



Ribston Hall High School

Offer of Early Help

Rationale

"Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later."
Working together to safeguard children 2015 DfE

The term Early Help is used to describe universal help that is offered to the entire student body to prevent problems developing and targeted help that is offered to particular children, young people and families with existing risk factors, vulnerabilities or acknowledged additional needs in order to protect them from developing problems or to reduce the severity of problems that have started to emerge.

Many children at Ribston Hall need additional help and support. We are committed to supporting our students as early as possible and recognise the crucial role that school has to play in improving the life chances of our students. Emphasis is placed on the importance of offering early help to promote the welfare of children. Early help means providing support as soon as the problem emerges, at any point in a child's life and we know that this is more effective in promoting the welfare of children.

Levels of intervention

When a concern is raised in school, where a member of staff believes that early help will be needed, the school will use an approach similar to the well-defined graduated pathway used to safeguard children in Gloucestershire, highlighted below. The DSL, DDSL or the SENCO will assess the need, and the appropriate level of intervention necessary. This decision will be made in conjunction with pastoral leads and staff that raise the concern as appropriate.

The GSCE Levels of Intervention guidance provides practitioners with guidance and indicators to help make decisions according to the level of need. The guidance is to be used in conjunction with the Graduated Pathway to ensure support is proportionate and at the lowest level of intervention. The Levels of Intervention Guidance can be found online by clicking [HERE](#).

Level 1 - Universal: Children or young person (CYP) with no identified additional needs or needs that can be met by universal services; a child with no additional plan in place.

Level 2 - Additional: The child's needs can be met through the school working jointly either with key supporting in school (SENCO, school counsellor) or another agency. The school will gain consent of the family to hold a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting and formulate a My Plan for delivery and review. The Lead Practitioner will coordinate the support.

Level 3 - Intensive: The child's needs are more complex and may require an assessment to understand the range, depth or significance of the needs which may require a more intensive response; this response can be provided through a My Assessment and subsequent My Plan +.

Level 4 - Specialist: The child's needs are complex and enduring and a statutory response is required.

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Universal Early help- Services Offered in School



Culture of vigilance

All staff adopt the approach of “It could happen here” and know the signs of abuse and what to look for. They can identify children in need of extra help or at risk of significant harm. All staff know how to make a referral to Children’s Social Care. All staff understand their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding and know to challenge the DSL if necessary.

School Counselling Service

We employ a full time, fully qualified school counsellor (MBACP Accredited). Referrals to the counsellor can be made via the appropriate head of year, on request from parents or through self-referral. The referral process is detailed in the mental health section below

Pastoral Lead

The role of the Pastoral Lead in school is to work with those students in need of tailored help. They work closely with Heads of Year and other staff to identify students who need support, this closely links (but not exclusively) with those students identified as SEND. They will ensure that all students on the inclusion list are known to staff and that their specific needs are met, and that their voice is heard in any meetings.

Wellbeing team

Each key stage has a dedicated pastoral support worker who will work to support individual students with their needs. This team will work closely with students to offer one to one support on a range of issues. These staff members will triage issues and where appropriate refer needs onto appropriate members of staff.

Pastoral support

Heads of year and their respective tutor teams meet regularly to discuss ways to support specific students, or groups of students regarding any issues that may arise. These will include behaviour support and monitoring of academic progress. In line with the behaviour policy and procedures, students may also receive support with a curriculum area report, a head of year report, in order to help students to focus on targets, remove barriers to learning and reduce exclusions.

Attendance

The attendance officer is responsible for monitoring attendance and working to support students and their families who may be experiencing difficulties, resulting in poor attendance. They liaise with the heads of year and pastoral lead to remove barriers to coming to school, including amended curriculum, part time timetables, referrals to outside agencies and referrals to school counsellor. They liaise with the Local Authority for attendance concerns where appropriate. This includes regular meetings with the Inclusion Officer at the LA. Home visits are arranged to provide support and a direct link to school. The Pastoral Lead will link directly with the hospital education service to provide a co-ordinated approach to re-integration following illness and also for students who may be experiencing emotional difficulties, resulting in poor engagement with education. The school will report any unauthorised absences of 10 days or over to the Local Authority (Children Missing Education – CME). If a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the pastoral lead will monitor attendance and report any absences to the social worker responsible as a matter of urgency. Students on a Child In Need Plan will also be closely monitored and absences reported to the social worker responsible.

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Amended Curriculum

Occasionally students will not be able to study for all of the GCSE option subjects due to illness, emotional difficulties or a long absence from school for a variety of reasons. In these circumstances, and with the permission of the relevant senior staff, students may drop an option block in order to concentrate on fewer subjects, and will work in the work zone in this additional time. This will be overseen by the Inclusion Coordinator.

