangements made by the Council, additional permission is required from the Council and SEND Team before the child's name can be removed from the register.
- 5.2 If a child has an education, health and care plan, the parent has the same right as other families to educate their child at home. However, the Council must be satisfied that the parent can meet the needs of the child as outlined in the plan. In these cases, the Education Improvement Officer will liaise with the child's SEND caseworker and, if appropriate, conduct joint visits.
- 5.3 Even if the Council is satisfied that parents are making suitable arrangements it remains under a duty to maintain the EHCP and review it annually.

6. Children not known to the Local Authority

- 6.1 The risk of children becoming missed and 'invisible' to schools or other agencies is always be considered. Home educators might not be registered with the Council or known via the normal admissions procedures. However, Knowsley Council seeks to ensure, as far as possible, all children and families are known to the home education team so that the relevant support can be offered.
- 6.2 Section 436a pf the Education Act 1996 requires:
"Local authorities need to make arrangements which will as far as possible enable them to determine whether any children who are not pupils at schools, such as those being educated at home, are receiving suitable education. In order to do this Local Authorities should make enquiries with parents educating children at home about the education provision being made for them."
- 6.3 The children missing education (CME) register is maintained by the Council's Attendance Team. Children who are identified as not attending school and have not formally entered EHE, or where suitable education cannot be established, are put onto the CME register until such time it can be ascertained that the parent has chosen to home educate and the education is suitable. Once this has been established, the child's name will be taken off the CME register and put onto the EHE register.

7. Cared for Children

- 7.1 The carer of a cared for child has the same right as other families to educate the child they care for at home. As with children with special educational needs, under arrangements made by the Council, additional permission is required from the Virtual Head Teacher before a cared for child's name can be removed from the register.
- 7.2 The Virtual School strongly challenge any request made to electively home educate a cared for child. The Virtual School need to be satisfied that the educational provision would be suitable and that the required monthly care planning meetings, termly PEP meetings and cared for children reviews can still be delivered with the quality required to meet the needs of the child.
- 7.3 When challenges arise for a cared for child to access school education, the Virtual School work in partnership to maintain effective learning and consider alternative options for the child in order for the child to remain on a school roll whilst receiving any alternative provision or an educational offer.

8. Safeguarding

- 8.1 Under Section 175 of the Children Act 2002, the Local Authority has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Local Authority has powers to enable it to insist on seeing children to enquire about their welfare where there are grounds for concern. Such powers, however, do not give the Local Authority the ability to see and question children who are being home educated in order to establish whether they are receiving a suitable education.
- 8.2 Knowsley Council will, nevertheless, aim to discharge its safeguarding functions in relation to home educated children by attempting to engage proactively with all home educating parents and will always seek to see, speak with and ascertain the views of children who are home educated.
- 8.3 To meet this duty the Council will make arrangements to meet with home educating families at least once a year, further to this an annual health-needs assessment will be offered by local school health services. The Local Authority will also seek to meet with parents within the first 6 weeks of starting EHE to ensure they have all the resources they need to fulfil a suitable education.
- 8.4 Parents may choose to employ other people to educate their child, though they themselves will continue to be responsible for the education provided. In these circumstances, parents are responsible for ensuring that those whom they engage are suitable to have access to children and should take up references. It is highly recommended that parents arrange for a Criminal Records Bureau check prior to employment and that arrangements for ongoing supervision are made. Where possible it is requested that families provide the Council with contact details of

tutors / teachers who are employed by them, to enable further safeguarding checks to take place if necessary.

- 8.5 A wide range of teaching and learning resources are available online. If parents/carers plan to use online resources as part of the planned educational programme it is recommended that they consider how to keep their child safe online. It is strongly recommended that parents ensure they and their children are alert to risks and take action to control and monitor access by their children. Advice about keeping safe on the internet is available from www.thinkuknow.co.uk.
- 8.6 Should any safeguarding concerns emerge during engagement with home educating families, or in consequence of a lack of engagement, these concerns will be consulted on with the Education Safeguarding Officer. If deemed to have met the threshold of need and intervention, families will then be promptly referred to children's social care. Whilst a failure to respond to the informal enquiries of the local authority will not in itself be seen as evidence of safeguarding concerns, a repeated and persistent failure to respond, together with other contextual information, may in certain circumstances cause the Council to consider the need for further action.

9. Further Support

- 9.1 EHE parents should not be excluded from the help of specialist Council services or other relevant agencies.
- 9.2 Parents will receive information about services that are normally available through school either via the home education team or Council website ([Home | Knowsley Council](#))
- 9.3 This could include information:
- Health – home educated children can miss routine inoculations, PSHE and other school-based health initiatives e.g. mental health support, sexual health support. If families need further support around health, they should initially contact their GP or contact the home education team for school nurse support.
 - Family First – families who may be struggling and need additional support from external from external agencies can contact familysupportservice@knowsley.gov.uk
 - College links – a 14-16 child may be keen to attend college full or part time. The home education team can provide further information on options.
 - Schools – should circumstances change and a family choose to no longer EHE and would like their child to return to school they should contact admissions@knowsley.gov.uk to discuss the options available.

- Exams – parents need to contact examining bodies directly for the arrangements to sit exams. Should families need further support they should contact the home education team.
Electivehome.education@knowsley.gov.uk
- Voluntary sector – Merseyside Youth Association run a series of projects within Knowsley which are open to all young people. Parents can visit their website to discuss further. www.mya.org.uk, Lee Cooper Foundation provides mental health support in Knowsley, parents can visit their website for further information – <https://theleecooperfoundation.co.uk>. The home education team are happy to advise on any wider support that parents require.

9.4 The Local Authority will provide parents with a guide which includes useful information and weblinks This will support all families starting their home education journey.

