



Ministry
of Defence

Elective Home Education Overseas

Parental Guidance

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General

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Introduction

1. MOD policy for elective home education (EHE) overseas is laid out in 2021DIN01-134. This directs the requirement for reviews of educational provision with those who are engaged in EHE.

Aim

2. This document provides general guidance on EHE overseas and details the process and procedures for conducting reviews of EHE provision.

Scope

3. This document applies to all circumstances where children are being electively home educated overseas.

Sharing Information

4. Information from the reviews will be shared in accordance with the MOD's and DCS privacy notices which are accessed on the internet via: [MOD privacy notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Education overseas for service children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

General Guidance

5. Parents may decide to home educate from a very early stage before a child reaches the age of compulsory education. Whilst there is no legal requirement for any education to take place at this stage, it is strongly recommended that **parents with pre-school age children, who are considering an overseas posting, discuss their plans for the future education of their child with Defence Children Services (DCS). DCS should be contacted by emailing the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) at: RC-DCS-HQ-CEAS@mod.gov.uk**
6. Parents who are considering elective home education overseas are strongly advised to discuss their plans with their current head teacher at the earliest opportunity. The head teacher can offer advice about the benefits and risks of elective home education for their child.
7. Parents who are considering an overseas assignment are required to contact DCS for advice and guidance before making any firm decision on elective home education, this presents an opportunity for parents to talk through their plans for their child's education. Personnel are also required to notify their CofC of their intent to home educate or if they are currently home educating and engage in the MOD Assessment of Supportability Overseas (MASO) process which is laid out in JSP 770 (Chapter 2A.) **Where the CofC determines that a child is not supportable in the overseas location, elective home education cannot be supported.**
8. By electing to home educate, parents become legally required to take on full responsibility for their child's education and this includes all associated costs, including examination fees and any additional learning support costs. **By taking on financial responsibility for their child's education, to ensure the best outcomes for their child, planning for this financial commitment through the entire stage of a child's education (for example, primary or secondary stage) is strongly recommended.**
9. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for parents to follow a prescribed programme of education like the national curriculum, it is good practice for education to follow a structured programme. Guidance on this may be accessed at the Department for Education (DfE)/Devolved Administration equivalent pages on GOV.UK and parents are strongly recommended to talk to other parents who have experience of home educating. Whilst parents can access a range of resources in the UK such as libraries, home education support networks and scouting groups, they should be aware that these may not be accessible overseas.
10. The guiding questions below aim to provide a steer for parents at the early stages of considering home education:
 - a. Will my child have access to education resources that can support their learning and deliver 'efficient and suitable' education which is suitable to age, ability, and aptitude and to any special educational needs?
 - b. Will my child have access to social and educational networks suitable to age, ability, and aptitude and to any special educational needs?
 - c. Will my child have access to any specialist or additional resources that are needed?
 - d. Will elective home education present any risks to the safety and/or welfare of my child or my family and others and can these risks be mitigated?

e. How does my child feel, what does my child think about learning at home?

11. The scenarios below are by no means exhaustive but provide some standard contexts for parents who are considering home education overseas. In these scenarios and in all circumstances where elective home education is being considered, it is important to focus on what is in a child's best interests and children, even at a young age, should be given the opportunity to have a voice and express their thoughts and feelings about their own learning and education.

a. **Scenario 1. Extending current elective home education.** Parents who are currently educating their child at home and have received an assignment offer/are considering a transfer from UK to overseas or from one overseas location to another may wish to extend elective home education. Parents should be aware that they may not be able to access the range of support networks or education resources they currently use, and this may have an adverse impact on the education that they can deliver in a new location. Parents should seek advice from their CofC on the legality of elective home education in the potential overseas location.

b. **Scenario 2. Considering home education whilst on assignment/transfer.** Whilst on assignment/transfer in an overseas location, normally children will be enrolled in either a MOD school or a local/International school. A change in education delivery may present a risk to continuity of learning and development and this is particularly important for children who have specialist and or additional needs which may not be supportable through home education.

