

This image was circulated on social media very soon after copies of this letter were received by EHE families in the Plymouth area. Attached to it were a two page copy of "Appendix B" of the Council's [EHE Policy Document](#).

This document was created and circulated by [The HE Byte](#).

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Date: Friday, December 18, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the end of the year, I am writing to you to provide an update on our current arrangements and plans for the year ahead.

I am delighted to inform you that Plymouth City Council has appointed an Elective Home Education Officer who will take up their position early in the New Year. I will write to you again with a formal introduction. We look forward to building helpful, professional relationships with all home educators across the city.

Plymouth has seen a significant rise in the number of children being home educated and we have been receiving lots of enquiries about how home educators should present their information to us. As a result we have developed our guidance (enclosed). I hope that the guidance will clear up any confusion about what we need to see in order to make decision as to whether a child is receiving an efficient and full time education, suitable to their age, ability and any special educational needs that they may have.

The policy arrangements that we have in place have enabled us to identify a cohort of children who are registered as home educated but who are not receiving a suitable education. Some children have been taken out of school by their parents for reasons other than a real desire to home educate and there are others who are children missing education. With the significant rise in children being withdrawn to home education, Plymouth City Council has put in place measures to ensure we can be confident that suitable education is taking place and that there are no safeguarding concerns. Our measures to determine suitability have therefore included a higher degree of professional curiosity.

Looking ahead to the New Year, Plymouth City Council is exploring options in relation to home educated children who may wish to return to school. We know that for some children and families this can be daunting and children may need additional transition support and planning in order to give them the best chance of success. We are keen to ensure that we have arrangements in place to support children at the right time and in a way that meets their needs, so that if they wish to return to school, they feel confident to do this.

We are developing arrangements for an Elective Home Education Moderation Panel. As a department we have a range of expertise including qualified teachers, educational psychologists and special educational needs and disabilities specialists. The purpose of the Moderation Panel will be to review the evidence home educators have presented in order to make a decision as to whether it appears the home education is efficient, full time and suitable to age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs and disabilities that a child may have. The panel will be there to not only make a decision, but also to provide constructive feedback to home educators on a case by case basis.

We have organised training for staff across the department which will be delivered by education law specialists. Elective Home Education is a priority area for our department. We are keen to ensure that we have as many staff as possible trained in this area so that we can discharge our duties effectively, identify children who are not receiving a suitable education and build parental confidence.

Finally, I am exploring options to resume the Home Education Engagement Sessions. It is likely that these would need to be held virtually in the foreseeable future, if you would like to be invited to attend please send your email address to ehe@plymouth.gov.uk.

Wishing you and your family a safe and happy Christmas.