

## **St Margaret's 'Early Help' Offer**

St Margaret's CE Primary School works hard to support families experiencing difficulty. We do this in conjunction with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's 'Early Help' team.

### What is Early Help?

'Early Help' means providing help for children, young people and families as soon as problems start to emerge or where it is likely that issues will impact negatively on children's outcomes.

Early help...

- is for children of all ages and not just the very young,
- can be provided at any point of need;
- can be very effective in supporting a child, young person and/or their family to step down from statutory services (as well as preventing the escalation of issues);
- is important because there is clear evidence that it results in better outcomes for children.

### The Role of St Margaret's and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

#### **Day to Day Support**

Most families, most of the time, can get on with their lives quite happily with little or no outside help. If they need help it is usually provided by universal services, such as schools. This can include the day-to-day support provided to pupils and their families by staff within the school.

#### **Focused Pastoral Support**

All families can have times, however, when difficulties arise and they either may not recognise it or may not know how to start putting things right. Without the right support early on, situations can easily get worse. St Margaret's plays a role in supporting families to address these difficulties through more focused pastoral support, which might include bringing in support via an external agency.

#### **Early Help Assessment**

For those children and families whose needs and circumstances make them more vulnerable, or where schools need the support of other agencies to meet the needs of the family, a coordinated multi-agency approach is usually best. At St Margaret's, this is often achieved through undertaking an Early Help Assessment to assign an Early Help Lead Practitioner to work closely with the family to ensure they receive the support they require. Schools are a key partner in any multi-agency work to support families. We use the process of assessment as a way of engaging with other practitioners who may already be working with the child and their family, or to bring on board new practitioners who would be able to provide support and advice to the family. This work is coordinated via team around the child/family meetings. CAF and Family CAF (FCAF) are Barking and Dagenham's primary assessment and service coordination delivery tools for Early Help. They support inter-agency working through

holistic assessment, improved coordination, cooperation and effective information sharing between agencies through the Team alongside the Family (TAF) approach. Early Help is everyone's business and our staff at St Margaret's are aware of their role in delivering and facilitating 'Early Help' so that Children and Families receive the right help, at the right time, by the right people, for the right reasons, and where they can access it best.

More information about Early Help in The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham can be found using this link:

<http://newsite.bardag-lscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Early-Help-Strategy.pdf>