



## **St Mary's RC Primary School**

### **Early Help Offer**

Designated Safeguarding lead: Claire Halstead – Head teacher

Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead: Chrissy Paterson – Office Manager

We have 82 pupils on roll. We have strong links with our neighbouring schools, and with our local community. All members of staff have updated paediatric first aid and safeguarding training.

#### **What is Early Help?**

Early Help is an approach we use and not a service. Our primary aim is to identify any needs early and to make sure that appropriate support is put into place.

ALL staff recognise their role in ensuring safeguarding practices to ALL children at ALL times.

We believe that information sharing and timely effective support can support ALL children and families to get a good start in life. Families often need support from a wide range of agencies. We recognise that other agencies will be able to support families based on their specialised work. Therefore our role is often to signpost families to the resources that will best support their needs.

St Mary's RC Primary School understands their responsibilities and as a school we will carry out our duties in ensuring the effectiveness of Early Help Services for pupils in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and within the statutory guidance "Working Together 2015". In summary, these are to:

- Identify children and their families who would benefit from Early Help utilising the DSCB thresholds
- Undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help using the approved Early Help assessment where this is appropriate

- Ensure signposting of targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.
- Share information on that provision which is consistent with the child's welfare and with due regard to confidentiality.

Staff have daily contact with children and their families throughout term time. All staff recognise their role in identifying needs of vulnerable children and their families need for early help. Staff are clear that acting on hearsay is not appropriate. However, all reports of concern are logged on the school's record keeping system CPOMs.

The Head teacher, in liaison with the class teacher monitors the entries. A secure electronic record is maintained as a chronology of concerns. Where appropriate the Head teacher will assess the needs of a family and this may identify that an early help assessment is required. The Head teacher also monitors attendance in school.

### **The voice of the child**

The school can provide a neutral place 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. We treat what the children share with us seriously, and value what they say.

### **Hearing what parents/carers have to say and signposting support agencies**

Remember being a parent is hard work and there are no instructions. 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. There is nothing to be ashamed of in asking for help. The school may be able to help you. We do have a member of staff who is a trained Emotion Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) who works with children and families supporting their emotional needs, well-being and looking for solutions to issues. But if that isn't enough, we can signpost you and your family to other partner agencies such as CFWS (Child, Family Well-being Service), PCSOs (police community support officers), school health etc. School will try to support you ourselves.

## **Using the Early Help Assessment**

This starts with an Early Help conversation. As a parent or carer you will chat with the Head teacher or a member of the school staff about what's going well and what's not going well for you and your family, and they will let you know what sort of help is available. This conversation might lead to an Early Help Assessment (EHA). 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 the areas where you could do with a bit of extra support. It's 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 don't 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, people from different organisations working with your family will share information and work together to help support you and your children. This could be school, health visitors, nursery staff, school health, etc. This may then be followed by a 'Team Around the Family' meeting. You need to give your consent as your personal information belongs to you. Agencies can't 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' meeting?**

The family and workers involved come together to make a support plan. This is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made for your family 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.

## **Safeguarding Training at all levels**

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead – Claire Halstead and our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Miss Paterson undergo 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. Governors also carry out Safeguarding training.

All staff are provided with the following information:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Safeguarding Policy
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- The identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL

## **Seeking advice**

The DSL or deputy DSL (or other members of staff if necessary) readily seek advice from the 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 may be shared prior to consent being gained.

## **Being knowledgeable and aware**

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.

## **Understanding links**

Staff understand the correlation between domestic abuse and child protection – staff are vigilant, listening to the child and making referrals as required.

## **Raising awareness**

The school raises parents' awareness of reasons for out of character behaviours such as becoming withdrawn, anxious, continually tired etc. to increase their understanding of the correlation between behaviour and safeguarding risks such as grooming, internet safety, bullying, aiming for early identification of pupils at risk.

## **Identifying risks at the earliest opportunity**

All staff are aware of the 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

## **Recognising that early help is effective**

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.

## **Understanding legal responsibilities**

Staff are aware of the extent of FGM and forced marriages and understand how to fulfil their legal responsibilities.