

A Parent's Guide to EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School)

What is EOTAS?

EOTAS stands for *Education Otherwise Than At School*. It refers to any educational provision arranged by the local authority for a child or young person who cannot attend a mainstream or special school. This might include home education, online learning, tuition centres, or therapy-based provision.

EOTAS is not the same as elective home education (EHE), which parents choose to provide themselves. EOTAS is decided through the EHCP process and funded by the local authority.

Who is EOTAS for?

EOTAS might be right for a child or young person who:


- Cannot cope in a school environment due to anxiety, trauma, sensory needs, or other difficulties.
- Has medical needs or disabilities that make school attendance unsuitable.
- Has tried specialist or mainstream schools and they haven't worked out.
- Needs a highly individualised education approach.

How do you get EOTAS?

EOTAS must be agreed through the **EHCP process**. Here's how it usually works:

1. Your child must already have or be applying for an EHCP.
2. During an EHCP review or assessment, you or the professionals involved can suggest that school is not suitable.
3. You'll need evidence (e.g., medical reports, educational psychologist input) showing why **no school can meet your child's needs**.
4. The local authority must agree that EOTAS is necessary and will describe the provision in **Section F** of the EHCP.



 The law says that local authorities “must arrange the special educational provision specified in an EHCP,” even if it’s not in a school setting (Children and Families Act 2014, Section 61).

What can EOTAS include?

EOTAS is tailored to the individual, so it can be flexible and creative. It might involve:

- One-to-one tuition at home
- Online or virtual learning
- Therapies (speech, occupational, mental health)
- Social skills support
- Outdoor learning or forest school
- Part-time access to alternative education centres

The key is that **the support must meet your child’s needs as set out in their EHCP.**

17 Is EOTAS permanent?

Not necessarily. EOTAS can be:

- A **short-term arrangement** while a school placement is found or made suitable
- Or a **long-term solution** if school is unlikely to work for your child

It should be reviewed at least **once a year** as part of your child’s EHCP annual review.

What should parents know before requesting EOTAS?

- It’s not a DIY home education option. The local authority is responsible for organising and funding it.
- You’ll need strong evidence that **no type of school** can meet your child’s needs.
- Once agreed, EOTAS is **legally binding** like any EHCP provision.



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Where can I get help?

- **SENDIASS** – impartial advice and support in your local area
- **IPSEA** – legal info on EOTAS: ipsea.org.uk
- **Special Needs Jungle** – parent-friendly explanations and case studies
- **Contact** – help for families with disabled children: contact.org.uk

Final Thoughts

EOTAS isn't the right choice for every child—but for those who cannot manage in any school setting, it can be a lifeline. With the right plan in place, EOTAS can open the door to personalised, meaningful, and empowering education.



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