



Ashbourne Primary School Early Help Offer 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Our Early Help Principles

At Ashbourne Primary School, we recognise the importance of identifying and responding to the needs of children and families at the earliest opportunity to ensure that all pupils are safe, happy and able to achieve their potential. Early Help provides timely and proportionate support where emerging needs are identified, with the aim of improving outcomes for children and families and preventing needs from escalating.

Our approach to Early Help is child-centred, family-focused and strengths-based. We work in partnership with children, parents and carers to understand individual circumstances, recognise strengths, identify needs and agree appropriate support. Where additional or more complex needs are identified, we work collaboratively with relevant professionals and services to ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time.

This document outlines the Early Help provision available at Ashbourne Primary School and describes the systems and processes that underpin our identification, assessment, support and review of children and families who may benefit from Early Help. It is intended to provide clarity and consistency for staff, families and external partners.

Early Help forms part of our wider safeguarding arrangements. It does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures will be followed without delay.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
Headteacher/DSL	The Headteacher ensures that appropriate systems, staffing and resources are in place to support the school's Early Help and safeguarding responsibilities. The DSL has oversight of Early Help and safeguarding within school. They provide advice and support to staff, consider the appropriate response to identified needs and ensure concerns are escalated where safeguarding thresholds are met.
Co/Deputy Headteacher/ DDSL	DDSLs support the DSL in identifying, coordinating and reviewing Early Help and safeguarding support and act in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.
Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders/DDSLs	The Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders coordinate the school's Early Help response, support assessments and plans, liaise with children, families and professionals and ensure that support is regularly reviewed.
Attendance Lead/Officer	The Attendance Lead/Officer identifies attendance and punctuality concerns at an early stage, works with children and families to understand barriers to attendance and coordinates or contributes to Early Help support where wider needs are identified.
SENDCo	The SENDCo supports the identification of additional needs and coordinates appropriate provision through the school's graduated response, working with families and external professionals where necessary.
Teachers and Support Staff	All staff have a responsibility to recognise emerging needs, listen to children, record and report concerns appropriately and contribute to Early Help support and review processes.
Governing Body	The Governing Body provides strategic oversight and assurance that the school has effective arrangements for safeguarding, Early Help and supporting vulnerable children and families.

2. Early Help

2.1 What is Early Help?

Early Help is support provided to children and families when emerging needs are identified or when additional support may prevent difficulties from escalating. Support may be required at any point in a child's life and may involve a single area of need or a combination of needs requiring a coordinated response.

The primary aim of Early Help at Ashbourne Primary is to identify concerns at an early stage and to ensure that appropriate support plans are implemented. This process requires collaborative working between school staff, families and, where necessary, external agencies.

Our Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders, Mrs Jill Simpson and Mrs Ali Blake, are responsible for coordinating Early Help assessments within the school. By working together with families and professionals, we seek to ensure that children are supported holistically. Where additional support is required, Ashbourne Primary School may work with health services, local authority services, housing providers, community and voluntary organisations, police and other relevant agencies.

Early Help may be initiated when parents, carers, children or school staff express concerns, or when practitioners identify emerging needs. Following assessment, an Early Help plan may be developed, setting out the actions required and the support to be provided.

Family Help forms part of the wider system of help and support for children and families. It brings together targeted Early Help and support for children in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, providing a more coordinated response for families with additional or complex needs. Ashbourne Primary School works within Derbyshire's local Early Help and Family Help arrangements to ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time.

2.2 Identifying Children and Families Who May Benefit from Early Help

Early Help may be considered when a child, parent/carers, member of staff or other professional identifies an emerging need or concern.

A child or family may benefit from Early Help where there are concerns relating to, for example:

- attendance, persistent absence or punctuality;
- emotional wellbeing or mental health;
- behaviour or emotional regulation;
- special educational needs or disabilities;
- physical or developmental needs;
- parenting or family relationships;
- bereavement, loss or significant changes in family circumstances;
- housing, financial hardship or food insecurity;
- parental or family mental health;
- domestic abuse;
- substance misuse within the family;
- caring responsibilities;
- social isolation;
- online safety or harmful influences; or
- other circumstances affecting a child's safety, wellbeing, development, attendance or ability to engage successfully in education.

2.3 Assessing Need and Planning Support

When an emerging need is identified, information is gathered to develop a clear understanding of the child's and family's circumstances, including their strengths, needs and existing support.