Safeguarding & Welfare Concerns

Through regular training, staff are aware of the process for referring any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a student. Staff are aware of the referral process to children's services and how to make an advice call. Where necessary, referrals are made to children's services and appropriate staff are identified to attend strategy meetings, child protection conferences and to attend core groups for a student on a child protection plan.

Voice of The Child

Through PHSE, Tutor time and through the On-line Pupil Survey (OPS), students are encouraged to talk about feelings and pressures. Through year group assemblies and through tutor time, the students are regularly reminded about the services available in wellbeing and where they can go for help, support & guidance. Individual tutorials are also held during mentoring weeks allocated to each year group. An identified member of staff has attended training on the school data results from the On-Line Pupil Survey (OPS) and informs relevant staff of any areas of concern or areas of strength, in order to direct resources to the appropriate areas, such as assemblies and PHSE programmes.

Parents in Prison

Where we are aware of a student with a parent in prison, support is offered through Wellbeing or through referrals to outside agencies for targeted family support.

Parents in the Military

Staff are aware of students with a parent in the military. The relevant Head of Year is responsible for meeting the students regularly and is a point of contact for any issues and concerns.

Staff Supervision

There is regular supervision for pastoral staff who work regularly with students who are experiencing mental health difficulties and for staff working in a Safeguarding role. There is also an offer to all staff who have identified a need for specific support. These referrals will be made by the Headteacher. External supervision is also sourced for identified staff when appropriate through the LA's Occupational Health team.

Mental Health Offer in School

We have a system of early identification and support, such as looking at attendance & absence, monitoring changes in behaviour and disengagement with learning. School-based early interventions have evidence of improving not only pupils' wellbeing but also their mental health and behaviour. Interventions have been shown to **improve outcomes including resilience and self-esteem, reduce anxiety or depressive symptoms, and prevent violent and aggressive behaviour**. In order to achieve a robust early intervention school staff should focus on building rapport with their students and strengthening their listening and empathy skills to help children regulate their emotions and reduce their levels of emotional stress.



When presented with a distressed student we must consider what are the needs that require support, for example, is it an emotional response as a normal reaction to a stressful situation or is it due to an unmet need (individual, family or environmental)? Also, we can remember to ask what intervention has already been tried already if anything?

Level of need 1 & 2: Getting advice – targeted support

Some students show signs of emerging mental health needs and are struggling with their emotional wellbeing and may be having trouble regulating their emotional response. Problems may be outside the normal range for their age or gender and of a mild to moderate nature. These will be starting to cause difficulties with their schoolwork, friendships or family relationships. This student may need some reassurance that what they are feeling is perfectly normal and will pass. Although in general they may feel robust they may start to demonstrate some of the following: Irritable/Impatient, nervousness, sadness, increased worrying, procrastination, have trouble sleeping, lowered energy, have difficulty in relaxing, have intrusive thoughts or decreased social activity.

What can we do at school?

Mood Juice Guided self help booklets would enable a student to think about the level of self care they practise and whether this can be improved. Often a one-off chat with a trusted adult will enable a student to put something into perspective or a regular meeting to help embed self care principals might give focus to new concepts. Younger students may also find talking to a Peer Mentor useful to reframe a thought or worry. If symptoms don't ease and the dysregulation continues then a referral for Counselling support would be appropriate.

Mood Juice Resources: <S:\Heads of Year\Wellbeing work & information sheets for students\Mood Juice Self Help Guides.zip>

Link to Apps & downloads: [Ribston Hall High School - Apps & Links](#)

Level of need 3: Getting help – specialist support

A few students will show signs of significant mental health problems that impact on daily activities and prevent them from functioning within the norms for their age. These may be persistent and moderate to severe in nature, causing significant difficulties with their achievement and relationships. They may find their ability to cope decreasing with some or all the following symptoms: Lingering sadness, hopelessness, preoccupation with things, decreased performance, significantly disturbed sleep, avoidance of social situations or withdrawal, school absence, self-harm or suicidal ideation.

What can we do at school?

Continue to use school-based interventions to support the student. Contact CAMHS pre-referral professional's helpline for consultation 01452 894272 and follow the advice given. This may be to refer in for CAMHS or professional specialist clinical support.

Level of need 4: Urgent mental health support

A minority of students will present with a serious mental health crisis, for example, psychosis, suicidal intent, serious weight loss or signs of an eating disorder. Students with complex and significant needs will need a multi-disciplinary approach for their care and symptoms could include: Constant high anxiety, depressed mood, constant fatigue, disturbed contact with reality, dissociative episodes, significant difficulty with academic functioning, significant disturbance in thinking, Suicidal thoughts, intent or behaviour. We must be vigilant and follow safeguarding procedures.



Universal Early help- Services offered in School in conjunction with external agencies

Referral Process: The referral process into early help will follow the same graduated path procedures used for any safeguarding concern. These will be managed by the DSL, DDSL or the SENCO. For more information on Early Help, staff may refer to Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive (www.gscb.org.uk)'s guidance on the Graduated Pathway of Early Help and Support including allocations meetings.

