



Chaucer Junior School



## **CHAUCER JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**Early Help Offer from October 2019**



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**We have approximately 240 pupils on roll in our school. All members of staff recognise their role in safeguarding. We work together to provide Early Help and services to support families.**



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## 1. Introduction

Chaucer Junior School works to provide Early Help to families in the school community. From October 2019 we are providing Early Help through school. We work alongside the Multi Agency Team and are providing support through the school setting.

As part of our Early Help offer, the school is using the Thrive Approach and have licensed practitioners throughout school who deliver this provision to the children and their families.

Early Help services aim to both provide advice and/or intervene where there is evidence of emerging needs with the objective of preventing escalation to higher level services.

This document is our school offer outlining the services available under the Early Help umbrella and also the key processes associated with this.

The **Our Early Help Offer explained document** (see website & appendix 2) outlines the rationale behind our offer.

## 2. Early Help.

Our primary aim is to identify 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 ensure that ALL children and families get a good start in life.

Families can 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.

### **How will we know when Early Help is needed?**

Staff have daily contact with children and their families throughout term time. All staff recognise their role in identifying vulnerable children and their families need for Early Help.

Staff are clear that acting on hearsay is not appropriate. All staff will advise 'concerned others' to report their safeguarding concerns to Starting Point (the county's single point access for safeguarding referrals). However, all reports of concern are logged on the school reporting system, CPOMs. Access to CPOMs is available to all staff at the most suitable level of access. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Upton, Head teacher), supported by our DDSLs - Assistant



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Head teacher (Miss Mee) and our Family Support Workers (Mrs Starling (Senior) and Mrs Farrall), monitor the entries logged on CPOMs.

Where appropriate the above will assess the needs of a family through Monitoring & Supervision meetings. This may identify that an Early Help Assessment is required.

The Head teacher and the Family Support Team monitor attendance in school. They are active in their role to ensure that families recognise the importance of their children attending school regularly.

See Chaucer Junior School's Attendance Policy

### **3. Recording, Reporting and Referrals**

The Head teacher (DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead) has case management responsibility. They identify needs based on the safeguarding thresholds e.g. low level, emerging, complex/serious (Section 17) or Child Protection concerns (Section 47).

Where emerging needs are identified the DSCB (Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board) approved Early Help Assessment Form will be used and will be reviewed under the single plan format with reference to the safety and wellbeing grid.

A provision map details interventions for all pupils requiring Early Help in school.

A current recording system, CPOMs (Child Protection Monitoring System), is available online for staff to record information.

Concerns and chronologies are closely monitored – identifying patterns/ frequency of concerns and the actions that have been taken - by the Head teacher. These profiles may trigger an in-house referral to the Family Support Team.

Staff also create and record on CPOMs where there are other agencies involved. The structure that children will be supported and reviewed through will be the Early Help Assessment format, which is currently the assessment process used by the Local Authority.

If a vulnerable child moves school, we will ensure that information is shared with the receiving school. Depending on the level of safeguarding need it may be appropriate to hold a meeting, have a telephone conversation or as a minimum send the child's file.

We are unable to use the DCC Framework i / Mosaic system which would enable us to enter case notes and documents. Access to the system would also flag up concerns. As this is unavailable to us, we will contact the local Social Care Office when needed. We have raised our concerns regarding no access to this system with the Local Authority and hope that it will be recognised that this is an essential need to ensure effective communication between all services.



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Where there has been no improvement to the welfare of the child, and there are escalating concerns around the safety and wellbeing of a child, staff will step up the Early Help Assessment to Starting Point. The family support team and the Head teacher meet regularly to discuss the children and families and the progress that is being made.

Where there are immediate Safeguarding concerns it will be taken to Starting Point, the county's single point access for safeguarding referrals, following consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in school.