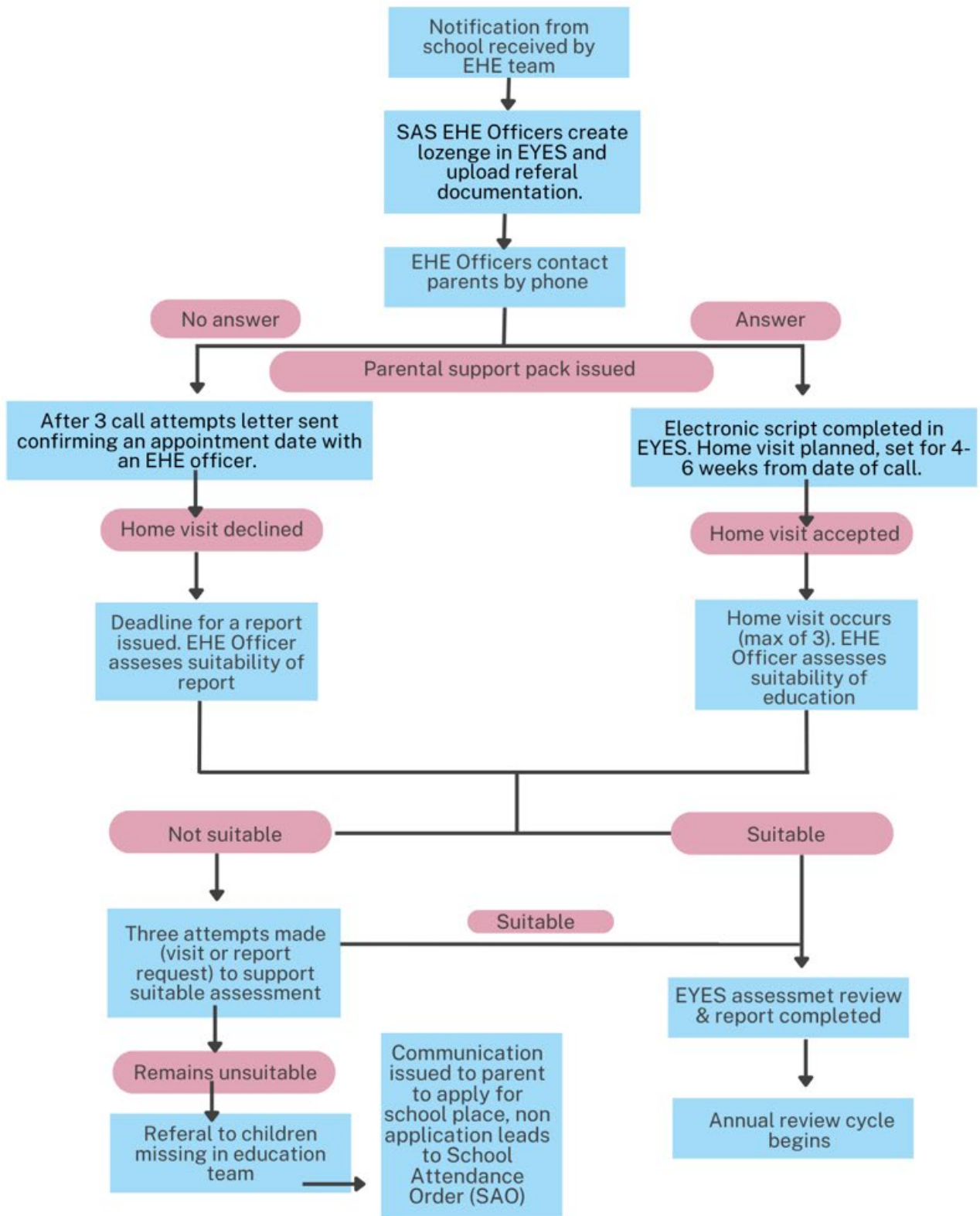
10. Monitoring arrangements

10.1 Records maintained will include the following:

- Review visit reports on EYES system
- Case notes on contacts with parents/carers
- Register of students
- Any feedback received from parents
- Data analysis of the number of children and young people who are electively educated at home will include the following details:
 - key stage at which child started elective home education
 - the number of new referrals – *by gender/age group/school*
 - the number of children and young people who have returned to school
 - The prime reason for choosing elective home education
 - the number of Education, Health and Care Plans of children and young people who are electively educated at home which are reviewed annually
 - the number of children and young people who have SEND needs and are electively educated at home which are reviewed annually

- the number of children and young people working with social care or family first who are electively educated at home which are reviewed annually

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION FLOW CHART



A review of the policy will take place annually. Policy reviewed by	Date of policy review
Louise Noon (Education Service Manager)	September 2026

Publication arrangements for the Policy:

The policy will be available on the Knowsley Council Website and linked to the Knowsley Offer site.

Arrangements can be made for the policy to be translated or made available in a different form to support access arrangements upon request.

Policy updated by:

Education Service Manager

USEFUL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1	EHE Notification Form for Knowsley (to be completed by schools on deregistration)	 EHE Notification form for Knowsley Blank 2C
2	EHE phone script (incorporated as part of the EHE electronic pathway process)	 EHE phone call script.pdf
3	Initial contact letter (if phone call failed)	 Template Initial contact EHE letter.pdf
4	Annual visit letter (if phone call contact failed)	 Template Annual Visit Letter.pdf
5	Calling Card	 EHE Calling Card.pdf
6	EHE Visit prompt sheet (to support visiting Officers)	 EHE Visit prompt sheet.pdf
7	Section 437 Notice letter	 Section 437 (1) notice letter .pdf

8	DfE Elective Home Education guidance for parents	 EHE_guidance_for_parentsafterconsultation
9	Parental support pack	 FAMILY HUB HOME EDUCATION LEAFLET