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.



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, Youth 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 with access and signposting to 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 ECHP Requests for Assessments with the local authority.

Our Safeguarding Teams – work with families when there are concerns about a student's welfare, both inside and outside the school context. They often oversee the Team Around the Family process and coordinate the most appropriate team to support a student and their family.

Our Council for Belonging – At ACS, we want every child to feel safe, seen, and a sense of belonging. Guided by our Human Flourishing Charter, our Council for Belonging works closely with families and staff to support children who may experience discrimination or feel left out. We provide guidance, resources, and a listening ear, helping to create a school environment where every child belongs and can flourish.



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 guidance on accessing support services for children in their locality. They may also request direction to school-based services such as our Level 3 Therapeutic Counselling Service or Nursing Teams. Alternatively, a Team Around the Family can be convened. This approach brings together professionals who work collaboratively with the family, focusing on a holistic, whole-family approach.

All members of the Team Around the Family respect each other's roles and responsibilities, ensuring the right professionals are involved. These meetings provide an opportunity for families to be heard in a non-judgemental environment, acknowledging their strengths, needs, and concerns. It is crucial to keep the voices of the child and the family at the centre of this process, providing the necessary help and support.

A Team Around the Family consists of family members, as appropriate, and key professionals from the school or relevant support agencies. Every family involved in the 'Team Around the Family' process will have an appointed lead professional. This lead professional may be from the school or part of the multi-disciplinary team working with the child and family. The lead professional will know the family well, work closely with them, and serve as 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 worry 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

Internet Matters
UK Safer Internet Centre
Common Sense Media

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

