

Home Education

Official Newsletter From Educational Freedom

July 2024

Building relationships between LAs and Home Educators.



The Educational Freedom Team at the GHEX Home Education Conference.





OK, so we know we won't be winning any Photoshop competitions with this photo, but we missed our team members so much we had to add them to the photo.

Liz, Cheryl, Michelle, Lucinda and Stacey are just some of the team that run the not for profit Home Education support and information service.

The event was fantastic, so many speakers from all around the globe and it was amazing to meet some of you in person. We heard about lots of research demonstrating the positive outcomes of home educated children.

This month's newsletter addresses some of the points raised with us at conference.

Transparency and honesty

Most people believe the letter from 'authority' when it drops through their door, they believe the LA has the rights they claim without questioning it.

Using this trust against people is diabolical we are sure you will agree.

But that is exactly what is happening with an increase in LAs claiming they have 'ended EHE' or even 'deregistering from EHE' because concerns were raised about the suitability of the home education.

However, in the majority of these cases the family were not clearly told what the concerns about the provision were, for most the s437 processes were not followed, and in the worst cases families were told to sign their child up for school in a way that made it sound illegal not to (having no previous s437 notices).

We have stepped in and explained the law and LA process to the families and supported them to provide a written report (note we do not help with educational content, we only advise on the level of detail required), and in every case the LA have agreed the education is suitable as the parent has provided the required information.

The threats, the claim of being able to 'end EHE' are wholly unnecessary and do nothing to improve the relationship. That trust is now broken, those families will never want to engage with you, they will never reach out if they have problems.

EGRESS and other online portals

These systems are not fit for purpose, parent's can not access old communication without asking for it, many do not realise that the communication needed saving upon receipt.

It's time to reconsider how clear communication happens.

SHOCKING TACTICS

We were horrified to hear from some English Home Educators that a private home education activity at their local library had EHE staff turn up without any notice or invitation, and when challenged their response was that they wanted to put faces to the emails. They also took someone along who claimed to be

offering a resource but required lots of contact information to access the free resource, we feel this was an underhand way of getting information on who was at the event.

This now means, that what should be a fun and educational activity is rarely attended as families do not trust the LA to not turn up again.

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATES

We wonder if there has been an oversight, in a couple of LA areas they are giving out certificates and awards to home educated children who's parents have given samples of learning, a timetable, or allowed their child to 'perform' for the EHE person. On the surface these seem 'nice' but they appear to be more like a bribe to force parents to give information they are not required to give, in a format that is not necessary. For example certificates are only given to families with a timetable, what happens to respecting all styles of home education? What about children with SEND who can't 'perform' the task set, or do not produce 'work' to be shared?

Reward systems such as these are actually detrimental to many children due to specific SEN. Many EHCPs recognise this. A certificate can actually result in the child disengaging from their learning program that has been efficient and effective.

We ask the LAs giving these out to consider if they really are appropriate and are they inclusive?

WHEN IT IS OBVIOUS THE PARENT HAS NOT UNDERSTOOD YOU

Not every parent understands the legal jargon, many see the legal quotes and get scared, some have learning difficulties or SEN, some clearly need signposting to support services like ours, others just need things wording in a more accessible way. But how many of you do that?

Who of you can put your hand up and say that you can spot a parent who isn't understanding something and you take the time to explain it better to them? Because this doesn't seem to be happening much.

Just because a parent has difficulty understanding you, doesn't mean they are incapable of providing their child a suitable education. Doubling down and serving SAOs does no one any favours.

If a parent doesn't reply in the way you needed then consider why, consider rephrasing your request.

And if the family ask for information about home education, please don't say 'well this is something you need to find out for yourself.' and follow up with an SAO when you could have signposted them to us, where our specialist team will take time to ensure they understand what they need to be doing.



Educational Freedom

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