

9th July 2010

Dear

Re: Lancashire Elective Home Education (EHE)

I have considered your detailed email and attachments and would like to offer the following in response. Lancashire's provision of EHE is set firmly within the DCSF ~~(now DfE)~~ guidelines, the ~~Local Authority's~~ LA's statutory safeguarding duty and the five outcomes of the 'Every Child Matters'. The ~~Local Authority~~ LA takes these duties seriously and in an effort to ensure that all children are safe and receive a "suitable education", the EHE guidelines were developed. The DCSF guidance on EHE, as you point out, can be interpreted in several ways, according to one's viewpoint. However in Lancashire, the aim is to ensure that all children and young people regardless of where they are educated, are safe and receive an appropriate education in line with the agreed 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. The EHE Officer does discuss these during the home visit with all parents/carers.

I appreciated your opinion and comments, ~~re regarding~~ our procedures. However, parental groups must consider the LA role and responsibility in its widest sense and the ~~enormous pressure that they~~ significant challenges that we face. Due to the tragic deaths of two children in other LAs we face increasing pressure to safeguard all children. EHE does present challenges and the annual visits do allow us some contact and opportunity to offer support. Whilst this group may have a very positive attitude to EHE, from experience sadly this is not always the case. We have more families choosing EHE as a negative reaction to an incident in school and some children then become vulnerable. The LA's mode of working does address all EHE

children and therefore safeguarding ~~remains our primary duty~~ is hopefully global.

Your referral to an official forum is extremely positive; however, we have not progressed with this due to the journey of the Badman ~~R~~report. The report did offer a framework for joint working and guidance. ~~As but as you will be aware,~~ the report failed to make its final reading, ~~and consequently,~~ we have been considering ~~an appropriate~~ way forward. More recently we have been informed by Ofsted that there are to be further recommendations which may guide this work. I will keep the details of the group on record and contact you when we have firm plans to develop a forum.

In your email you ~~have queried~~ makes very clear reference to the paperwork and processes that we use. A detailed review of all EHE processes and supporting paperwork was completed two years ago and is updated annually. ~~I must stress that our guidelines are not out of date as you have asserted.~~ The comment that our guidelines are out of date is incorrect. However, the procedures referred to are not national procedures; they are practices that the LA has agreed and are in line with its view of safeguarding and 'Every Child Matters'. Many of the procedures were reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group, which included parent representatives. The Working Group also consulted EHE providers, parents and voluntary groups. The final Overview and Scrutiny Report recommendations have been reflected in the updated paperwork.

Many of your additional comments relate to national information over which, I am sorry to say, ~~we~~ I have no influence. ~~However, it is appropriate to emphasise~~ What I would like to stress is that Lancashire is not aiming to make EHE challenging or difficult. ~~Moreover, our core purpose is:~~ it aims to ensure that the child or young person has the best education possible, whatever that may ~~be~~ look like, and is safe.

~~May I thank you~~ Many thanks for your comments. I will keep this information on file and will endeavour to keep all EHE parents and carers informed of developments.

Yours sincerely

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