  

 Miscellaneous Themed Q & As from the LA/PCPW KIT 26/03/21

1. **What happens when child transits to college education from school if aged 16? Seems to be limited in offering continuing support.**

The support arrangement would vary depending on the young person’s individual needs. Perhaps useful to ask what is meant by support. Support with options at 16 or is it more around support in learning?

Wirral Met College can provide a response to set out the range of support available.

Thank you for sending this query to us.  I’m only able to respond with regard to Wirral Met College, and can’t speak for any other post-16 provider, but am happy to explain the processes with regard to young people who transition to ourselves.

We have very close working relationships with the SEND department at Wirral Council.  With regard to young people who have EHCPs, if they state in their annual review that they intend to progress from school to Wirral Met College, a copy of their EHCP is passed directly to our Additional Learning Support (ALS) department.  The ALS team will contact the student, once they have applied to college, to discuss their EHCP and put together an Additional Learning Support Plan detailing the specifics of how that student will need to be supported once they come to college.  Parents are welcome to be involved in this discussion, and we also often speak to the school SENDCO and any other professionals involved with the student if we need any points of clarification.  This plan is put together in advance of the student enrolling with us, so that all support is in place for the start of their course.  In some cases, where the student needs it, transition visits to college are arranged during their final year at school.  This process varies according to the needs of the individual; some students with more complex needs require multiple, prolonged visits and the opportunity to participate in some lessons; other students don’t need to participate in lessons but do need supported visits to the campus just to get used to the new environment, whereas of course some students don’t need any of these additional measures and just require support to be put in place ready for the start of their course.  The approach is tailored to the individual.

All students, whether or not they have an EHCP, have the opportunity to tell us on their application form that they have additional needs.  Students then go through the admissions process, and once they accept their offer of a place with us our ALS team get in touch to discuss their support needs and, as above, put a support plan in place.  We request information from the students’ current school regarding their additional needs, and incorporate any information received into their support plan.  Legally schools can only share this information with us if they have the explicit permission of the young person and/or their parent, so if parents could ask their school SENDCO to provide us with this information that is a big help.

The most helpful thing students and their parents can do to ensure a smooth transition, is to make sure they tell us about their additional needs when they apply.  Students do sometimes change their minds about where they intend to go, so if at their EHCP review a young person says they want to go to a different provider then Wirral Council will send the EHCP to that provider rather than us.  If the young person then changes their mind and decides to come to us, it’s vital that they indicate their needs on their application so that we can request a copy of the EHCP from Wirral Council.

Similarly, if a student without an EHCP doesn’t tell us on their application that they have additional needs, our ALS team won’t be able to put a support plan in place for them as we won’t know they need one.

Students can delay telling us, and instead inform us when they enrol in August or indeed any time after they have started their course, but it’s much better if they tell us as early as possible so that we can give them the support they need.

We have very robust processes in place for getting support set up in advance of students coming to us and ensuring a smooth transition.  The most important things students and families can do to help with that is to tell us about their needs on their application form and respond to the ALS team when they get in touch to arrange an appointment and ask their school SENDCO to provide the college with as much information as possible about their needs.

If young people or their parents want to speak to someone at college about their needs at any time, before or after they come to us, they can contact the Additional Learning Support department via the main college switchboard (0151)551 7012, or directly by email, ALS@wmc.ac.uk

1. **Why is the SEND team not attending annual reviews? We have been told by them that during the pandemic they are too busy to come.**

Answered previously – see last month’s responses

1. **There are a number of ‘schemes’ locally that provide activities and food during school holidays to children who qualify for Free School Meals (FSM). However, this funding is restricted to children and young people ages 5-16 and does not follow the protected characteristics of children/young people with SEND (0-25). A) Can the data for the number of SEND children with also qualify for FSM be shared please? And B) can we discuss the legality of restricting funding such as this to specific age groups.**
2. The January 2021 School Census has the following recorded:

Numbers of FSM eligible pupils with:

EHCP = 864

SEN Support – 3144

*Note: numbers include single and main dual registrations only.*

1. We have asked this question to the DfE without a clear response other than the LA can make its own decisions. We have joined forces with Aiming High Commissioning to support the Holiday Activities & Food programme (HAF). We do not wish to restrict the HAF funding for SEND/FSM children but there is no specific funding to do this. We have nearly 2,000 extra FSM children to support since COVID 19.
2. **Why do schools block the SEND report and let parents down and in turn the child?**

Please can PCPW supply clarity/more detail on this question. Does this question relate to the SEND Information report (SIR)? Unsure what is meant by the SEND Report. The SIR is accessible via the school’s website and a sample audit of SIR’s, both Primary & Secondary is currently being completed. Please contact the SEND Participation Manager via pcpw@wired.me.uk if there is a specific issue with a specific school.

1. **The SEND Code of Practice under 11.27 states if a parent wants to go to mediation before going to appeal, the LA has to take part. Can you advise why I was told by my co-ordinator that they felt it was a waste of time as they would not be changing their minds so cancelled the day before. Why are they ignoring send law?**

Normal practice would involve a discussion with parents to talk through the issue e.g., a school placement, the LA may advise Parent/Carers to consider opting to pursue the appeals route rather than progress directly to mediation. However, if they decide to proceed to mediation then the LA must attend. If this isn’t the case, then the SEND Resolution Officer can progress a complaint on the person’s behalf. Parent/Carers can log a complaint via the SEND Resolution inbox sendresolution@wirral.gov.uk or call 0151 691 8262