

**Cabinet 24 November 2017 – Item 4 – Removal (Closure) of Residential Facilities at
Maplewell Hall Special School**

Letter for consideration at the meeting of the Cabinet

Dear Mr. Rushton, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Ould, Mr. Pain, Mrs. Posnett, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Shepherd and Mr. White,

I am writing to you in my capacity as carer for my grandson who has lived with us since he was two months old under a court residency order. He has foetal alcohol and foetal drug disorder. He has global developmental delay and is assessed as having moderate learning disabilities. He is on the autistic spectrum. A feature of foetal alcohol disorder is severe social and emotional delay. He only transferred to Maplewell Hall School in September and is in Year 7. One of the reasons for selecting Maplewell Hall School was the residential facility and its glowing Ofsted Report. As yet he has not been assessed as suitable to participate in the after school activities and residency. He is only just settling in to the new class and transport and needs to develop further trust in the school and its staff before this can happen.

When my grandson's EHCP was being discussed at his Primary School enquiry was not made as to night time needs. A full discussion about the school day and its impact was undertaken but school holidays and night needs were not considered. I have asked other parents subsequently and their experience has been similar. I believe I should be asking for revision of the EHCP if this is for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. These children are not privileged but are some of the most vulnerable in society. Due to his disability he does not make friends easily. He has no friends out of school. Sadly he believes people he talks to on line are 'his friends' and we have no way of assessing whether or not these are suitable contacts. He does not get invited to parties or sleepovers like other children who do not have the behavioural problems. He walks around wearing ear defenders because he hates loud noises. He cried watching 'Paddington 2' because he was frightened. My grandson is 11 years old but socially and emotionally he is younger than his cousins aged 7 and 6. Wherever he goes I have to stay. He often wets the bed at night. He gets up during the night and checks on me or comes to my room because he has had a bad dream.

I tend to over protect my grandson. Every day is a struggle for him and in a different way for us as well. I am looking forward to the opportunity he will have to develop educationally, socially and emotionally in the safe environment of the residence under the reassuring care of staff he and I will trust. Once the extracurricular enrichment topics and clubs will have ended the learning continues. Staff encourage the pupils to be independent, to develop self confidence and to learn and practise life skills, albeit bed making, washing up or preparing a simple supper. The pupils have the chance to spend time with other children and develop their friendships. He has never needed much sleep. Despite a late bedtime he gets up at 5.30 to 6.00am. Perhaps he will learn to stay in bed longer in the morning?

MLD schools in the country cannot be directly compared. Some, for example, have wonderful new buildings and integral swimming pools. Of course these have been built to modern standards to address and accommodate the needs of disabled people. Maplewell Hall School is housed in an old country house, the decoration of which is very tired. When we were looking for a secondary school for him we were greatly impressed by the standard of education it offers, the flexibility of courses and the the dedication of the staff which is exemplary. In my opinion the school should be revered as a flagship of Leicestershire Education Authority and the residence, a real strength of this educational provision, should be maintained and promoted.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by the Grandparent of a Year 7 student

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