**Protocol for meeting Local Authority responsibilities for Safeguarding Electively Home Educated Children in Tower Hamlets**

**Context**

Elective Home Education is the term used to describe education provided by parents other than in school. This is different to home tuition or alternative provision organised by the Local Authority. The Local Authority is responsible for maintaining a register of home educated children in the borough, providing information to home educators and intervening if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable and efficient education. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to safeguard the wellbeing of all children in the borough, including those who are home educated.

**Policy**

It is the policy of Tower Hamlets that where a child is home educated then the child is seen in person at commencement and thereafter at least once every 12 months in fulfilment of the need to check that the child is receiving an education and to safeguard the wellbeing of all children in the borough. The Local Authority will seek to undertake these duties and responsibilities in cooperation and partnership with home educating parents/carers.

**Protocol for Safeguarding**

Tower Hamlets Pupil Services Team (PS), Tower Hamlets Behaviour & Attendance Support Service (THBASS) and Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service (THESS) work together and exchange information on home educated children to fulfil the Local Authority’s duties.

The Pupil Services Team (PS) maintain a register of home educated children and add the names of children when: (i) they are withdrawn from schools following notifications of intention to home educate being received from the parents(s); or (ii) they are reported to be being home educated by another agency or professional such as Children’s Social Care, Health Visitor, GPs, the Police or the Royal London Hospital.

Pupil Services inform Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service (THESS) of the details of children. The THESS check for any records of a family’s contact with and Children’s Social Care and share this information with the other teams. A letter is sent to the family arranging a visit by a Specialist Advisor for Elective Home Education to provide an information pack, discuss the child’s education and to complete a Statement of Arrangements form.

The Specialist Advisor will then advise the parents on the suitability and efficiency of the education being provided and offer support. Feedback and the completed Statement of Arrangements form are shared with Pupil Services and with other key professionals as necessary.

Where children have special educational needs and an Education Health Care Plan then the Specialist Advisor shares the feedback and completed Statement of Arrangements form with the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Section. A Specialist Teacher then advises the parents on the suitability and efficiency of the education being provided and offers support.

**LA Enquiry about the suitability and efficiency of the home education provided**

The Specialist Advisors in the THESS are the main point of communication between the parents who electively home educate their children and the Local Authority and record all communication.

The Team Manager – Education Safeguarding is the line manager for the Specialist Advisors in the THESS and reviews cases with them to make a judgement on the ‘suitability’ and ‘efficiency’ of the provision. If it is deemed that the home education provision to be not yet ‘suitable’ or ‘efficient’, the Specialist Advisors give advice and make arrangements for a follow up meeting.

Should the provision for an electively home educated child remain unsatisfactory then the Specialist Advisor for Elective Home Education in the THESS will initiate further follow-up and, if necessary, apply for and issue a School Attendance Order.

**Monitoring the Local Authority responsibility for Home Educated Children**

A Steering Group meeting is held at the end of each term and attended by representatives from the THESS and Pupil Services. The meeting is convened with the aim of monitoring the number of children being electively home educated and the effectiveness of the local authority’s systems and to review policy and protocol.

Tower Hamlets seeks to ensure that each home educated child is seen annually in fulfilment of the need to check that the child is receiving an education and to safeguard the wellbeing of all children in the borough and the review the suitability of the education being provided with the parent(s).

**Notification to the Local Authority of Children thought to be Out of School**

In accordance with Tower Hamlets Children Missing Education Guidance – September 2018, when agencies/professionals become aware of a child thought to be out of school then the proforma in Appendix A should be completed and returned to the Pupil Services Team without delay. This includes a child whom it is stated is being home educated. The Local Authority will then initiate follow-up in accordance with its children missing education and safeguarding duties.

Appendix A

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

Notification to Local Authority of child out of school

 Date / /

Pupil Services Team

5th Floor Mulberry Place - Town Hall

5 Clove Crescent

London

E14 2BG

The following child is believed to be out of school:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Date of Birth:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Parent/Carer** |  |
| **Telephone:**  |  |
| **E-mail:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Referrer’s Name and Job Title:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |

Please send this form to: Pupil Services Team, 5th Floor Mulberry Place - Town Hall, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG,

**Tel:** 020-7364 5006

**Fax to**: 0207 - 364 4311, or

**Email to**: cme@towerhamlets.gov.uk