

Appendix 2: Early Help Pathways (Early Support in Warwickshire)

1. Introduction

Early Help is a central component of safeguarding practice at **Watling Meadows Primary School (WMPS)**.

In Warwickshire, this work is known as **Early Support**. It involves offering timely, proportionate support to children and families **as soon as needs emerge**, helping to prevent escalation to statutory intervention.

This appendix outlines:

- How WMPS identifies children who may benefit from Early Help
- How staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) initiate Early Support pathways
- How Early Help links to **Section 17 of the Children Act 1989** (Children in Need)
- How our approach aligns with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)**
- How we work with **Warwickshire County Council (WCC)** and local safeguarding partners

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, KCSIE 2025, and Warwickshire Safeguarding guidance.

2. Legislative and Statutory Framework

2.1 Section 17 – Children Act 1989

Under Section 17, local authorities must safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are assessed as **“in need”**.

A child may be “in need” if:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without services
- Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without services
- They are disabled

Early Help/Early Support pathways are frequently used **before** statutory thresholds are met, helping to reduce risk early. Where Early Help is insufficient and Section 17 thresholds are met, WMPS will support referral to **Children’s Social Care** through **Family Connect**.

2.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)

KCSIE states that:

- *“All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help.”*
- Early Help responses should be **timely, coordinated, and monitored**, ensuring the right support at the right time.

This appendix supports those statutory duties.

3. What is Early Help (Early Support in Warwickshire)?

Early Support is a **graduated, needs-led approach** that provides assistance to children and families at the earliest stage. It includes:

- School-based pastoral support
- Targeted interventions within school
- Coordinated multi-agency support through WCC services

The goal is to **strengthen family resilience**, improve outcomes, and prevent difficulties escalating to crisis.

3.1 Warwickshire Early Support Pathway

Warwickshire operates a structured approach which includes:

1. **Identifying emerging needs**
2. **Holding an Early Support meeting** if appropriate
3. **Completing an Early Help Pathway Assessment (EHPA)**
4. **Coordinating a multi-agency plan**
5. **Reviewing progress regularly**

Further details are available from WCC Early Help services:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families/early-help-warwickshire/1

4. Identifying Children Who May Benefit from Early Help

All WMPS staff share the responsibility for spotting early signs that a child may need support. As outlined in KCSIE and our policy (Section 5.10), indicators may include:

- Concerns around emotional well-being or mental health
- Emerging concerns around attendance, punctuality or engagement
- Behaviour changes or increased distress
- Family circumstances presenting challenges (e.g., parental mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse)
- SEND or medical needs requiring additional support
- Risks linked to exploitation, peer relationships, online safety, or contextual safeguarding
- Concerns about neglect or inconsistent care

Any concern—no matter how small—should be recorded on **CPOMS** and shared with the **DSL** or **DDSL** immediately.

5. The WMPS Early Help Pathway

5.1 Step 1: Identification and Recording

Staff record concerns using **CPOMS**, enabling the DSL to build a clear picture of need over time.

5.2 Step 2: DSL Review and Early Help Planning

WMPS Safeguarding Policy Appendices.

The DSL will consider:

- The child's emerging needs
- Existing internal support already in place
- Whether structured Early Support may benefit the family
- Whether a referral to Family Connect is required

5.3 Step 3: Internal Support Options

Where appropriate, support may begin within school through:

- Pastoral interventions
- ELSA or emotional well-being support
- Attendance monitoring
- Behaviour support plans
- Enhanced communication with parents/carers
- Tailored SEND support

5.4 Step 4: Early Help Pathway Assessment (EHPA)

Where multi-agency involvement is required, the DSL may initiate an **Early Help Pathway Assessment**.

This is carried out **with parental consent**, unless doing so would increase risk.

5.5 Step 5: Multi-Agency Early Support Meeting

A Lead Practitioner (often the DSL or an external professional) coordinates:

- A meeting with the family
- Partner agencies such as health visitors, family support workers, mental health practitioners
- A clear, achievable action plan with shared responsibility

5.6 Step 6: Review and Monitoring

Plans are reviewed regularly and recorded on CPOMS.

