



Teacher Monitoring

The following was written in response to the "professional Association of Teachers" who made a call at their 2004 annual conference and the open letter produced by the "Association of Educational Worker Managers" that the powers of LAs to inspect the homes of home educating families should be increased.

It's not meant as a serious suggestion but rather to show the absurdity and outrageous nature of the demands of some professionals.

In the light of the 300 to 500 allegations of abuse made each year against teachers resulting in around 70 convictions ranging from possession of Internet porn to the direct and actual physical abuse of children, home educators in the UK call upon the government to introduce mandatory checks of teacher's homes.

It is only through close monitoring of teachers and their home environment that parents can regain any confidence that those persons who they hand over their children to are fit and suitable persons. The nature of teachers employment requires that parents have knowledge of persons who are responsible for the care of vulnerable young persons and as such teachers should automatically relinquish their rights to a "private family life" on the grounds of "child welfare" as is allowed as a derogation of the Human rights act.

The precautionary principle should guide the government in this sensitive area. The difficulty of proving cases of abuse require the government to take pre-emptive action in the task of weeding out the unscrupulous who masquerade as safe hands in the caring professions. As such we would wish the government to consider extending these powers to other professions like social workers and Educational Welfare officers who have similar or commensurate responsibilities.

Checks should include a search of the teacher's computer hard disk, an examination of the general conditions of his or her family and home and sight of the teacher's children and partner (should he or she have them) including medical record (to ensure that they themselves are not being abused). There should also be a legal requirement for doctors to disclose any suspicions they may have regarding the behaviour of teachers either towards their family or relating to other problematic behaviour such as drug abuse.

Certification that such inspections of teachers have been carried out satisfactorily should be prominently displayed by the school at which they are employed for perusal by parents along with the statutory display of insurance and safety certification and should form part of a schools OFSTED inspection regime.

Inspections should be repeated at least annually. A failure to either comply with the inspection or an actual failed inspection should result in the immediate suspension of the teacher leading to outright dismissal.

It is the hope of those parents who support this idea that by introducing such spot checks the status of the profession would improve by ensuring that parents can at last have some confidence of the suitability of those who are responsible for their children's care.