#### 4. Early Help Interventions.

At Chaucer Junior School we have a full-time family support team, who provides support for children and families. We have an 'open door policy' and can often meet parents without an appointment for brief queries, especially at the beginning and end of the day, or telephone and leave us a message. During term time the Nurture and well-being team may work directly with children offering specific support

Over the school holidays the email address

[earlyhelp@chaucer-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@chaucer-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk)

will be monitored (on a weekly basis) and we will sign post you to the most appropriate advice and support. **This is NOT for urgent help or advice. Call Derbyshire on 01629 533190 for urgent help or support.**

Our school website contains information for families actively seeking advice and support.

Based on the needs of each family, staff will coordinate the support of the appropriate services. Where appropriate TAF (Team Around the Family) meetings are arranged to monitor the work of all the agencies involved. The Early Help Assessment Tools, including the safety and wellbeing grid are used to assess progress and achievements made by the families and professionals supporting them.

Joint working arrangements with partner agencies, such as school health, local infant and secondary schools, educational psychology, CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health service) and with the PCSOs (police community support officer), are already in place and information is shared through meetings, email and telephone communications. As a family's needs arise further links to agencies will be established and maintained. Clear lines of communication are essential to support long term improvements for families. The Derbyshire Children's Services - Early Help Offer Guide to Children & Family Services – provides a directory of support that families will either be signposted to, referred to, or engaged with on behalf of the families we support.



## **5. After Early Help**

Following a review of a family's needs, or at a time of crisis, it will be appropriate to escalate the support a family requires. At the stage where early intervention attempts have not been successful and a social worker becomes involved, we will continue to support children and families. Ongoing communication with all services involved continue to be essential.

The Head teacher and/or the assistant head or family support team will be available to represent the school at Case Conference or Child in Need Reviews and will provide reports when required.

## **6. Quality Assurance**

The best quality assurance will be received from the families receiving the support.

The school community is committed to the welfare and safety of children and as such are relentless in questioning the support families are receiving.

Chaucer Junior School Governing Body actively challenge the Senior Leadership Team at termly Governors' meeting regarding safety and welfare of all the pupils. Governors are involved in the annual safeguarding audit, meet with the Designated Senior Leads for Safeguarding and Attendance.

Resources used are recommended by the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board.

The school networks with other school-based family resource workers and pastoral staff and keeps up to date with developments in safeguarding families including attending DCC Safeguarding briefings and training.



## What is Early Help? - for parents



### What is Early Help?

Early help is a way of getting extra support when you or your family needs it, but getting it as soon as the difficulties start, rather than waiting until things get worse. It's for children and young people of any age.

Help can come from all kinds of services and organisations who work together to support your family. You might be using some of these services already, but we want to make sure they are providing the right support for you and your family's needs.

### Why would I seek early help?

It could be that you're worried about your child's health, development or behaviour, or perhaps because you are caring for a disabled child. Maybe your child is affected by domestic abuse, drugs or alcohol. Perhaps your child is a carer for other people.



### Who do I ask?

Have a chat with Mrs Starling, Mrs Farrall, Mrs Upton or any member of school staff, a support worker or health professional – they can help you look at what types of support are available and who might be able to help.

Your local children, young people's and families centre in Cotmanhay and at the Charnos centre also has lots of services and support for families with children, some especially for children with additional needs.



### What happens if I ask for an Early Help Assessment?

You will be fully involved, and we will listen to you. It may be that we just talk to you and point you to the support you want. If it's a bit more complicated, we'll need to ask you for more information that we'll write down or type. This is so we can get the right information and share it (with your consent) with people who need to know, so we can better understand your circumstances and match up services that would help you the most. You'll get a plan showing what you want to achieve and the support you need.





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## What sort of services or help do I get?



It will depend on what you need and might include services you already get. We will agree it with you and make sure it all joins up. Here are a few examples:

Education and Early learning	School support Stay and play Library sessions
Family and young people support	Parenting groups Local Support Groups Domestic violence support Youth support
Advice and welfare	Benefits advice Adult learning Housing advice Debt management
Health	GPs School nurse Health visitor

## Can I say no to an Early Help Assessment?

Yes, you can, but we would like to stay in contact with you in case your circumstances alter, or you change your mind. We will continue to monitor your child in school and will speak to you again if we feel support is needed immediately.



