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The Cheshire School Enrolment Policy and Procedure

Introduction

The Cheshire School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) has established minimum standards in relation to Student Enrolment Numbers, Enrolment Policies and Enrolment Registers.

The Cheshire School is an independent specialist school catering for primary school-aged students who require special educational provision for a diagnosed social, emotional or behavioural problem. The school offers an alternative educational program for students who have difficulty engaging in mainstream school. The Cheshire program prescribes attendance for approximately eighteen months plus, with the option of reduced or increased enrolment in consultation with the Principal. The minimum age for enrolment is five years.

This policy is consistent with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws including the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.), the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic.), the Privacy Act and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008).

Aims of this Policy

1. To detail the process for determining eligibility for students.
2. To articulate enrolment procedures.

3. To ensure transition in and out of the school is successful with orientation opportunities based on individual needs for eligible students, parents/guardians and their families.

Eligibility

To be considered for attendance at The Cheshire School, students need to meet all the following criteria:

1. Be eligible for Foundation (Prep) to Grade Four at the date of enrolment.
2. Be experiencing significant social, emotional or behavioural difficulties which place them at risk of disengagement within the mainstream educational setting.
3. Have speech and language skills within the normal range.
4. Have a prognosis for change within 18 months.
5. Have a full-scale IQ of 80 or more.

Enrolment Procedure

1. Initial contact

- a. Parents/guardians contact the school and should their child meet the eligibility criteria their details are added to the intake register.
- b. Enquiries and referrals may come from child and family agencies, medical and mental health professionals.
- c. Children may also be referred from Government, Catholic and Independent schools or from pre-schools.
- d. However, a referral must be in consultation with the parent/guardian.

2. Interview and School Tour

- a. When a place becomes available the Principal offers an interview and school tour for the parents/guardians.
- b. Both parents/guardians are required to attend the interview and tour.
- c. The process includes information about The Cheshire School's programs, a short tour of the school, and a discussion with parents/guardians about the child's history and presenting problems.
- d. Parents/guardians may wish to also invite a professional involved with the child or a supportive friend or family member.

3. Provision of Medical Documentation

- a. All relevant professional medical documentation needs to be provided at this point.
- b. A certificate of immunisation status is required to indicate whether students have been immunised against some or all of these infectious diseases: hepatitis, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, Haemophilus influenza type B, pneumococcal, rotavirus, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal, chickenpox. Children who have not been immunised are instructed to be kept at home for the recommended period as outlined in the Department of Health's School Exclusion Table.
- c. All prospective students are required to be linked with a paediatrician throughout their time at The Cheshire School.
- d. It is also advisable to have a connection with a psychologist.

4. Observations

- a. After the tour, and providing the intake team decides to proceed with the intake, the class teacher and school psychologist visit the student's current school (or home if home-schooled) to observe the student.
- b. This is to determine whether they will benefit from The Cheshire School program.

5. Trials

- a. If the team agrees the student is invited to attend for 4-6 trials.
- b. The first trial lasts up to 90 minutes, progressing to a full day by the end of the trial period.
- c. The parents are given the pre-enrolment/trial paperwork.
- d. Feedback is provided to parents after each successful/unsuccessful trial.

The purpose of the trial is to:

- engage the student in the program so that they want to continue attending;
- determine the likelihood of significant behaviour change within an 18-month plus time frame;
- allow the team to observe how the student fits with the current cohort of students;
- allow the team to observe how the student copes with the behavioural management practices of the program.

6. Enrolment decision

- a. After the trial sessions, the intake team meet to decide whether to offer the student enrolment at The Cheshire School.

7. Communicating the outcome

- a. If the student is considered eligible for enrolment, the Principal will advise the parents/guardians/caregivers whether the placement is available immediately or the following term.
- b. The parents are invited to an offer of enrolment meeting with the principal; whereby they are handed the enrolment pack which explains the conditions of enrolment, requirements of the program, tuition fees, etc.
- c. If the student is considered ineligible, the Principal will advise the parents/guardians/caregivers and communicate the grounds for the decision.

Transition into School

- Completion of an Application for Enrolment and a signed agreement undertaking to comply with Conditions of Entry is required as follows:
- All fees shall be payable prior to commencement of the child's first term unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed by the Principal and the Finance Department.
- Unless the principal determines otherwise, the student may not be permitted to attend school if such fees and levies are outstanding without explanation.
- A full term's notice in writing to the Principal is required in the event of withdrawal of a student from the school. Otherwise, payment of a full term's fees is required.
- The Parent/Guardian Enrolment Agreement has been completed and signed by both parents/guardians.

- The transition process is individually designed to cater to each child's particular needs. A holistic approach to the induction process takes into consideration all aspects of the child's previous schooling: strengths and challenges, attendance rate, the maximum time of successful learning, academic and behavioural ability.
- In addition to this, parents/guardians need to be aware of and support the policies and procedures of the Cheshire program and actively work with staff to support behavioural change. Parents/guardians are required to agree in writing to comply with all school policies and procedures. This includes timely payment of fees; regular participation in school meetings, such as Parent-Teacher Interviews; regular communication with staff; advice of new or changing medication; regular sessions with the child's personal psychologist or psychiatrist.
- The class teacher will meet with the parents/guardian regularly to determine an effective and successful transition into school. This may mean the child commences on shortened hours, to ensure success.
- A Parent-Teacher Interview (PTI) meeting will be conducted within the first term of enrolment to establish the student's personal, social and academic goals. These inform the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Student Support Plan (SSP).

Disputed Parental Consent

- In situations where there is disputed parental consent in relation to enrolments, parents/guardians/caregivers or guardians are responsible for providing the Principal with up-to-date information and documentation relating to relevant court orders or informal arrangements that are in place. It is required that both parents/guardians consent to the enrolment and sign the enrolment form.
- When parent consent is disputed, the Principal will always act in accordance with the best interests of the student and the school community. Parental responsibility falls equally to both parents, considering any court orders, which may include a Parenting Order, a Family Violence Protection Order or a Protection Order.
- Should decisions need to be made that relate to a long-term issue about the care, welfare and development of the child then the following persons can make these decisions:
 - The person with 'parental responsibility' for 'major long-term issues'
 - The person who has 'guardianship' of the child.
 - The person who has been given responsibility for this decision pursuant to a Court Order or Parenting Plan. Should a decision relate to other issues about the care, welfare and development of the child then the following persons can make decisions on the child's behalf:
 - The person with 'parental responsibility' who is spending time with the child at the particular time.
 - The person who has 'custody' of the child.
 - The person who is the 'carer' of the child.

See: DET School Policy & Advisory Guide (2016) Decision Making Responsibility for Students. EVALUATION: This procedure will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Data Collection

- The Cheshire School maintains a Register of Enrolments that contains all information as required by the VRQA, including:
 - Student name
 - Student birth date

- Student address
 - Name and contact details of parents/guardians/caregivers/guardians/caregivers
 - Date of enrolment
 - Date enrolment ceased Student Background Characteristics
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- Data is also collected at the time of enrolment and reviewed periodically.
 - Student information is treated confidentially and managed in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and legislation.