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**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

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Dear Colleague

3rd September 2018

Nottinghamshire County Council's Commissioning Expectations for Year 14 Placements

As we start the 2018/19 academic year, I am writing to confirm Nottinghamshire County Council's commissioning expectations regarding Year 14 placements in Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools commissioned by the Local Authority. We have communicated our expectations previously, but due to staff changes in some settings we thought it would be helpful to do so again so that there is absolute clarity on the matter.

Irrespective of setting, the purpose of post-16 education is to support young people to transition to adulthood equipped with the skills and qualifications needed to achieve their planned outcomes. Given that these outcomes, and the settings in which they will be delivered vary, we believe that the duration of post-16 placements commissioned by Nottinghamshire in Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools should be informed by the timing appropriate for individual transition outcomes. This aligns with the approach we have been developing with our maintained Special Schools and Academies over the last three years, which has led to a shared understanding that learners will ordinarily leave school at or before the end of Year 13, with Year 14 placements approved only by exception. In the interests of consistency we must ensure that this approach is understood and adopted by the Independent Non-Maintained sector. For the avoidance of doubt this means that:

- For Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools with a designation up until age 19, there is not an automatic entitlement to a Year 14 and there is indeed an expectation that Year 14 placements will be approved by exception only. The primary ground on which a year 14 placement may be approved is where there is evidence that a sustained break in learning, due to ill health or extenuating family circumstances, has prevented the learner completing their planned programme of study. We will also consider cases – by exception – where further structured learning post-school is not envisaged and the transition destination is Adult Social Care. In such cases a compelling argument would have to be made to explain why the transition cannot be completed by the end of Year 13 and the added value a Year 14 would bring.
- All requests for Year 14 Special School placements are now considered by a Commissioning Panel, which I chair. Any requests for a Year 14 should be submitted on the attached form no later than Friday 15th February 2019 so that the Panel has time to consider the request and if necessary make any amendments to the EHC Plan by the end of March. Given the complexity of young people placed in Independent Non-Maintained settings, and the statutory requirement that Preparation for Adulthood planning should start no later than Year 9, we would expect transition plans for your post-

16 cohort to be well developed such that you should know by February if there are any instances where an exceptional application for a Year 14 is warranted. For the avoidance of doubt, let me confirm that the Local Authority's expectation is that your current Year 13 cohort other than by exception, will complete their transition by the end of the 2018/19 academic year.

- The definition of full-time education post-16 in all settings other than Special Schools is 540 Planned Learning Hours a year, which equates to three days a week. This is the standard offer made by Nottinghamshire's mainstream and specialist colleges. Given our commissioning expectation that the overwhelming majority of Nottinghamshire learners will have transitioned out of school at, or before, the end of Year 13 for the small number that do remain provision will be commissioned on the basis of three days a week in line with the offer made to learners in other educational settings in the interests of equity and consistency. We are of course mindful of the stipulation in the SEN Code of Practice that Local Authorities should "consider the need" to provide full packages of support that cover five days a week "where that is appropriate to meet the young person's needs." We are equally aware however, as is the Code, that such packages need not be exclusively provided by an educational setting nor should they necessarily be delivered by one, provided health and social care are contributing as appropriate.
- We are aware that in some Independent Non Maintained schools the post-16 curriculum is delivered in partnership with a mainstream FE college. We will be looking at such delivery models in further detail to ascertain their impact and effectiveness. In the context of Year 14 placements let me clarify that any requests where the learner is on roll at school but attending college for part of the week are highly unlikely to be approved as we would expect the learner to be on roll with the FE provider.

I trust that this letter makes Nottinghamshire County Council's position on Year 14 commissioning clear, and my apologies if it repeats a message you have already heard and understood. Let me emphasise again that the closing date for submitting exceptional Year 14 requests is Friday 15th February 2019 as it is in the best interests of all parties - including most importantly the learner - that decisions are made in a timely manner.

If you have any questions arising from this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wishing you and all at the school an enjoyable and productive year.

Yours faithfully



Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning & Resources