

01772 532289

01772 532214

maureen.davenport@lancashire.gov.uk

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Your Ref  
Our Ref PR/LEIS/MD/LM  
Date 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Dear [REDACTED]

**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 statutory safeguarding duty and the five outcomes of the 'Every Child Matters'. The Local Authority 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 appreciate your opinion and comments, regarding our procedures. However, parental groups must consider the LA role and responsibility in its widest sense and the 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.

Your referral to an official forum is extremely positive; however, we have not progressed with this due to the journey of the Badman Report. The report did offer a framework for joint working and guidance but as you will be aware, the report failed to make its final reading, and consequently, we have been considering an

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Miss Angela Jerstice  
Administrative Officer  
EHE, LEIS Central  
8 East Cliff, Preston  
PR1 3JE

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 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. 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 have no influence. However, it is appropriate to emphasise that Lancashire is not aiming to make EHE challenging or difficult. Moreover, our core purpose is to ensure that the child or young person has the best education possible, whatever that may be, and is safe.

May I thank you 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

Maureen Davenport  
Head of Service