

Request that Draft 4 of Rotherham Policy for Elective Home Education and Parental Guidance are accepted and approved for publication via the RMBC website, as required by the Department of Education EHE Guidance for LA's.

Background

Two education officers, experienced in mainstream education, with part-time administrative support took over the EHE work area from October 2013 on Government Education Select Committee recommendation to separate EHE from the Education Welfare Service. An operational partnership between the two teams will continue. There was therefore a need to find out our position, update our knowledge and review the policies and guidance.

Elective Home Education

Whilst educating children of statutory school age is compulsory, attendance at school is not. Parents can legally elect to home educate their children.

Local Authority duty is to be aware of cases when education provided is not suitable for age, ability and aptitude. In such cases, usual processes leading ultimately to a School Attendance Order would be followed.

Work completed:

- As the officers were new to this area of work a handover of cases took place which included completing visits where they shadowed the previous officer.
- Processes, policy and parental guidance were reviewed and updated.
- RMBC website reviewed and amended. Further improvements to be made once new policy and parental guidance are approved.
- Generic ElectiveHomeEducation@rotherham.gov.uk email address arranged.
- Comparisons to sub-regional and national best practice have been investigated. Other LAs are undergoing similar changes, so the Yorkshire & Humber EHE Network is being revived. This will feed into national EHE networks suggested by Education Select Committee.
- All the above were completed against both the sub-regional and national picture of rapidly increasing numbers whilst the Rotherham numbers of learners who are fully recorded as EHE are fluctuating but only rising slowly overall.
- Policy and Parental Guidance reviewed to be in-line with current thinking and Education Department guidance to LAs.
- Electronic tracker (password protected) developed with individual electronic files for each child allowing easy access to a current view of the position and central working document for case management.
- ONE system updated and other services assured of the validity of EHE status and comments now available.
- Important links developed with other teams and agencies: CART, EWS, School Admissions, Educational Psychology, Learning Support, Autism Communication Team, CAMHS, Child Protection & Child in Need Panels, Health, Social Care etc.

- New process in place of half termly meetings with Joyce Thacker and Karen Borthwick to discuss vulnerable/ unseen children as parents are legally allowed to refuse EHE Officer visits or meetings.
- Back-log of annual visits caught up and now back on track for the school year 2013/14
- EHE Data summary sheet attached, to end March 2014.

Draft 4 incorporates comments from DLT meeting (02.06.14) and has the support of that meeting.

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