



ACS
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



OUR
EARLY HELP
OFFER

ACS understands every family is unique, having its combination of strengths and areas to work on. We recognise that any family can get overwhelmed by what seems like an endless challenge when juggling all aspects of day-to-day life, school and each other's needs. Changes in circumstances, such as, a mental or physical illness or a job loss, understandably disrupt families. Even "joyful" events such as a new job or a move to a new school or country can bring unexpected challenges.

1. WHAT IS EARLY HELP?

Early Help is intervention and support given when an issue first emerges. Early Help effectively supports concerns and issues before they escalate, enhancing a family's resilience and overall outcomes while decreasing the likelihood of problems worsening. When children and families need extra support, they often need it quickly. Early Help support can be provided at all stages of a child's life, from early childhood to adolescence.

Early Help is always voluntary and designed to deliver short term intervention to enable families to be supported with the strategies and strengths to move forward again independently.



2. WHAT CAN EARLY HELP INCLUDE?

Support for students can include:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Promoting self-esteem and confidence towards resilience
- Promoting positive behaviour and positive attitudes to learning
- Providing individualised support for specific areas of concern such as Learning Support Needs/SEN
- Providing support and guidance for emerging emotional welfare concerns or mental health needs
- Providing guidance on career and personal development

Support for families can include:

- Providing information and signposting to non-school-based services in the local area
- Liaising with a range of external services such as Family Support Workers, Health Care Professionals or support finding the right professional
- Advice and support in promoting positive behaviour at home



3. WHO PROVIDES EARLY HELP SUPPORT IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

Any member of staff can initiate Early Help. Usually, the starting point is having a conversation with your child's teacher or pastoral lead, as they have the most contact with your child and often know your child best in school. All our staff receive guidance from our safeguarding team to ensure advice is tailored to support our students to achieve their best outcomes at the earliest opportunity.

The principles of Early Help are underpinned by our PSHE programme as a framework. The programme ensures students have a level of understanding of how to maintain their wellbeing in accordance with their level of development. Students develop knowledge, skills and attributes to keep themselves healthy and safe, prepare for life and work in the modern world. It aims to develop skills and attributes such as resilience, self-esteem, risk-management, teamwork and critical thinking in the context of learning grouped into three core themes: health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world.

ACS supports parents to exercise their parental responsibilities to help keep students safe in the digital world with a 'whole school approach' towards online safety. We provide all parents access to the National College and National Online Safety, an award winning provider of accredited courses and educational resources that support online safety conversations and learning.

Working with families is key to the Early Help approach. Parents are supported with access to quality resources and learning opportunities delivered by specialist teams such as Counsellors, Online Safety Lead and external speakers. These events run throughout the year. Topics are bespoke to parent feedback and analysis of trends.



Our staff will liaise with our specialist teams within ACS, such as:

Our Nursing Teams – support registering with the NHS, accessing medical and health advice, referral to appropriate supports and a vaccination program.

Our Divisional Counselling Support Teams – collaborate with teachers and parents. The school counsellors offer all students social/emotional, academic, and career support. The support can be provided through individual conversations, small group activities, or classroom instruction. Each school counsellor works with a specific caseload of students within a flexible and collaborative framework. While concerns are often developmental, common themes are anxiety, stress, friendship challenges, transition concerns, self-image, bullying, etc. School counsellors also respond to crises within the family or school community.

Our Independent Therapeutic Counsellors – offer Level 3 therapeutic counselling service to support students who would benefit from 10 sessions of solution-focused interventions. This service allows the young person and family to identify the next appropriate intervention to support the child when issues arise that may indicate emerging mental health concerns or patterns of behaviour negatively disrupting day to day life. Parents can access this service at a subsidised cost through ACS International Schools.

Our University/College Counsellors – provide optional workshops in Grade 9 - 10, individualised course selection conversations in Grade 10, and bespoke future pathway planning in Grade 11. University/College Counsellors work directly with universities on support packages for students who are eligible for additional support in specific circumstances such as wellbeing and diagnosed mental health challenges, students who are young carers or leaving care, and students with additional learning needs.