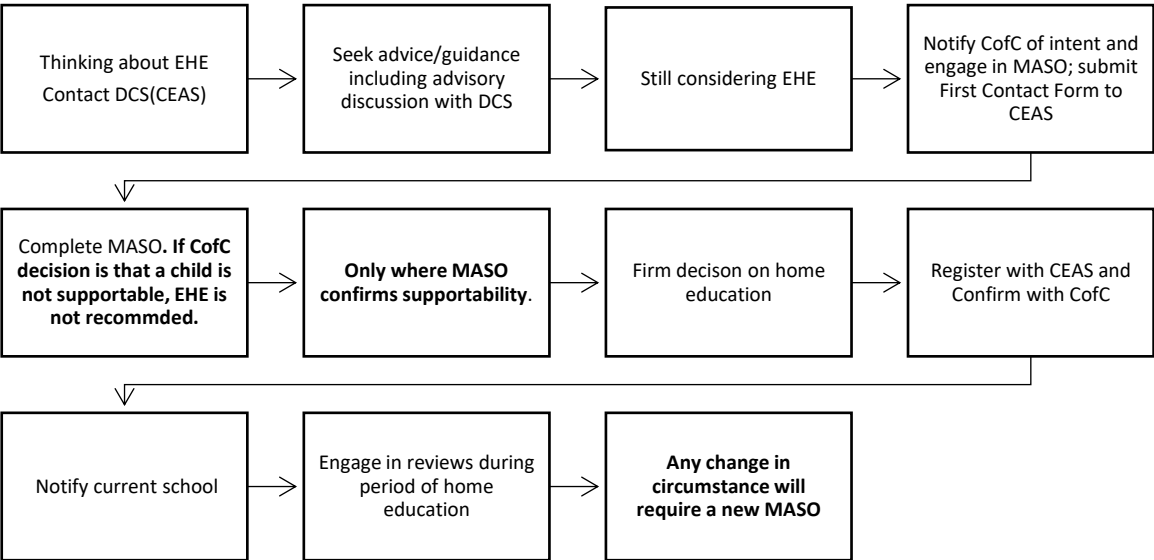
c. **Scenario 3. Transition from pre-school to primary education overseas.** Parents with pre-school age children may be considering home education as an alternative to enrolment in primary school. It is important to understand that should parents decide to home educate at a future stage in their child's education, this will present a change to their child's supportability status.

d. **Scenario 4. Re-entry into school overseas.** Where re-entry into any school overseas is being considered, the MOD's Assessment of Supportability is critical in determining whether a child can be supported in the overseas location. Schools may not be able to support the educational needs of a child and parents should understand that there is no guarantee that a child will be determined supportable in the overseas location. For re-entry into any overseas school, parents will be required to provide a record of their child's progress and attainment as part of the assessment of educational supportability. Parents should note that MOD schools can only enrol a child who has been determined as educationally supportable and only where there is capacity in the MOD school, and this does not automatically mean that a child can be enrolled in a non-MOD school. Parents will need to discuss their intentions with their CofC, CEAS and/or the relevant MOD school head teacher.

e. **Scenario 5. Re-entry into school in UK.** When returning to the UK after an overseas assignment, parents may be considering re-entry to a UK- based school. It is important for parents to understand that early engagement with the receiving local authority is critical as there is no guarantee of placement in a preferred school. CEAS can support families with this.

f. **Scenario 6. Removing a child from School.** Parents who are considering removing their child from an overseas school before engaging with DCS and making a firm decision on home education are required to notify their CofC immediately so that the CofC can raise a MASO and request an educational supportability assessment from DCS. Children of parents who fail to do this will be automatically deemed unsupported in the location and this is likely to trigger a return to the UK. Parents can remove a child from school, but this will be deemed unauthorised absence rather than EHE until supportability has been established.

12. **Process.** The flow diagram below charts the steps parents need to take if they are currently delivering or are intending to deliver home education overseas.



Flow Diagram: Elective Home Education Process

EHE Reviews

13. Elective home education can work well when it is a positive choice and carried out with proper regard for the needs of the child. The MOD recognises the need to exercise its duty to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and has deemed it necessary to conduct periodic reviews of home education in order to discharge this duty. Reviews provide an opportunity for children and their parents to discuss their programme of education with MOD education professionals and to review whether educational and welfare needs are being met.

14. Parents who elect to deliver education at home will become responsible for delivering education that is efficient and suitable. Education may not be suitable even if it is satisfactory in terms of content and teaching, if it is delivered in circumstances which make it very difficult to work in or where it leads to excessive isolation from the child’s peers and thus impedes social development. During periodic reviews, a child’s opinion on the suitability of the home education received may be sought, this enables children to express their views and can be relevant to advice on whether the educational needs of the child can be met through home education.

