



# **Early Help Policy and Procedure**

Reviewed: September 2021

Next Review: September 2022

## **Early Help Policy and Procedure**

### **Staff responsible:**

At Rivers Primary Academy, all staff are trained in recognising the signs of child abuse and extremism. They are committed to, and know the benefits of, Early Help as a way of supporting families and young people before their needs become acute and Children's Services or other specialist intervention may be necessary (see Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021) .

The school has a range of robust safeguarding procedures in place which put the safety and protection of children at the heart of any decisions. The school's safeguarding team is made up of the following:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Miss M Stone
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) – Mrs L Wright and Miss B Anderson, Mrs K Moorhouse
- Safeguarding Officer – Mrs Gamwell
- Pastoral Lead - Mrs K Moorhouse
- Online Safety Lead - Miss M Stone

The DSL and all DDSLs complete inter-agency safeguarding training on a two-yearly programme. All other school staff complete safeguarding training on a yearly basis and are updated regularly to any changes in legislation.

### **Reporting concerns**

If any member of the school suspects that a child may be at risk of harm, or who has been harmed, they will report the incident through the school's reporting system (CPOMs). The update is received by all members of the safeguarding team. Staff are expected to report a concern as soon as possible through the reporting system. If a member of staff believes that a child is at risk of, or has been subjected to, significant harm then this must be reported immediately in person to either the school's DSL or one of the DDSLs and recorded on a green form.

The primary aim of the school's Early Help System is to try to intervene early with families before it gets to the stage when a child may be at risk of harm.

### **Involvement of families**

The school will always involve the family in all Early Help strategies and they will only be put in place with their permission. The school will aim to work with families in a supportive, non-judgemental way so that trust is built up and the best possible outcomes achieved.

However, there are occasions when the school's safeguarding team, or members of school staff, may believe that a child may be at immediate risk of significant harm and that by informing the parents/carers of the concern may put the child at further risk. In these cases, the school will implement section 47 procedures. This will involve an immediate referral to social care without the parents/carers knowledge.

### **School indicators for children or families that may require Early Help**

The following list provides examples of areas where, without intervention, a family may break down or a child may be put at risk of harm. The school has no pre-prescribed criteria for supporting children and families at Early Help level. Each case is assessed according to needs and a bespoke programme put in place for that child and/or family:

- Low parenting skills
- Poor diet – obesity, malnourished
- Low income or poverty
- Transport
- Financial issues
- Homelessness
- Limited community integration
- Breakdown in family relationships
- Special Educational Needs (refer to local and school offer)
- Child mental health
- Adult mental health
- Disability of a child
- Bereavement
- Poor attendance and punctuality
- Changes in behaviour
- Poor behaviour and risk of exclusion
- Child unaware of how to keep themselves safe online
- Child unaware of danger and how to keep themselves safe
- Child demonstrates sexualised behaviours

Following the identification of a family who may require Early Help, the school will seek to gain consent from the family to engage with the services who may be best placed to support them. This may involve support from the Local Early Help support team who will work with the school to assess the needs of the family and to complete a 'Family Star Assessment' or 'My Star Assessment.' However, Early help can also be offered as a single agency response led by

school.

The level of need for each family is assessed on an individual basis and different levels of services can be accessed as a result. These may include the following:

- Family Support Worker
- School Safeguarding Team
- GP
- Police
- Health Visitor
- Midwife
- Change4Life School Clubs
- Food Bank
- Churches and Religious Leader
- Housing Association
- Landlords
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Jobcentre
- Traveller Support Services
- Army Support Services
- Interpreter
- Children's Centre
- Black Country Women's Aid
- Mental health services
- Parenting Courses
- Counselling
- Education Psychologist
- Bereavement Services
- NSPCC

## **Procedures**

If a family is identified as potentially benefiting from Early help, the following steps will take place:

- Staff member to have a discussion with parent/carer about Early Help.
- Staff member to inform DSL and Pastoral Lead that discussion has taken place/need identified via CPOMS and in person.
- Pastoral lead to contact parent/s, briefly discuss what Early Help can offer and book an initial meeting.
- An initial meeting, gain consent and begin to write a plan if appropriate. Set up a folder for the family.
- Book in further sessions to complete a plan or Family Star Assessment.

- Hold review meetings monthly and complete appropriate paperwork.
- When the plan has been completed and the family no longer requires support, complete closing paperwork and keep on the family file.

**Note: If parents refuse to engage with the Early Help process or fail to meet two appointments, a further discussion with Children's Services will take place. If at any point school feels that the family meets the level 4 threshold, they are to seek advice from the MASH team.**

### **Supervision**

Supervision of the Safeguarding Officer takes place weekly with DSL where every vulnerable child is discussed. This is then shared in pastoral meetings weekly and with Pastoral Lead and SENCO (also Miss M Stone). The DSL and Safeguarding Officer also have half-termly supervision with the Early Help Locality Team Lead.