Families First for Children/ Family Help (Early Help) Policy 2026-27

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on Oct 2026

It is due for review on *Oct 2027* (up to 12 months from the above date).

Signature ……. Date ……

Head Teacher

Signature ……. Date ……

Chair of Governors

Families First and Early Help Policy

Families First For Children Programme

Walsall is one of seven new areas in England selected to pilot the 'Families first for children' pathfinder programme – a national reform to children's social care, which is designed to keep more children in safe and loving homes and improve child protection.

As a 'pathfinder' area, Walsall will test new ways of working to help more children stay with their families, and further strengthen the Early Help partnership to ensure families suffering from issues such as domestic abuse, addiction, and poor mental health can receive Family Help at the earliest opportunity.

The programme will build upon Walsall's existing multi-agency Family Safeguarding Service and Early Help offer.

The pathfinder programme is part of the government's children's social care reform strategy, Stable Homes, Built on Love, which aims to revolutionise the current system to put more focus on early intervention and best practice child protection where required.

Families First for Children and Family Help offer at Palfrey Junior School

Palfrey Junior School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all children. The school has a Designated Safeguarding Team; that is made up of the Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) Ms Collis and Mrs Kinsey, Deputy DSL & Learning Mentor Miss Thomson and Inclusion Manager Mrs Shaw, and new addition Mrs Smith.

We work hard to make sure of our children and families feel supported and listened to and receive the right help at the right time.

"At times children, young people and families will need some extra help and support and Families First in Walsall can support with this. Getting the right help as soon as any difficulties start is very important, don't wait until things get worse. Help can come from a range of services and organisations who will work together to support you and your family."

We all need some extra help and support at times, as a family we want you to know it's ok to ask for help. If you are struggling or finding things difficult come into school and have chat about what is going on. We can discuss what help and support is available and how we can access this for you. We can work together to complete a document called 'Our Family', this is a needs assessment to help us all to understand your family, what is and has been happening, and what help you need so everyone in the family is safe and has an opportunity to thrive.

The 'Our Family' assessment might be completed here at school with Miss Thomson, or could be completed with a health professional, who will focus on specific health/ medical needs. If you need more targeted help and support then a Family Help Practitioner will do the assessment with you, they will be known as the Family Help Coordinator.

Families First in Walsall means providing support as soon as possible to help families cope with difficulties and challenges, by working together and with others eg. Family support workers, police, housing, counselling and health etc… to address issues as soon as they occur.

Families First aims to identify and build on family strengths, and help families to develop the skills to become more resilient whilst also building connections to their local community

How can Families First help me and my family?
We will work with you to:

- Build on the strengths of your family
- Signpost and refer to support agencies and organisations
- Help you overcome issues such as unemployment, poor school attendance, mental health, relationships, parenting and many others
- Focus on the immediate difficulties that you face and to help you find long term solutions
- Help support and strengthen families so you can thrive.

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 school, GPs, Health visitors etc... This can include the day-to-day support provided to pupils and their families by staff within the school.

Focused Support
All families can have times 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 very quickly. Schools play a role in supporting families to address these difficulties through more focused support, which might include bringing in support via an external agency e.g school nurse service, counselling and financial services etc..

The 'Our Family' assessment can then be completed to create a plan of what things are going well and areas and actions needing support. This is then used to create a supportive team around the family (TAF) .

If you and your family are experiencing any difficulties, issues, concerns, or you feel your family would benefit from some additional support through the Families First process please come into school and speak to us.

Lead Practitioner for Families First at Palfrey Junior School: Miss Hayley Thomson

You can email support@palfrey-j.walsall.sch.uk and Miss Thomson will get back to you arrange a convenient time to have a chat, or call the main office on 01922 721092

Alternatively, for more information about Walsall Families First and Family Hubs please visit www.walsall.family hubs.co.uk

or contact our local Walsall Family Hub

South and Central Family Hubs Birchills Street, Walsall, WS2 8NF
Telephone: 01922 654545

Please click the link to read the article – Walsall selected for national pilot to transform children's social care

Find out more information on the Families first for children (FFC) pathfinder programme and family networks pilot (FNP) – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)