15. Whilst there is no definition of 'efficient' or 'suitable' education in statute law, an accepted definition of these terms is 'an education which achieves that which it sets out to achieve and equips a child for life within the community in which he is a member' and further information on these terms and DfE definitions used in this document is contained in DfE guidance¹ published on its pages of GOV.UK.

16. The MOD has adopted the DfE's description of a child's educational needs as below, noting that for the purposes of this document the use of the pronouns 'him/his/he' in the quote are considered to denote both male and female children:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him 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.'*²

17. The first review will take the form of an elective home education questionnaire and a visit, either in person or via remote/virtual means, as agreed between parents/carers and reviewer; subsequent reviews will be shorter in length and not require repetition of the questionnaire. The visit may include discussing educational provision with the key person who delivers the education, meeting the child, sharing examples of the child's learning, books and observing the learning environment.

18. There will be a minimum of three reviews per year and the duration of reviews will vary according to need and circumstance; it is anticipated that the first review will take one hour and that this will reduce in later reviews.

19. The intent is that reviews will be a positive experience for all participants, and an opportunity for the parent, child, and reviewer to discuss and reflect on educational provision. Suggestions for improvement may be outlined in the review visit and the report and are intended to be helpful and developmental.

20. Reviews will be conducted on the understanding that parents are exercising their choice to electively home educate and that there is no statutory requirement to follow a prescribed curriculum.

21. The stages of the review are:

a. Once the MASO has been conducted and a child has been determined as supportable and only where EHE is considered viable in the overseas location, the parent or carer will register the child with CEAS. MOD educational professionals will be appointed to conduct the reviews.

¹ Department for Education, Elective Home Education, Guidance for Parents, Gov.UK (April 2019) and Department for Education, Elective Home Education Guidance for Local Authorities, Gov.UK (April 2019).

² Department for Education, Elective Home Education Guidance for Parents, Gov.UK (April 2019).

- b. The reviewer will contact the family and ask the parent and/or carer to complete the review questionnaire at Annex A and a review date will be agreed.
 - c. The family will complete the review questionnaire and return it to the reviewer five working days before the review.
 - d. The review is conducted as a physical visit or through remote/virtual means (i.e. Microsoft Teams/Zoom) and this will be agreed and planned between the parent and reviewer. For a physical visit, the reviewer will contact the parents before the visit to discuss logistics, including health and safety aspects, and to help complete a pre-visit risk assessment (e.g. if the reviewer suffers from asthma triggered by animal hair they will need to ask about pets in the household) or an alternative venue to the home can be agreed. For some physical visits, there may need to be two reviewers.
 - e. The key person responsible for delivering the education will need to attend the review in addition to the child; some examples of reading books and the child's learning should be available to share with the reviewer.
 - f. The reviewer will conduct the review in accordance with the review visit record form at Annex B. This involves discussions with the key person delivering the education and the child, sharing of work, reading books, the learning environment and any other matters arising which relate to provision for the child. A date will be agreed for the next review.
 - g. The reviewer will complete the review visit record form and send this to the family, CEAS and the relevant CofC with welfare responsibility, within 10 working days of completing the review.
22. If safeguarding concerns are identified, the MOD's policy for safeguarding (JSP 834) will be followed; the MOD's contracted social work service will be contacted and the CofC notified. This may lead to a CofC led multi-agency meeting being convened to discuss the issues and agree next steps.
23. If significant educational issues are identified and these indicate that a child is not being provided with a suitable education, the CofC will be notified and this may lead to a CofC led multi-agency meeting being convened to discuss the issues and agree next steps.
24. It is expected that relevant family members will actively and willingly participate in the reviews at the required time; if this does not happen, CofC will be notified and this may lead to a CofC led multi-agency meeting being convened to discuss the issues and agree next steps.
25. If parents have any concerns over the way reviews have been conducted or would like to exercise a right to appeal they should contact HQ Defence Children Services by emailing: RC-DCS-HQ-Groupmailbox@mod.gov.uk

Annex A – Elective Home Education Review Questionnaire

Please complete the attached questionnaire to help with our discussion about Elective Home Education for your child.

