

PROPOSAL FOR MONITORING AND SUPPORTING SCHOOLS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AROUND ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)

THE CURRENT SITUATION

In 2019 the School Forum consulted on a range of measures intended to address the pressures on the High Needs Block. One of the measures adopted was the charging of schools for children who leave schools for elective home education.

This charging is made at the minimum funding level per child and any personalised funding such as, Pupil Premium, EAL and low attainment funding.

Charging is calculated over the academic year and is invoiced termly, with the funding determined at a weekly rate pro rata. Schools Forum also made a decision to charge at 50% for those children likely to have become EHE as a reaction to the pandemic.

The charging currently draws in approximately £76,000 per term before the 50% is applied.

The number of families choosing EHE has dropped markedly with 370+ individual children reducing to 205 before the first lockdown.

REPRESENTATION

The Local Authority received a representation from The Spires College, and asked if this could be shared at Schools Forum. TSC thus consulted with secondary peers across Torbay in order to present a representative view to Schools Forum.

This representation outlined the following concerns:

1. That the charging was unfair in that it removed funding from schools whilst other children were then admitted into a now unfunded place.
2. Parents have a right to electively home educate and school cannot prevent this.
3. The lag in census funding means a charge may be made against a place that is already unfunded.
4. A blanket approach as a means of culture change is unfair to those schools who already seek to reduce EHE off rolling.
5. EHE often becomes a pattern for some families and the current approach provides a disincentive to schools admitting students with a history of EHE.

The details of this discussion are in the March 2021 Schools Forum minutes.

PROPOSAL

As a result, the Head of Service (Vulnerable Pupils) and the Principal at The Spires College have met and propose the following:

1. Charging ceases as a matter of course for EHE.
2. A meeting between the EHE team and the parent(s)/carer(s) takes place **before** a child is removed from roll, rather than afterwards.

3. If an alternative provision becomes necessary for a child who has moved to EHE (because EHE is not appropriate and a school place cannot be allocated), the school will retain funding responsibility for alternative provision for the remainder of the academic year.
4. This provision will be determined by the Vulnerable Pupils team.
5. There will be a maximum liability to be determined by the School Forum. (Suggest up to the funding allocation for that child.)
6. Charging will be termly across the academic year.
7. If the child joined a school and left between censuses then these places will not be charged.

This will be supported by a standing TAPS and TASH agenda item for a termly discussion of a report created by the Local Authority. This report will include;

- a. Movement between schools in year
- b. Movement to and from EHE
- c. PRP placements under the fair access protocol

In this way it is hoped that the peers will be able to work together in this arena to maintain an inclusive culture.

RECOMMENDATION

That schools forum:

1. Agree to cease charging using the current methodology
2. Direct officers to charge for provision for necessary alternative provision
3. Agree a maximum liability for any one case
4. Note the process for families considering EHE

