

## **Cabinet – 18 October 2023**

### **Recommendations from Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Children Not in School, Exclusions and Suspensions and support for children in Elective Home Education.**

**Portfolio:** Councillor M. Statham – Education and Skills

**Related Portfolios:**

**Service:** Childrens Services (Education Directorate)

**Wards:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Forward plan:** No

#### **1. Aim**

To receive a recommendation from the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee made on 5 September 2023 regarding Children Not in School, school attendance and support for children in Elective Home Education.

#### **2. Recommendations**

That:-

1. Cabinet writes to the Secretary of State for Education requesting the introduction of the Children Not in School Register as soon as possible.
2. the Cabinet asks that the Government pay the fees for children in Elective Home Education to sit standardised examinations.
3. the Cabinet note the concerns of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the disproportionately lower school attendance figures of boys, SEN pupils and those pupils receiving free school meals.

#### **3. Report detail – know**

At its meeting of on the 5 September 2023, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update report on Children not in School and Members raised concerns and recommendations in relation to the report.

Members were concerned that a Children Not in School Register had not been implemented due to the withdrawal of the Schools Bill in 2022. This was a concern due to the fact that while the Council could monitor those children who did not attend a school within the Borough, they did not have the legal power to compel parents to register their children. Meaning that it is possible for a small number of children to potentially not be known to the Council or any partner organisation and

thus not receive the necessary support especially in relation to safeguarding. The implementation of a register would close this gap and improve safeguarding.

The Committee also considered issues around Elective Home Education (EHE) and were concerned that a small number of children were not given the opportunity to sit standardised tests such as GCSE's and A-Levels due to the cost of exam fees. EHE students were expected to pay their own examination fees. Unlike their in mainstream peers whose setting paid the fees. It was noted that some support with examination fees is currently provided to EHE children undertaking part time study at Walsall College. However, there were some EHE students that did not study there. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the Cabinet asks the government to support these children by paying the fees for all children in Elective Home Education to sit standardised examinations. This would provide equality with those pupils in mainstream settings.

The Committee received a detailed update on the school attendance across the Borough. The Committee was very concerned by the disproportionately lower attendance figures for boys, children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) and those receiving free school meals and wished to highlight this to the Cabinet.

#### **4. Decide**

Cabinet could choose to:

1. undertake the recommendation as set out;
2. reject them;
3. choose to receive a report in more depth at a future Cabinet meeting.

#### **5. Respond**

Following the decision of Cabinet, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be advised of the outcome of their recommendation.

#### **6. Review**

Subject to the decision of Cabinet further reports at Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings or Cabinet meetings may be required.

### **Background papers**

None

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