

## Reviewing Recharging for Elective Home Education (EHE)

---

### Introduction

The DfE guidance for attendance from 1<sup>st</sup> September calls for;

*'all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.'*

Torbay schools seek to meet this expectation and the vast majority have returned. At the time of writing, local schools had achieved approximately 98% attendance.

Some parents have chosen to not send their children to school. This has been for a variety of reasons including, previously shielding family members, anxiety over virus transmission and revising their lifestyles after an extended period of being together at home.

The guidance calls for schools to:

- *.... **develop plans for re-engaging them.** (children who are anxious about returning to school)..... especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic...*
- ***Use the additional catch-up funding** schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support **to secure pupils' regular attendance.***
- ***Work closely with other professionals** as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.*

The Local Authority has engaged in a social media campaign to promote school attendance and the local area has agreed a process for a return to the use of legal measures to promote good attendance. At the same time, the Mediation Service has focussed on families identified as nervous across August to encourage a return.

Early signs are that there is a significant increase in both, enquiries and Elective Home Education registration. One school reported 5 cases within the first three days – the total for the autumn term in 2019. Across the local area, at the 3 week point of the term 58 children had moved to EHE vice 35 in the previous full month of September.

Torbay has a policy of recharging for EHE places at the rate of the MFG plus all personalised funding at a weekly rate for the first year of EHE or until the child returns to a school. (whichever is the shorter)

Schools have asked that this policy is reviewed in the light of the pandemic.

### Proposed Charges

It is proposed that the following policy be adopted for 2020/21 before a return to the current position in 2021/22.

1. EHE to be recharged at 50% for all children **except:**

2. Children who were persistently absent in the autumn term 2019 or who had greater than 4 sessions of fixed term exclusion. These places to be charged at the existing rate.

It is hoped that these charges will:

1. reflect the anxiety in the community whilst:
2. retaining charging for those children who were at risk of not maintaining a school place before lockdown.

The autumn term has been chosen as the measure as this is before widespread media coverage of the developing pandemic. It is also sufficiently long for attendance to average out.

### **Recommendations**

That the Schools Forum accept this change to recharging for the academic year 2020/21 and return to full charging thereafter.