If concerns escalate or the plan is not improving outcomes, the DSL will consider:

- Referral to **WCC Family Connect**
- Escalation to **Section 17 (Child in Need)** or **Section 47 (Child Protection)** assessments

6. Warwickshire County Council Referral Routes

6.1 Family Connect

For all new referrals (from 3 March 2025):

01926 414144

Out of Hours

Emergency Duty Team: **01926 886922**

Immediate Risk

Dial 999

WMPS will always follow WCC's **Spectrum of Support Guidance** when determining the correct threshold for support:

<https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk>

7. Working in Partnership with Families

WMPS believes Early Help is most effective when:

- Families are engaged as equal partners
- Support is transparent, respectful, and strengths-based
- The voice of the child is central to planning
- Agencies communicate openly and appropriately

We work with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times, in line with statutory information-sharing guidance.

8. Consent and Information Sharing

Early Help typically requires **parental consent**, but safeguarding concerns may justify sharing information without consent if:

- Seeking consent places a child at greater risk
- It is not possible to gain consent in time to protect the child

WMPS follows **Information Sharing (DfE 2024)** and the Data Protection Act 2018, as outlined in Section 14 of the main policy.

9. Reviewing the Impact of Early Help

The DSL monitors:

- The number of children accessing Early Support
- Timeliness and effectiveness of interventions
- Emerging trends across the school community
- Multi-agency engagement and outcomes

Learning from cases informs whole-school safeguarding practice and curriculum development.

10. Voice of the Child

Children are encouraged to express:

- Their worries
- What is working well
- What support they feel they need

The child's views will be recorded and addressed at each Early Support review.

11. Conclusion

Early Help/Early Support is a vital part of safeguarding at WMPS, ensuring children and families receive the right help at the right time. Working collaboratively with Warwickshire County Council and following statutory guidance from KCSIE and the Children Act ensures a strong, preventative safeguarding culture across the school community.

Appendix 3: Managing Low-Level Concerns About Staff

1. Purpose of this Appendix

This appendix outlines how **Watling Meadows Primary School (WMPS)** manages **low-level concerns** about staff conduct.

It complements the procedures in the main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and supports the expectations set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)** regarding creating a culture of transparency, openness, and accountability.

Low-level concerns do **not** meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), but may still indicate behaviour that requires attention, learning, or support.

2. What is a Low-Level Concern?

A *low-level concern* is any concern—no matter how small—that an adult working in or on behalf of the school **may have acted in a way that:**

- is **inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct**
- appears **inappropriate**, unprofessional, or questionable
- **does not meet the LADO threshold** (harm, possible harm, or potential risk of harm)
- causes a sense of unease or “nagging doubt”
- may indicate patterns that could escalate if left unaddressed

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Overly familiar behaviour or unprofessional boundaries
- Comments made to a pupil that could be misinterpreted
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures
- Inappropriate use of communication methods
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct relating to social media, physical contact, or confidentiality

A low-level concern **is not insignificant**—addressing concerns early protects pupils, maintains professional standards, and supports staff wellbeing.

3. Our Principles for Managing Low-Level Concerns

WMPS is committed to:

- **Early identification** of emerging issues before they escalate
- **Transparency and openness**, where staff feel empowered and safe to speak up
- **Fair, proportionate responses** that support staff in meeting expected standards
- **Recording and reviewing patterns** to safeguard children and uphold a safe culture
- Ensuring all actions reflect the principles of **natural justice**, dignity, and professionalism

Staff must never feel that raising a low-level concern will be viewed negatively—**the welfare of the child is always paramount.**

4. How to Report a Low-Level Concern

All low-level concerns should be reported **as soon as possible** to the **Headteacher**, who is the school's point of contact for such matters.

Staff may report concerns by:

- Speaking directly to the **Headteacher**
- Speaking to the **DSL** (who will inform the Headteacher)
- Using the school's established reporting mechanisms
- Using the **Whistleblowing Procedure** if needed
- Reporting anonymously where the staff member prefers (this will be respected where reasonably possible)

If the concern is **about the Headteacher**, staff must report directly to the **Chair of Governors**.

