

Correspondence from DfE to LAs about home education

Reference

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/correspondence_from_dfe_to_las_a

Fiona Nicholson May 2014

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From: Fiona Nicholson

24 April 2014

Dear Department for Education,

Please provide copies of any correspondence from the Department to local authorities between September 2013 and March 2014 which deals with elective home education/home schooling and home educated children/young people."

Yours faithfully,

Fiona Nicholson

Department for Education

8 May 2014

Dear Ms Nicholson,

Thank you for your email dated 24 April 2014 about Elective Home Education.

I must ask you for clarification of this request. Do you mean correspondence with authorities in general about home education as a subject, or do you mean correspondence with individual local authorities about particular EHE cases. If the latter, the correspondence will almost certainly be exempt from disclosure because of the personal information it contains.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2014/0033396. If you need to respond to us, please visit:

[1]www.education.gov.uk/contactus, and quote your reference number.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Bishop
Independent Education and School Governance

From: Fiona Nicholson

9 May 2014

Dear Stephen,

I am sorry for being unclear.

I would like copies of correspondence from the department to local authorities where home education or home educated children and young people are mentioned.

I understand that personal data will have to be redacted

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Nicholson

To Norfolk LA

From: BISHOP, Stephen

Sent: 15 September 2013 11:15

To: 'Lambert, Joy'

Cc: Cake, Carey - EDU; Brazell, Gill; Creasy, Val; Cooper, Ricky; Gray, Geoff; ZELTINS, Paul; HOGGART, Theresa; BISHOP, Stephen

Subject: RE: Holly BARRETT

Thank you. I am currently on leave but will look in detail at this when I return on 23 September. In the meantime I am pleased that further progress seems to have been made.

Stephen Bishop

Independent Education and Boarding Team

Department for Education

stephen.bishop@education.gsi.gov.uk

01325 735315 (Int x635315)

From: BISHOP, Stephen

Sent: 27 September 2013 17:04

To: 'Susannah.Bennett@walthamforest.gov.uk'

Cc: KENNEDY, Karen; BISHOP, Stephen

Subject: FW: Non Ofsted registered establishments

Susannah

The reason the school does not appear on the Ofsted site is that because it was only opened on 24 June, it has not yet had its first inspection report (pre-registration reports are not published). It will be fully inspected by Ofsted in the course of this academic year.

So far as elective home education is concerned, there is no legal obligation on a parent to notify a local authority of a home educated pupil or that a pupil is being educated in an independent school. If a pupil is being educated at a school and is taken off the roll because the parent has notified the

school that the child is being home educated, then the school, even if independent, must notify the LA. But that is a rather different matter.

Stephen Bishop
Independent Education and Boarding Team
Department for Education
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James Edmondson
Principal Education Welfare Officer
Wokingham Borough Council

10 February 2014

Dear Mr Edmonson

We spoke today about some correspondence we have received from ... via ... about home education, and in particular the powers of local authorities. He has drawn our attention to some revised internal guidance which you have drawn up for procedures when a child is known to taken out of school for home education.

The tension between safeguarding considerations and the rights of parents to home educate is a matter of interest to the Department, and we told Mr that we would be contacting you for a copy of your revised guidance, as he had suggested. So it would be helpful for us to receive this, together with any other material or observations you think might be helpful. Our intention is to take this matter further with local authority interests, probably via the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and I hope you would have no objection to your material being used as part of that.

As discussed, a reply after half term will be fine.

Stephen Bishop
Independent Education and Boarding Team
Department for Education
stephen.bishop@education.gsi.gov.uk
01325 735315 (Int x635315)

Mr Tim Shield
Chief Executive
Hackney Council
2 Hillman Street
Hackney
London E8 1 FB

21 March 2014

Dear Mr Shields

HACKNEY COUNCIL AND HOME EDUCATING PARENTS

I am writing further to exchanges of correspondence between ... and yourself about this issue, arising from the ... case. We have seen your letters of...The minister responsible, Elizabeth Truss, has written to ... on an interim basis but we feel that before she can reach any final conclusions about the matter we need to ask for some further information.

In your letters, you have explained about the lack of information obtained from ... and why this led the Council and the Trust to believe that a visit on ... pursuant to a s.17 assessment was necessary. We accept that there may well be a link between safeguarding and home education concerns in some cases; and the Department does not dispute that the authority should have the interests of children to the fore. What is not apparent to us at present is:

- a. whether there were any actual current - as opposed to past - concerns about safeguarding (not home education) which justified a s.17 assessment and a home visit based on safeguarding powers;
- b. why, if the information on home education of the children was as sparse as it seems, the authority did not go down the route clearly provided for in legislation and explained in the Department's guidelines ie service of a notice under s.437(1) requiring information on home education, and if the authority were to still not be satisfied, service of a school attendance order - which can be followed by prosecution if necessary. You quoted the relevant guidance in your letter of ... but so far as we can see this procedure was not followed. ... pointed this out in his letter of ... but the point was not directly addressed in your reply of ...

Any other comments you wish to make would be useful as well. There is no fixed date for the minister to write again to ... but it would be helpful if you could let us have a reply in the next couple of weeks.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Bishop
Independent Education and School Governance Division
