School Places in Cheshire East Borough for children looked after by other Local Authorities

Rationale

Local Authorities (LA) have a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, including those placed out of the Authority area.

Background

Children in care are a vulnerable group and so are given the highest priority when seeking places as described in the Schools Admissions Code. As a corporate parent, Cheshire East Borough Council (CEBC) will seek to ensure that all cared for children have access to the best possible education which meets their needs, and that when new places are required, these are found with as little delay as possible.

In order to identify a suitable education placement and support the child into school swiftly it is important that all staff involved are aware of the process, their responsibilities and options available. This document sets out the steps for admission of a cared for child and also information about school registration.

If the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs then this process will not apply. The SEN team should be made aware as soon as possible of the need for a new school and information about the child and their needs: PEP, latest EHCP, Annual Review, etc should be sent to them securely at SENTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Recommended steps to securing education in Cheshire East Borough Council area

1. Before an application to school is made, discussions should be held between the Social Worker and Virtual School of the LA which is responsible for the child. Agreement should be reached as to whether a school move is in the best interests of the child and what type of education is likely to meet the child’s needs.

2. The Virtual School Head (VSH) of the placing LA should contact the VSH of CEBC to advise that a child is moving into the CEBC area, that a place will be required and what type of provision this needs to be. The VSH of CEBC will then be able to give advice on possible local provision which meets these needs. Please note that if it is agreed that the child requires part or full time alternative education to meet their needs then the home (placing) LA will be required to meet the costs of this.

3. Once the provision type has been agreed then the Social Worker or Virtual School of the placing LA should follow the appropriate procedure as listed below.

A For children currently or previously accessing mainstream and who will require a place in mainstream

- Social Worker or parent with PR should identify their preferred schools and complete the on-line application form.
- VSH will inform the preferred school/schools that an application has been made and share the latest Personal Education Plan (PEP) and any other relevant information.
- Preferred school to respond in the usual way and in a timely manner, arranging visits and integration meetings if place available.
- PEP to be arranged to establish any transition support needed.
B  For children with a current mainstream place but who are likely to require some additional/specialist support or provision as part of their curriculum

- Social Worker or parent with PR should identify their preferred schools and complete the on-line application form.
- Virtual School of the home (placing) LA will inform the preferred schools that an application has been made and share the latest PEP and any other relevant information and offer to meet to discuss the child’s needs.
- Preferred school to respond in the usual way and in a timely manner, arranging visits and integration meetings.
- Alternative provision to be arranged and funding confirmed.
- PEP to be arranged to establish any transition support needed.

C  For children without a current mainstream place who require full time off-site provision

- VSH the home (placing) authority is to review the needs of the child and the provision available and identify the most suitable.
- VSH of the home (placing authority) to contact potential providers and confirm their capacity to meet child’s needs.
- Confirm whether the provision is a registered school or if the child needs to be registered at another school (See note below on registration).
- Meetings/visits to be arranged with Social Worker/carer/pupil to check if the provision is suitable.
- If place agreed then transition plan to be produced, including risk assessments, timescale and any interim arrangements.

School registration

If the provider is an independent school registered with DfE then they will be able to hold pupils on their own roll. For other providers pupils will need to be registered with a DfE registered school who will oversee their progress. For the most vulnerable cared for children who are in KS4 and very unlikely to return to mainstream school there is the possibility that they can be enrolled with the Fermain Academy subject to places being available and fully funded by the placing LA.

Transport

Transport arrangements should be considered when an application is made. For children placed with agency carers or in residential provision this will usually be included in the contract. Requests for transport by Cheshire East will only be provided if the child meets the criteria for home to school transport, including nearest for need school.

Contacts for further information

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