Children and parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to this process so that their views, wishes and priorities inform decisions about the support provided.

Depending upon the level and complexity of need, support may include school-based intervention, signposting to another service, involvement from a single external agency or a coordinated multi-agency response.

Where appropriate, an Early Help Assessment may be completed and an Early Help Plan developed. The plan will identify:

- the needs and strengths of the child and family;
- the outcomes to be achieved;
- agreed actions and support;
- who is responsible for each action; and
- arrangements and timescales for review.

3. Referrals and Vulnerable Children's Meetings

3.1 Identifying and Reporting Concerns

A clear referral system is in place to ensure that emerging needs and concerns are identified promptly and that children and families are directed to the most appropriate support.

All school staff have a responsibility to recognise and respond to concerns about a child's safety, wellbeing, attendance, development or family circumstances. Concerns are recorded on MyConcern in accordance with the school's safeguarding and recording procedures and are reviewed by the appropriate safeguarding or pastoral lead.

3.2 Graduated Response - Assessing Need and Agreeing the Response

The Headteacher, Heather Davis (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Co/Deputy Headteacher, Vicky Howell (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), hold overall case management responsibility and, in consultation with the pastoral team and other relevant professionals, assess the level of need and determine the appropriate response.

Ashbourne Primary School uses a graduated approach to ensure that children and families receive the right support at the right time. The level of response is determined by the nature, complexity and impact of identified needs and is reviewed as circumstances change.

Level of Need	Typical Response
Universal Needs	The child's needs can be met through universal services and ordinarily available school provision. Staff monitor progress and provide appropriate support within school.
Emerging / Additional Needs – Community-Based Early Help	Additional or emerging needs are identified which may benefit from early support. This may include targeted school-based support, pastoral intervention, attendance support, SEND provision, signposting, community-based services or involvement from a single external service. Support is reviewed and adapted according to the child's and family's needs.
Multiple / Complex Needs – Coordinated Early Help / Family Help	The child or family has multiple or more complex needs which require a coordinated response. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) and plan are used to identify strengths, needs and agreed outcomes. Where more than one agency is involved, a Team Around the Family (TAF) is convened. Where targeted support from Derbyshire's Family Help Service is required, this may be requested through Starting Point in accordance with local arrangements.

Significant / Acute Needs – Statutory Intervention / Child Protection	Where needs are complex or significant, or there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, advice or support is sought from Children's Services in accordance with Derbyshire's threshold and referral arrangements. Where there is concern that a child is suffering, or is at risk of significant harm, safeguarding procedures are followed immediately and a referral is made to Children's Social Care.
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Where there is concern that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, safeguarding procedures are followed immediately. Early Help processes do not delay or replace appropriate safeguarding action.

3.3 Early Help Assessment and Planning

Where Early Help is identified as appropriate, the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) approved Early Help Assessment tool is used.

The assessment considers the needs and strengths of the child and family and supports the development of a coordinated plan. Children and parents/carers are involved in the assessment and planning process wherever appropriate, and their views help to inform the outcomes and actions agreed.

The Early Help Plan identifies the support required, agreed actions, responsible professionals and arrangements for review. Where more than one service is involved, professionals work collaboratively to provide coordinated support and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Progress is reviewed regularly with reference to the Derbyshire “Safe and Wellbeing” framework. Reviews are held on a half-termly basis. These meetings are attended by the pastoral team, including Miss Jill Simpson and Mrs Ali Blake (Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders), Miss Heather Davis (Headteacher/Pupil Premium Leader), Mrs Vicky Howell (Co/Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs Beth Akhurst (SENDCO). During these meetings, referrals are discussed, resources allocated and signposting to internal or external services agreed.

4. Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

4.1 Recording Concerns

Ashbourne Primary School uses MyConcern as its primary system for recording and monitoring safeguarding, welfare and wellbeing concerns. All staff are responsible for recording concerns promptly, accurately and objectively in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Concerns recorded on MyConcern are reviewed by the appropriate safeguarding or pastoral lead. Actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions and outcomes are recorded to provide a clear chronology of the support provided. Early Help assessments, plans, actions and reviews are recorded appropriately to ensure that there is a clear and up-to-date record of the child's and family's needs, strengths, agreed outcomes and support.

4.2 Monitoring and Reviewing Early Help

Early Help support is regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it is having a positive impact on the child and family.