## Does it mean Social care will get involved?

No. If in the future your circumstances change and it becomes a possibility, we will keep you involved and work with you so that you understand what is happening and why.

## What happens when I stop receiving early help services?

We want you to become confident and able to find your own solutions and take responsibility for your family. You can continue to use all services that are open to families and children and if your needs change again, then please ask us for further help, as soon as you need it.





# Chaucer Junior school's Early Help Offer explained





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## Our Early Help Offer explained

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## Introduction

Early help is defined as providing support for children and young people as soon as a problem emerges, to prevent the problem escalating and further difficulties arising in the future. Effective early help relies on a multi-agency approach where organisations work together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help.
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later, as help is available for children as soon as a problem emerges.

## Our Early Help Offer summary

The Early Help offer Chaucer junior school provides links in with other wider scale multi-agency approaches that are in place to support families – it is important to remember that it is an approach not a service. It respects every family's right to access information in order to help manage their own lives successfully, whilst guiding them to seek support from appropriate sources. Help can be agreed as soon as concerns start to emerge.

The Offer is for all children, as issues may arise at any point in a child or young person's life. It includes both universal and targeted/specialist services, to reduce or prevent concerns from growing or becoming entrenched, and works to achieve the following aims:

- Help is there when parents, children and young people need it.
- Partner support is in place, which provides a way forward that is right for everyone – there is a choice of help and it will be easy to access.
- Families are at the centre of everything our school does – they will only have to tell the school their story once.
- Chaucer Junior school is assertive with families who may not want support but need it – and continue to support families until they no longer need help.



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## The Role of the DSL and DSSLs

Where early help is needed, the DSL (Mrs Upton) or any deputy DSLs (Miss Mee, Mrs Starling and Mrs Farrall) are responsible for leading or liaison with other agencies and organising an inter-agency assessment as required. Certain staff members, however, may assume responsibility for supporting other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, and may act as the lead professional in some cases.

The DSL and any deputies must have a firm understanding of the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and LA children's social care arrangements for referral.

## Early Help services

The purpose of early help is to prevent issues and problems becoming serious and harmful to the child, young person, family and community. When children and families need this extra support, they need it quickly. Provision of early help support can be at all stages of a child's life; pre-birth (During pregnancy), childhood or adolescence.

Children and families concerned may have a variety of needs that lead to professionals from different disciplines working together to support them and their families. Practitioners should be alert to the potential need for early help in children who:

- Are disabled or have 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 to their family home from care.

If used effectively, early help services will save costs to wider support teams, and so it is important that schools are fully involved: their own key responsibility is to ensure that all children, including the most vulnerable, achieve expected levels of progress. They are often the first agency to spot problems when all is not well at home and are trusted point of contact for many families.



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Early help will be used in line with our other school policies such as: child protection and safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, attendance and teaching and learning.

Chaucer Junior school has systems in place to recognise vulnerable children and/or families, and appropriate measures are in place to open the support network for these cases through the DSL, Family support team or the SENCO at the school. Whilst all these staff members play an important role in accessing support, ultimate responsibility for initiating inter-agency assessment and leading on the support provided lies with the DSL (Mrs Upton). Sometimes this support can be short-term, or it could be longer-term, widespread support that is needed through a common assessment framework.

Each LA will have provisions in place to support families through the Early Help Offer. They will provide a wide range of information, self-help, support and services which is available for all aspects of family life ranging from free universal support options or services, which everyone can access, to target support for times when specialist advice is needed. Specific details will be available through LA websites.

## Bibliography

We used DfE (2018) Keeping children safe in education p9, p89 and HM Government (2018) working together to safeguard children, p13-14.