Information Sharing and Data Protection

Information provided in this form will be shared with Children’s Education Advisory Service (Defence Children Services), Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS), and the CofC with welfare responsibility during your current overseas assignment. Information will be shared in accordance with the MOD’s and DCS privacy notices which are accessed on the internet via [MOD privacy notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and [Education overseas for service children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Questionnaire

This questionnaire only needs to be completed for the first review; for subsequent reviews, opportunities will be provided to outline any changes since completion of the questionnaire, and these will be recorded by the reviewer on the review form at Annex B.

Child’s details

Legal Surname:		Legal Forename:	
Preferred Surname:		Preferred Forename:	
Middle name(s):		Date of birth:	
Gender: (Male / Female)		Unique Pupil Number:	

Parent Contact Details

Serving Parent: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other		Other Parent: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other	
Service and Service/ Staff No: (i.e. Army, Navy, RAF, Civil Service/contractor plus service/staff number)		Service/Staff No:	
Forename:		Forename:	

Surname:	Surname:
Relationship to child:	Relationship to child:
Current Contact details:	Current residential address:
Home:	.
Work:	.
Mobile:	.
Email:	Email:

Other family members

Please list any other children in the family (name, age and if currently living with you):

Elective Home Education Context

Please provide some context about when you started to provide home education, why you decided to home educate and what you hope to achieve? What is your current predicted end of tour date?

Programme of Learning and Daily Structure

Please describe the programme of learning for your child, outlining how you structure this on a typical day. Please include the subjects you teach and a schedule if you use one. Please attach any other supporting information.

Resources

What resources do you use (i.e. scheme reading books, online teaching and learning programmes, curriculum planning materials, library access, swimming teacher etc) to help support your child in their home education?

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Specific and/or Additional needs

Does your child have any specific educational needs, disabilities or strengths/aptitudes and how are you providing for these?

Progress and assessment

What progress is your child making and how do you assess this? If your child is taking an examination, or at an age when they would be taking formal exams in school, how are you facilitating this?

Social development

What opportunities do you provide for your child to socialise with others of similar ages?

Additional information

Is there anything else you would like to share about how you support and provide for your child's education?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this Elective Home Education questionnaire.

Declaration of parent with legal responsibility:

I declare the above information to be correct to the best of my knowledge at the time of completion

Name:

Signed:

Date:

(E-signature is acceptable)

Please retain a copy for your reference and e-mail a copy to the person who will be working with you as part of the Elective Home Education Review process and has e-mailed you this information.

Alternatively e-mail a copy to the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) or the EHE DCS team:

RC-DCS-HQ-EHE@mod.gov.uk
RC-DCS-HQ-CEAS@mod.gov.uk

Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)
Defence Children Services
Bldg 183
Trenchard Lines
Upavon
SN9 6BE

Annex B – Elective Home Education Record of Review Visit

This form is completed by the reviewer and provides a record of the visit and includes additional detail to that supplied in the questionnaire and any previous reviews.

Information Sharing and Data Protection

Information provided in this form will be shared with Children’s Education Advisory Service (Defence Children Services), Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS), and the CofC with welfare responsibility during your current overseas assignment. Information will be shared in accordance with the MOD’s and DCS privacy notices which are accessed on the internet via [MOD privacy notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and [Education overseas for service children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Visit Details

Name of EHE reviewer	
Name of child	
Date of birth	
Persons present during the visit	
Visit - In person or remote	
Date, time and duration of visit	
EHE visit number	

Record of Discussion with Parents

Review of the completed questionnaire, record of any changes since previous reviews and any other matters arising.

Record of Discussion with the Child

Where this takes place, record of general discussion with the child about their learning and any other matters arising.
Guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are you enjoying learning currently? Why?• Is there any work you would be willing to share and show me?• What are you reading at the moment? Can you read a bit to me?• What do you find easy and difficult in learning?• What is the best thing about learning at home?

- What could help you in your learning at home?
- What would you like to do when you are older?

Developing Provision

Record of how parent(s) plan to develop the provision of learning.

Findings and Recommendations from the Review

Date of next visit

Review completed by:.....

Name:.....

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Copy to:

RC-DCS-HQ-EHE@mod.gov.uk
RC-DCS-HQ-CEAS@mod.gov.uk

Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)
Defence Children Services
Bldg 183
Trenchard Lines
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CofC – *details to be completed*