



HIGHFIELDS
SPENCER ACADEMY

What is Early Help?

At Highfields Spencer Academy we understand that from time-to-time family life can have its complications and sometimes families may need some extra help. To support and advise you at such times we have an Early Help Offer which is supported by Pingle Early Help Assessment Team.

We believe that by working together we can better support children and families. Sometimes, families need support from a wide range of agencies or people, for example, health services, housing services, family support workers, social workers and local police. As a school, we may be able to signpost a range of services to support families beyond the educational setting.

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.

Our primary aim is to identify support early, and to make sure that appropriate plans are put into place. This will require working with the school staff and other agencies if needed. We will also use existing interventions already in place within the school setting.

What support do we offer?

Anna Jones, Principal is our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and is able to carry out Early Help Assessments at school. Laura North is our parental engagement lead and works with families to help identify support for them. We complete SPOA referrals, and can refer to our own Speech and Language therapist Alex Childs, who can meet with parents and give information and advice for families who are supporting a child with speech and language difficulties. We have Laura and Cat Thompson as trained mental health first aiders in school, both have completed nationally approved courses and are there to help parents and pupils.

With the direct support of our DSL, our team of very experienced Teaching Assistants are providing additional pastoral and nurture support where needed, through regular contact with our families; this allows parents/carers to share concerns and to maintain communication between school and home on a planned, regular basis if needed, ensuring that children and families are receiving the best support possible.

We can offer advice on a range of concerns or can signpost parents to other sources of information, help and support.

What sort of concerns might parents share with us?

A wide range of issues such as behaviour management, domestic abuse, mental health issues, housing concerns, financial worries and debts, mobility difficulties, parents in prison, bereavement and loss, cyber bullying – in fact any concerns which you are worried might be having a negative impact on your children.

How will we know when Early Help is needed?

Parents, carers, children and staff may tell us that support is required, or practitioners may identify that there are emerging needs and services might be required, as there are concerns about a child.

We will assess the needs and this may identify that an Early Help Assessment is needed and the subsequent action that needs to be taken.

How will families be supported through our Early Help Offer?

Children and families will be supported and reviewed through the Early Help Assessment format, run by Pingle for schools in the Derbyshire area, which is currently the assessment process used by the Local Authority. Since 2018 schools in Derbyshire have to provide their own in school support or work through an approved hub such as Pingle to provide access to support and advice for their families.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead can meet informally with parents/carers and children in the first instance and this can be followed by completing the Early Help Assessment. Following the assessment, families may be supported by a range of professionals from within and beyond school. Team Around the Family meetings may be held in school to identify what is working well, what needs to change and to agree actions to help and support families.

Gaining the views, wishes and feelings of the child is central to our safeguarding policy, and our team of staff in school, also carry out direct work with children, for example completing Voice of the Child.

We are unable to use the DCC 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, or the Starting Point advice line.

The Early Help Assessment will be passed to Starting Point, the county's single point access for safeguarding referrals, where there has been no improvement to the welfare of the child, and there are escalating concerns around the safety and well-being of a child. Where there are immediate safeguarding concerns, the case will be referred to Starting Point following consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Leads in School.

We work closely with other agencies who can provide more specialist support for our families, for example, CAMHS and Crossroads. We can also signpost support groups and parenting courses on offer in the local area.

When will Early Help be available through the school?

The Early Help offer provided by the school will be available during term time only, but our planned offer through Pingle will be available 52 weeks of the year. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead may attend prearranged meetings during school holidays if the need has been identified for open cases. In order to support families during holiday times, we will signpost agencies and activities who are available when school is closed.

Starting Point:

If you are concerned that a child is suffering or at risk of significant harm, please contact

Starting Point:

01629 533190

Derbyshire County Council

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/support-for-families/support-for-families-and-early-help.aspx>

PINGLE Early Help Offer

For more information on the services provided through Pingle Early Help Team please follow the link: <https://www.pingle.derbyshire.sch.uk/page/?title=Early+Help&pid=221> or search Pingle Early Help Offer.