Reviews consider:

- progress towards agreed outcomes;
- the impact of interventions and support;
- the voice of the child and parent/carer;
- any changes in circumstances, needs or risk;
- information from professionals involved with the family; and
- whether support should continue, be adapted, stepped down or escalated.

Where more than one agency is involved, a Team Around the Family (TAF) approach may be used to coordinate support and review progress.

The school's half-termly Vulnerable Children's Meetings provide an additional opportunity to monitor vulnerable pupils, review the effectiveness of support and identify where further action may be required.

4.3 Escalation and Referral

Where a child's needs increase, agreed interventions are not achieving the intended outcomes, or additional support is required, the case is reviewed and consideration is given to increasing or escalating support in line with Derbyshire's levels of need and referral arrangements.

Where appropriate, a request for additional support may be made to Derbyshire Children's Services through Starting Point (advice line - 01629 535353). Relevant Early Help assessment and planning information is used to evidence the child's and family's needs, the support already provided and the reasons additional support is required.

Where there is concern that a child is suffering, or is at risk of significant harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care through Call Derbyshire (01629 533190). Early Help intervention will never delay necessary safeguarding action.

4.4 Transfer of Records

When a child transfers to another school or education setting, relevant safeguarding and Early Help information is transferred securely and promptly in accordance with the school's safeguarding and information-sharing procedures.

Where compatible electronic systems are available, records may be transferred securely through MyConcern. Where this is not possible, information is shared securely with the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to support continuity of safeguarding and Early Help provision.

The school maintains an appropriate record of the transfer.

4.5 Information Sharing

Ashbourne Primary School recognises that effective information sharing is essential to safeguarding children and providing timely and appropriate support.

Information will be shared appropriately, proportionately and securely with relevant professionals and agencies where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child. Data protection legislation does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Where appropriate, children and parents/carers will be informed about how and why information is being shared. However, consent is not required where seeking consent would place a child at risk, cause an unnecessary delay in protecting a child, or where there is another lawful basis for sharing information.

Staff must record relevant information-sharing decisions, including what information has been shared, with whom, the reason for sharing and any decisions not to share where appropriate.

Staff should seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead where they are uncertain about information sharing, but concerns about information sharing must not prevent necessary action being taken to safeguard a child.

5. Early Help Interventions

5.1 School-Based Early Help Support

Ashbourne Primary School provides a range of Early Help interventions designed to respond to the individual needs of children and families. Support is coordinated by the Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders in partnership with the Designated Safeguarding Leads, SENDCo, Attendance Lead and other relevant members of staff.

Support is tailored to identified need and may include:

- individual or small-group pastoral support;
- emotional wellbeing and regulation support;
- support with friendships, relationships and social skills;
- bereavement, loss and family-change support;
- lunchtime drop-in sessions;
- structured clubs and activities providing informal opportunities for children to access support;
- attendance and punctuality support;
- transition support;
- support for children experiencing difficulties at home;
- parent/carer meetings and advice;
- signposting to appropriate community, voluntary or specialist services; and
- coordinated support with external professionals where appropriate.

The support provided will depend upon the individual circumstances of the child and family and will be regularly reviewed to consider its impact.

5.2 Support for Parents and Families

We recognise that effective Early Help involves working in partnership with the whole family. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss concerns with school at the earliest opportunity.

The Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders provide flexible opportunities for families to access support. This may include early morning appointments, home visits (by prior arrangement) and telephone or email contact.

Support may include practical advice, identifying sources of additional support, signposting or referral to relevant services, support with accessing services and coordinating Early Help where several needs or professionals are involved.

This support is available during term time and extends into some school holiday periods, including half-term breaks.

5.3 Multi-Agency Working

Where a child or family would benefit from support beyond that available within school, Ashbourne Primary School works collaboratively with relevant external services and partner agencies. This may include health services, Children's Services, mental health and wellbeing services, SEND services, housing services, police, voluntary and community organisations and other appropriate professionals.

The Child and Family Wellbeing Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads contribute to multi-agency planning and meetings as appropriate and provide relevant information and written reports to support effective decision-making.

Where a child is receiving statutory support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 or is subject to child protection processes, appropriate school representatives attend relevant multi-agency meetings, including Child in Need meetings, Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and reviews, and contribute to assessment, planning and review as required.

Regular communication with partner agencies is maintained, where appropriate, through meetings, secure information sharing, telephone and email contact.

Additionally, termly cluster meetings with pastoral representatives from neighbouring schools provide an opportunity to share good practice and discuss community-wide issues.