Our Student Support Services/Learning Support Teams – provide early assessment and identification of a student's potential learning needs and often assist with Social and Emotional Mental Health concerns alongside learning needs. They support with signposting parents to Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Education Psychologists and Clinical Psychiatrists when required and liaise on submission of EHCP Requests for Assessments with the local authority.

Our Safeguarding Teams – work with families when there are concerns about a student's welfare or outside the school context often overseeing the Team Around the Family process and coordinating the most appropriate Team to support a student and their family.



To best support you and your child sometimes we need to locate services in our local community. We always do this in partnership with you. We have established relationships with:

- Education Welfare and Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice
- Family and Young People Support Agencies
- National Advice and Welfare Organisations
- Health Professionals

What could Early Help look like?

Early Help uses a graduated approach to support families. This approach provides a continuous cycle of assessment and review as the child's strengths and needs develop and change.

Often families seek advice and signposting to children's support services in the locality or may request direction to a school-based service such as our Level 3 Therapeutic Counselling Service or Nursing Teams. Another approach is a Team Around the Family, which brings together professionals who work with a family. The focus is always on holistically working with the family using a whole-family approach. All members of the Team Around the Family will respect each other's roles and responsibilities. The lead professional will ensure the right professionals are included. A Team around the Family meeting is an opportunity for families to be heard and non-judgementally, acknowledging strengths, needs and concerns, to provide help and support. It is essential to keep the voice of the child and family at the centre of this process.

A Team Around the Family consists of main members of the family as appropriate and key professionals from relevant support agencies. Every family involved in A Team Around the Family process will have an appointed lead professional from either school or the most appropriate professional. The lead professional may be from the school or a member from the multi-disciplinary team working with the child and family. The lead professional will know the family well and work closely with them. They will be the central point of contact for the family.



What happens at a Team Around the Family meeting?

- Information is shared by family members and practitioners involved with the child
- Actions are identified to address the needs and build on strengths and recorded in the Family Action Plan
- If appropriate, other services should be consulted and invited to the next Team Around the Family meeting
- Members of the Team Around the Family are jointly responsible for developing and delivering the support package
- Each member is responsible for completing their assigned responsibilities
- Each member should support the lead professional by keeping them informed, providing information and attending meetings
- Progress is regularly reviewed as part of the graduated approach to re-assess and plan continually to achieve desired outcomes for the child as the child develops

What are the benefits of a Team Around the Family approach?

- Families feel listened to and contribute to a plan which includes the changes they want to make on behalf of the child
- A plan is created which considers the needs of the child, the parents and the family as a whole
- Families access resources and services easily
- Families provide consent for their information to be shared with the different agencies working with and supporting the child
- Communication between professionals is improved to reduce duplication of work
- Outcomes for families are more likely to be met
- Change is sustained within the family

We recognise outcomes for children are more likely to succeed in collaboration with families. Early Help works well in partnership with our families. Our aim is always to place the child at the centre of all we do, provide the right support for the child at the earliest opportunity to improve outcomes and help prevent any situation from escalating or further problems arising.

If you would like to discuss a concern relating to your child, please approach your child's teacher, counsellor, or pastoral lead to talk about how you can engage in Early Help.



4. WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE TO MY FAMILY?

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Groups

[Kooth](#)

[The Wellbeing Hub](#)

[Young Minds](#)

Online Safety Support Groups

[National College](#)

[Safer Internet](#)

[Child Exploitation and Online Protection](#)

National Children's Support Groups

[Child Line](#)

[The Mix](#)

[NSPCC](#)

Parenting Support Groups

[Ginger Bread](#)

[Home Start](#)

[Family Lives](#)

Domestic Abuse Support Groups

[Refuge](#)

[Women's Aid](#)

[Mens Advice Line](#)

LGBT+ Community Support Groups

[Gender Trust](#)

[All Sorts Youth](#)

[Proud Trust](#)

Bereavement Support Groups

[Winston's Wish](#)

[Child Bereavement UK](#)

[Cruse](#)

