

Early Help in Partnership of Dronfield Schools (PODS)

To support children and families when early help and intervention may be needed, the Partnership of Dronfield Schools have worked together to introduce a Family Support Practitioner into Pods. Based at Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School within their pastoral team, the role will be working predominantly with the Pods primary schools to support children and their families when they have emerging safeguarding needs.

A referral into family support may lead to an Early Help Assessment (EHA) which they can support the family with. They may also take on a lead practitioner role within Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings, where necessary to ensure we are all working together for best outcomes for the child and their family.

The Family Support Practitioner will work to support the child and their family, continuing to review their needs. They may deem that an escalation into social care is necessary, alternatively a piece of work with the practitioner may be sufficient to meet the needs of the child and their family. In which case, once completed, the child will continue being supported by their school/other services, as they were before.

We have outlined below some questions to consider when exploring what level of support is most appropriate for a particular child and their family.

What support is available within school?

For many children and their families, the support they have access to within their school may be suitable to meet their needs. At **Name of Primary School** our staff are available to support our children and their families in a number of ways, the wellbeing and mental health of the children attending our school is paramount to us.

A brief outline of our school's pastoral support is detailed below:

- **XXX (eg. positive support)**
- **XXX (eg. art/creative therapy)**

If you would like to know more about specific support that may be available to a child or family attending **Name of Primary School** please contact us on **XXX**.

What further support is available in the community?

When considering specific issues a child or family may be experiencing, there are many services available in the community to offer additional support. Derbyshire County Council has a lot of useful information on their website about local options for support for a variety of circumstances.

For information around Education & Learning, such as schools, childcare and out of school activities, please see:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/education-and-learning.aspx>

For information around Health & Wellbeing, such as mental health, vaccinations and drug/alcohol support, please see:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing.aspx>

Other local organisations are available to support with a variety of issues. Please see link below for a comprehensive list of services working with children and families in the Derbyshire area: **Link to second document sent in email named 'Signposting'**

Is early help needed to meet the needs of this child or family?

If early help is the most appropriate level of intervention, the Pods Family Support Practitioner (FSP) will be able to support the child and their family.

When a safeguarding concern has been raised, but the child and family have not been open to social services, it may be that early help can offer appropriate support to them. However, if the safeguarding concern indicates that the child or family are unsafe, it may be necessary for the safeguarding lead to escalate straight to social services.

Early help is an optional intervention, the intention of which is to support children and their families so their needs are met and the chances of difficulties later in the child's school careers and adulthood are reduced. As the support is not a requirement, it is necessary to gain the family's consent before making a referral.

Signs that a child may benefit from Early Help include:

- Displaying disruptive or anti-social behaviour
- There are ongoing safeguarding concerns
- Being bullied or bullying others
- Having poor attendance at school
- Being involved in, or at risk of, offending
- Having poor general health
- Having anxiety, depression or other mental health issues
- Misusing drugs or alcohol
- Having a particularly challenging relationship with parents or appearing to be unusually independent from their parents
- Experiencing difficulties at home, such as domestic abuse, parental substance abuse or parental mental health problems

(Department for Education (DfE), 2018)

Some groups of children may be more likely to need early help than their peers. These include children who:

- Have been excluded from school
- Have special educational needs
- Are disabled
- Are in care
- Are leaving or preparing to leave care
- Are young carers
- Are young parents (or about to become young parents)
- Are experiencing housing issues

For more guidance on whether family support may be appropriate for a child or family you are working with, please review the **PODS FSP Referral Flowchart**. If you would like to submit a referral, please gain consent to do so from the child's family/carers and complete the **PODS FSP Referral Form**. Please send all completed referral forms and queries to Elise Grehan Family Support Practitioner at:

egrehan@dronfield.derbyshire.sch.uk

Is social care involvement necessary for this child and their family?

If a child or their family require further support than early help is able to offer, particularly when there are concerns around their safety or welfare, it may be that social care involvement is necessary at this time.

If there are concerns about a child's safety then a social worker must carry out an assessment under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 which includes meeting with the child. Parents/carers are normally asked for their consent before an assessment begins but, when deemed necessary, a safeguarding assessment can take place even if parents/carers do not agree to it.

For information around social care support and options for children and families in Derbyshire, please see: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/children-and-family-services.aspx>

If at any time you believe that a child is in danger, call: 01629 533190 choosing the option for urgent child protection calls.