5. How Low-Level Concerns Are Responded To

After receiving a concern, the Headteacher will:

5.1 Clarify and Gather Context

This may include:

- Speaking to the person who raised the concern
- Speaking with the staff member involved
- Checking existing CPOMS records or training logs
- Establishing whether the concern is **low-level, does not require LADO involvement**, or meets the threshold for **harm**

5.2 Categorise the Concern

The Headteacher will determine whether the behaviour:

1. **Requires guidance or reflection**
2. **Indicates training or support needs**
3. **Is a pattern that requires additional oversight**
4. **Moves into LADO threshold territory** (in which case Part 4 of KCSIE procedures are followed)

5.3 Take Proportionate Action

Actions may include:

- A reflective conversation
- Re-visiting the Staff Code of Conduct
- Additional supervision
- Targeted training or coaching
- Action under performance management processes

WMPS Safeguarding Policy Appendices.

- Increased monitoring
- No further action, if appropriate

The intention is **supportive**, not punitive.

6. Recording Low-Level Concerns

WMPS will maintain clear written records of:

- The concern raised
- Context in which it occurred
- The staff involved
- Actions taken and rationale
- Any learning or adjustments put in place

These records are:

- Held securely and confidentially by the **Headteacher**
- Used to **monitor patterns** or repeated behaviours
- Retained until the staff member **leaves the school**, in line with KCSIE expectations

Patterns of behaviour that emerge across time may result in further action.

7. When Patterns or Escalations Are Identified

If records show recurring low-level concerns or behaviours that begin to escalate, the Headteacher will:

- Meet with the staff member
- Review relevant records
- Identify further training, support, or management actions
- Refer to the LADO if the threshold is subsequently met
- Consider whether the concerns indicate cultural issues within the school
- Implement measures to strengthen safeguarding practice as needed

8. Relationship to the Staff Code of Conduct

All staff are expected to understand and meet the standards set out in the **WMPS Staff Code of Conduct**.

The Code sets clear expectations on:

- Professional boundaries
- Behaviour inside and outside school
- Use of technology and social media
- Communication with pupils
- Appearance, language, and confidentiality

- Avoiding behaviour that could be misinterpreted

Low-level concerns provide a constructive mechanism to ensure these expectations are consistently upheld.

9. A Culture of Openness and Trust

WMPS is committed to a safeguarding culture in which:

- **Concerns are raised early**, without fear
- Staff are confident about expected conduct
- Leaders model transparency and accountability
- Everyone has a part to play in maintaining a safe learning environment

The school actively promotes a **“no blame” culture** for low-level concerns, recognising their value in protecting pupils and supporting staff.

10. Summary

Low-level concerns form an important part of WMPS's safeguarding culture. Managing them fairly and transparently:

- Protects children
- Promotes high professional standards
- Supports staff in reflective practice
- Prevents escalation into more serious issues
- Ensures the school remains compliant with **KCSIE 2025 Part 4**
- Strengthens trust across our whole school community

Appendix 3

Summary of Safer Recruitment Procedures

(Aligned to KCSIE 2025 and Warwickshire County Council Guidance)

1. Introduction

Watling Meadows Primary School (WMPS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Safer recruitment is a vital part of our safeguarding culture and ensures that all individuals working or volunteering at the school are suitable to do so.

Recruitment practices follow the statutory requirements set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)** and the local expectations of **Warwickshire County Council (WCC)** to ensure a robust, transparent, and consistent approach to child protection.

2. Core Principles of Safer Recruitment

WMPS adheres to the following core principles:

- **Children's welfare is paramount** and underpins all recruitment decisions.
- **All adults working in school must be suitable**, appropriately vetted, and able to uphold the school's safeguarding culture.
- Processes must be **fair, lawful, and discrimination-free**, following the Equality Act 2010.
- Recruitment decisions must be **evidence-based**, well documented, and compliant with statutory guidance.

3. Recruitment Planning and Advertising

3.1 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

Every role includes:

- Clear safeguarding responsibilities
- Explicit expectations around promoting a safe environment
- Requirements for professional conduct and suitability to work with children

Where appropriate, the role description includes the requirement to adhere to the **WMPS Staff Code of Conduct**.

3.2 Advertising

All advertisements:

- Make clear WMPS's commitment to safeguarding
- State that all positions are subject to enhanced DBS checks and other relevant pre-employment checks
- Follow WCC guidance to ensure fairness and consistency in recruitment wording

4. Shortlisting and Application Scrutiny

4.1 Application Forms

WMPS requires a **full application form** (not CVs), in line with KCSIE expectations. This helps identify:

- Full employment history
- Gaps in employment
- Relevant qualifications
- Motivation for working with children

4.2 Shortlisting

A minimum of **two people** (with safer recruitment training) shortlist candidates.

