

This article has been written using a combination of resources including HEFA

Home education vs Home Schooling- Why does the wording matter?

Elective Home Education is the correct and accurate term for home education in the UK and is a term that veteran home educators fought the government to be used as the preferred term by the DfE (which they now do) I'll cover a few reasons for that below but first...

Elective home education is often referred to as home education, home ed, home edders and EHE. These all represent Elective Home Education.

Home Schooling is a different term and has a much longer history with origins in America, before becoming a popular term in the UK to describe children being taught at home, many years ago. This was then changed to better reflect the educational journey that children who do not use the school system go on.

There are specific issues with the use of the term home schooling:

1 Evolving language, matters.

Since the Pandemic, Home schooling has taken on a separate meaning in England, to mean education provided by a school to a pupil still enrolled in a school, but who is currently at home.

2 Words in general, matter.

Education is a human right for every child and part of a parents legal responsibility in the UK.

Schooling is not the same thing. Schooling is an optional way in which you can become educated.

3 Definitions matter.

Schooling is a method of instruction and training; the act of being taught in a school.

Education is a body of knowledge acquired by the person. (In a range of ways of which schooling can be one)

4 Perception matters

Because of words and definitions home schooling can imply to others that you are providing 'school at home'.

It leads to a perception of a school room set up at home, with desks and a teacher and a school curriculum and timetables.

5 Representation matters

When we represent home education as home schooling we tell stake holders such as the local authority to expect school at home practices.

By the very use of 'school' being used to represent home education, we erode other valid and respected approaches to education that exist and ask the local authority to judge us by a school based education.

6 Education matters

The word education has become synonymous with the word school and with it a push to see anything outside of school based practice as 'wrong'. The words home education challenge this and remind us that education happens in many forms, only one of which is 'school'.

7 Mindset matters

When you look at how ingrained the word school has become in relation to education, using 'school' to describe your own home education can block your mindset and prevent you from seeing all of the ways that learning can happen. Education provides us with an expanding perspective. Schooling provide us with a restricted perspective.

8 Media matters

The media use the term home schooling on purpose to compare the education of home educators, to that of schooled children. They also use it to compare home education to that of 'education other than at school' (EOTAS) where a child is provided education by the local authority - this conflates the two and lumps very different education as one.

These styles and approaches to education are not comparable but by using the word 'school' it implies they are all the same thing.

9 Expert Judgement matters

Experts such as doctors, education psychologists, social workers and local authorities are often called to give evidence in areas relating to children and education.

Many do not know and have not been trained to know, the laws, the difference between home education and home schooling and the varying valid approaches to education. So will give evidence based on their own unconscious bias towards a school at home approach.

Their ignorance to the differences, the laws and the words that protect our community can be devastating for families.

The word education rather than schooling, can and does change lives and your home educated child deserves protecting against school based standards.