Graduated Pathway

The Graduated Pathway is Gloucestershire's response to Early Help, ensuring support is available to all children, young people and their families with additional needs. The Graduated Pathway is based on a simple assess, plan, do, review cycle. Responses include, My Profile, My Plan, My Assessment and My Plan+. A trained member of staff will work with the family to produce the assessment and an action plan to meet the identified needs.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) have a direct contact within the school who will provide any information requested as a result of a referral to social care. The information provided by the school will form part of the decision making process to support initial assessments/core assessments and the allocation of a Social Worker to enhance the life chances of a student and their family.

Early Help Coordinator

The school meets regularly with the Early Help Coordinator, assigned by the Local Authority. The coordinator will work with young people and their families as part of a multi-disciplinary approach. The coordinator will be able to decide on any specific help that is needed and offer advice, guidance and support to Practitioners. The Coordinator works with the Families First Plus team.

Team Around the Child Meetings (TAC)/ Multi-Agency Meetings

Team around the child meetings are called to support the graduated pathway process and where a multi-agency approach is necessary. T.A.C meetings can also be called without this process taking place, and where it is felt necessary to promote the welfare of the student.

CAMHS

The school work directly with a member of the CAMHS team, who has monthly meetings with pastoral staff to discuss strategies to support students and to meet their needs. CYPS also work in school with targeted groups to support various needs at key times during their time in school. Sessions this year have included dealing with emotional health at times of stress and body image.

Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool

The CSE Toolkit is used to assess and identify the risks around a young person's risk of sexual exploitation. Where there is concern and a level of risk is identified, the referrals are sent through to the police central referral unit and the Children & Young People's directorate for assessment and support where necessary. Chelsea's Choice is an applied theatre production (based on real-life stories) that has proven highly effective in raising awareness around child sexual exploitation, trafficking, the grooming process, healthy relationships and safe internet use.

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This production is shown to each year 8 group annually. CSE awareness is delivered to students through the PHSE curriculum.

Other external agencies

The school works closely with a range of external agencies, and can facilitate sessions in school. These include CYPS, TIC+, GRASSAC, SARK, GDAS amongst others. Young carers are supported through the Inclusion Coordinator. Referrals are also made to young carers who liaise with student support and the family concerned. We have established strong links with young carers and have a nominated member of staff responsible for the welfare of young carers in school.

School Nurse Service

The school nurse service provide a weekly drop-in service in the School Counsellor's office. Students are aware of this service and are reminded on the day of the drop-in through posters. The school nurse service also present an assembly annually. The school nurse liaises directly with the pastoral teams and will be part of multi-agency meetings when necessary.

Keeping Children Safe in Education Safeguarding Assurance Declaration.

The annual declaration provides the school governors with information about the school provision for safeguarding and provides the GSCP (Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership) with the statutory information it requires from the school. The declaration also identifies any gaps in provision and ensures that plans are put in place in order to better safeguard the students.

Targeted Areas of Concern in School

Body Image

The OPS highlights this is an area of concern for young people at Ribston. Targeted groups in year 10 will work with mental health nurses with a specific specialism in body image to complete a programme called the "Body Project".

Use of social media and internet safety, Sexting and Sextortion

Specific PSHE sessions will focus on this issue in KS3. The use of the PINK curriculum resources aid this delivery. Acceptable use policy and internet search filters can identify students with a cause for concern. Bi-annual parent meetings run by CEOPs trained professionals. A member of SLT is CEOPs trained and will deliver assemblies to all year groups regarding risks online and social presence. Chelsea's Choice play, delivered to year 8 also highlights the risks and dangers.

Healthy Relationships

Through assemblies and the PHSE curriculum, students are taught about healthy relationships, how to recognise signs of an unhealthy relationship and where to go for help and support. Where we are concerned about unhealthy relationships/domestic abuse at home, contact is made with parents (where appropriate) and support offered through social care and GDASS.

Forced Marriage

Safeguarding staff are aware of the signs and implications of forced marriage and are aware of the process to refer any concerns on to the relevant agencies. All staff are aware of whom to refer any concerns to.



Female Genital Mutilation

Through GSCB (Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board) whole staff training, and through regular refresher training, school staff are aware of the signs to look out for and the language that may be used by the student where FGM may be being planned, or where it has taken place. Staff are aware that FGM is a crime and who they speak to if they have any concerns. All staff have completed the Home Office training to enhance their understanding in this area. Key staff have delivered assemblies to students in year 9 about forced marriage, FGM & healthy relationships.

Radicalisation

All maintained schools must meet the requirements set out in section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students, actively promoting fundamental British values. Students are encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance. Through collective worship, establishing a strong school ethos supported by effective relationships throughout the school, through a broad and balanced curriculum through the PHSE curriculum, students are taught that different people may hold different views about what is right and wrong, but all people living in England are subject to its law.

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