**Mugginton Church of England Primary School**



**Our Early Help Offer**

**Contact details:**

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Designated safeguarding lead Joseph Green

Deputy designated safeguarding leads Emma Dennis, Debbie Wallen

SENCO Emma Dennis

Safeguarding Governor Catherine Stroud

We have approximately 60 pupils on roll. We have strong links with neighbouring schools and our local community. All members of staff have annually updated safeguarding training and Paediatric First Aid training is updated every 3 years (last completed in February 2021).

**What is Early Help?**

Family life can be complex and sometimes families may need extra help and support.  We want to help. To support and advise you at times of need, we have an **Early Help Offer which you are free to request.**

Early help, also known as early intervention, is support given to a family when a problem first emerges. It can be provided at any stage in a child or young person's life upon request. Early help services can be delivered to parents, children or whole families. **Their main focus is to improve outcomes for children**. For example, services may help parents who are living in challenging circumstances to provide a safe and loving environment for their child. Or, if a child is displaying risk-taking behaviour, early help practitioners might work with the child and their parents to find out the reasons for the child's behaviour and put strategies in place to help keep them safe.

By working together with you and with support services, we can better support children and families. Working in partnership with you, support can be accessed from a wide range of agencies, for example, health services, housing services, family support workers, social workers and local police.

Early Help services aim to provide advice and/or intervene where there is evidence of emerging needs with the objective of preventing escalation to higher level services. There is no judgment and it is important that families do not see Early Help as ‘a threat’ but as a support.

**Intention**

It is important to remember that Early Help is an approach we use and not a service in itself.

Our primary aim is to identify need early, and to make sure that appropriate plans are put into place for the benefit of our children. These plans might include new interventions but also existing interventions already in place within school.

All staff recognise their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding. We believe that information sharing, trusting relationships and timely, effective support can ensure that all children and families get the best possible start in life. We understand that families may need support from a range of agencies/specialists. With this in mind, an important part of our role is to signpost families to the resources that will best support their unique needs.

Mugginton Church of England Primary School understands our responsibilities and, as a school, we are determined to carry out our duties effectively to provide easy access to Early Help Services for pupils/families in need, in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2018). In summary, these are to:

* Identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help, using the DSCB thresholds
* Undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help using the DSCB approved Early Help assessment when appropriate
* Ensure easy access to targeted Early Help services for families receiving support to significantly improve outcomes for the child. This involves the use of evidence based interventions as set out by the Early Intervention Foundation (www.eif.org.uk/how-do-we-know-early-intervention-works/)
* Share information on the provision which is consistent with the child’s welfare and with due regard to confidentiality.

Our staff recognise our responsibility to identify the needs of vulnerable children and their families and work together with families to access early help services. Staff are clear that acting on hearsay is not appropriate and that clear, consistent record-keeping is very important. All staff will advise ‘concerned others’ to report their safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or to Starting Point. A secure electronic record is maintained as a chronology of concerns. Where appropriate, the Headteacher or SENCO will assess the needs of a family and this may identify that an early help assessment is required. Alternatively, a family may request early help support after discussion with staff. The Headteacher also monitors attendance in school.

**Our Early Help Approach**

We believe the early help approach works best when there is trust, honesty and a genuine desire to achieve the best for the children involved. We believe that asking for help is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness. Our approach includes:

1. Placing the ‘voice’ of the child at the centre. The school can and will provide a neutral place and nurturing, trusting relationships where the child feels it is safe to talk. Sensitivity to the child’s conversation is vital. Staff listen carefully to what the child is saying, attune themselves (take on board how the child is feeling), validate that feeling (being alert to the child’s lived experience), contain their feeling (making their distress a survivable experience), and soothe/calming them until they can regulate their own emotions. We treat what the children share with us seriously, and value what they say but never ask leading questions.

2. Hearing what parents/carers have to say and signposting support agencies. We know that being a parent is hard work - there are no instructions and sometimes you or your children may need extra support. This may be before your children are born, when they are very young, or throughout their school years. We would emphasise that there is nothing to be ashamed of in asking for help. The school may be able to help you or signpost you and your family to other partner agencies such as CAMHS (Child and adult mental health service), PCSOs (police community support officers), school health etc. The Derbyshire Children’s Services – Early Help Offer Guide to Children & Family Services – provides a directory of support that families can be signposted to.

**Using the Early Help Assessment Tools**

This starts with an Early Help conversation. As a parent or carer you will speak with the Headteacher or a member of the school staff about what is going well and what is not going well for you and your family. They will let you know what sort of help is available. This conversation might lead to an Early Help Assessment (EHA) being completed and submitted to the Early Help team. This is how we get a full picture about the whole family. We use it to help you see what is working well and identify areas where you might need extra support. It is your choice to take part in the assessment and you can choose who else should be involved. Every person and family is different, but an Early Help Assessment (EHA) will:

* Help you see what’s going well and not so well for your family
* Help you and others to see what support you might need
* Create a picture of your family’s circumstances, which can be shared, with your permission, so you do not have to repeat yourself to different workers
* Help you to be part of a team of people working together on the same plan to get things going well again.

**What happens after the Early Help Assessment?**

With your permission, this assessment is submitted to the Early Help team. Professionals from different organisations will work with your family and share information to help support you and your children. This could be school, health visitors, nursery staff, school health, etc. This may be followed by a ‘Team Around the Family’ (TAF) meeting. You need to give your consent as your personal information belongs to you. Agencies cannot share your information unless you agree because your information is protected by law under the Data Protection Regulations.

**What is a ‘Team Around the Family’ (TAF) meeting?**

In short, a TAF meeting is when the family and key workers involved come together to make a support plan. This is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made and that the right support is in place. At these meetings a ‘lead worker’ is selected - it may be the person the family see most frequently, the one most involved or the most approachable. The lead worker arranges the review meetings and is someone you can speak to at any point about concerns or issues you or your family are facing.

**Valuing Safeguarding and Safeguarding Training at all levels**

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (Joseph Green) and our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Emma Dennis and Debbie Wallen) have completed the full Designated Safeguaring Lead training and undergo refresher training every two years. All other staff members receive annual refresher training at the start of the new school year. New staff cover safeguarding training as part of their induction. All staff are provided with the following information:

• Keeping Children Safe in Education
• Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
• Pupil Behaviour Policies
• Staff Code of Conduct
• The identity of the DSL and deputies and clear guidance over how to report a concern

The DSL or deputy DSL will seek advice from safeguarding partners in the event of a disclosure or if they are concerned about a pupil’s wellbeing. If a child is at risk of harm this information can be shared prior to consent being gained. The DSL and the deputy DSLs receive alerts from the safeguarding partners, attend safeguarding briefings and keep their knowledge and awareness of safeguarding up to-date and at the heart of their practice. Staff understand and are aware of correlations between domestic abuse and child protection – staff are vigilant, listening to the child and making referrals as required. The school is fully engaged with the multi-agency risk assessment conference process (child in need and child protection), where necessary.

The school will speak with parents if a child displays behaviour which is out of character such as becoming withdrawn, anxious, continually tired etc. All staff are aware of risks which may indicate the need for early help – this includes children who:

• Are disabled or have a specific additional need/needs.
• Have SEND.
• Are young carers.
• Are showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
• Are frequently missing or go missing from care or from home.
• Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation.
• Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
• Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
• Are misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
• Are privately fostered.
• Have returned home to their family from care.

Staff understand that, where a statutory intervention is not required, early help may be used to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour to prevent escalation of sexual violence. Staff are aware of the issue of Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriages and understand how to fulfil their legal responsibilities.