

Introduction for Early Help at Swanwick School & Sports College

At Swanwick School and Sports College we want our pupils to 'Enjoy, Achieve and Exceed.' This sometimes means us working with other professionals to assist our families to find support.

Swanwick School and Sports College works closely with a variety of other organisations to provide early support to our families when it is needed.

As part of our Early Help offer, our Pastoral Team aim to provide practical advice, and work closely with other organisations and charities who are able to offer more specialised assistance.

Please remember that every family will face challenges at some time or another where they need additional help or guidance. Swanwick School and Sports College's Early Help Offer enables us to work with you to identify what support you require so that we can signpost or refer you to the right place.

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

At Swanwick School and Sports College we are alert to the potential need for early help in children who:

- 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.

Swanwick School and Sports College has systems in place so that we can recognise vulnerable children and/or families. Appropriate measures are in place to open the support network for these cases through the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), our Family Liaison Worker or the Pastoral Team. Whilst all of 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 Lead DSL's (Mrs England and Mr Greenhough).

What is Early Help?

Early help is a way of getting extra support when you or your family needs it. It is important that you gain this support as soon as the difficulties arise, rather than waiting until things get worse. Early Help is available to children and young people of any age.

Early 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.

All professionals that work with children, young people and families are responsible for listening to your concerns and worries and work closely with you to make sure you and your family get the right support at the right time.

Our Early Help Offer explained

The Early Help offer at Swanwick School and Sports College provides links with other professional services that are in place to support families.

It is important to remember that Early Help is an approach not a service. It respects every family's right to access information to help manage their own lives successfully, whilst guiding them to seek support from appropriate sources. Early Help is available as soon as problems start to emerge and includes access to both universal and targeted/specialist services whose input would reduce or prevent concerns from growing or becoming entrenched, in order to ensure that problems do not escalate to higher level services.

It is Swanwick School and Sports College's aim that:

- Help is available to all parents/ carers and children as they need it
- To work in partnership with other organisations to provide a way forward that is right for the family
- There is an appropriate choice of help and it is easy for our families to access
- Families are at the centre of the partnership so they only have to tell their story once
- We will monitor families who may not want support but need it so that we can intervene if required
- We will continue to support families until they no longer need help

The Role of the Lead DSL and other DSLs

Where Early Help is needed, the DSL (Mrs England) or one of the other DSLs (Mr Greenhough, Mrs McKee, Mrs Moody, Miss Harkin or Miss Kerry) are responsible for managing your case and liaising with other agencies and completing assessments and/or referrals that may be required.

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 a member of the Pastoral Team 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.

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.

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:

Parenting groups
Parenting courses
Domestic violence support
Youth support
Welfare Benefits advice
Adult learning
Housing advice
Debt management
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.

What is the Graded Care Profile?

The graded Care Profile is another tool that we might use to help us work together to identify how things can be made better for your child. Click [here](#) to find out more how the Graded Care Profile Works and what you will need to do.

Does any of this 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.

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.