During this process, we:

- Check for **inconsistencies or gaps**
- Review safeguarding-related disclosures
- Note any information requiring follow-up at interview

5. Interviews

5.1 Panel Composition

At least **one panel member must have completed up-to-date Safer Recruitment Training**, as required by KCSIE 2025 and WCC.

5.2 Safeguarding-Focused Questions

Interviews always include:

- Questions that explore suitability to work with children
- Scenario-based safeguarding questions
- Exploration of values, ethics, and behaviours expected at WMPS

Where concerns arise (e.g., unexplained employment gaps), these must be addressed directly with candidates.

6. Pre-Employment Checks

WMPS follows all statutorily required vetting checks prior to appointment, including:

6.1 Identity Verification

Confirming a candidate is who they say they are, using approved documentation.

6.2 Right to Work in the UK

As required by immigration legislation.

6.3 Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List Check

Required for anyone engaging in **regulated activity**, including:

- Teachers

- Support staff
- Supply staff
- Volunteers in regular unsupervised contact

Where a DBS certificate contains information, the Headteacher conducts a formal risk assessment.

6.4 Prohibition and Teacher Status Checks

Using the Teacher Services system, the school checks:

- Teaching prohibition orders
- GTCE sanctions
- Section 128 directions (for management roles in academies)
- EEA sanctions where relevant (historic)

6.5 Overseas Background Checks

For candidates who have lived or worked overseas, WMPS seeks:

- International criminal checks (where available)
- Certificates of good conduct
- Additional reference and employment verification

6.6 Professional and Character References

Two references are required, one from the most recent employer, with explicit enquiries about:

- Suitability to work with children
- Concerns relating to safeguarding
- Disciplinary or capability issues

6.7 Medical Fitness Check

To ensure the candidate can fulfil the role requirements safely.

7. The Single Central Record (SCR)

WMPS maintains a comprehensive **Single Central Record**, in accordance with KCSIE 2025 requirements and audited regularly by the DSL and Headteacher.

The SCR includes:

- Full vetting checks for all staff
- Checks on supply/agency staff
- Checks on volunteers
- Checks on contractors working on site
- Dates, outcomes, and who carried out each check

Any missing or incomplete checks **must be addressed immediately** before an individual begins work, except in tightly controlled supervised situations as allowed by KCSIE.

8. Contractors, Volunteers, and Visitors

8.1 Contractors

WMPS ensures contractors:

- Have appropriate safeguarding checks
- Are supervised if checks are incomplete
- Are only permitted on site with approval from the Head/DSL

8.2 Volunteers

Volunteers are risk assessed to determine:

- Level of contact with children
- Whether DBS/Barred List checks are required
- Necessary supervision arrangements

8.3 Agency and Supply Staff

WMPS obtains written confirmation from agencies that all required checks have been completed. Identity is verified on arrival.

9. Induction Procedures

All staff—including agency workers and volunteers—receive a **safeguarding induction** which includes:

- The WMPS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing procedures
- Behaviour and pupil safeguarding expectations
- The identity and role of the DSL/DDSLs
- KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B requirements

New staff must sign to confirm they have read and understood key safeguarding documents.

10. Ongoing Safeguarding Culture

Safer recruitment does not end at appointment. WMPS promotes an ongoing safeguarding culture through:

- Regular supervision and performance management
- Training updates
- Monitoring of staff conduct
- Openness around reporting low-level concerns

- Clear expectations set out in the Staff Code of Conduct
- A strong, preventative safeguarding ethos across all school operations

11. Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

Any concerns about staff conduct—at any level—must be reported.

WMPS follows:

- **KCSIE 2025 Part 4**
- Warwickshire LADO procedures
- Processes outlined in **Appendix 3: Low Level Concerns**
- Whistleblowing procedures

Immediate action is taken to safeguard pupils while concerns are investigated.

12. Annual Review and Compliance

The safer recruitment policy and practice at WMPS are reviewed annually, incorporating:

- Updates to KCSIE
- Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership guidance
- Learning from internal audits
- Advice from HR and governance teams

Any improvements identified are implemented promptly.