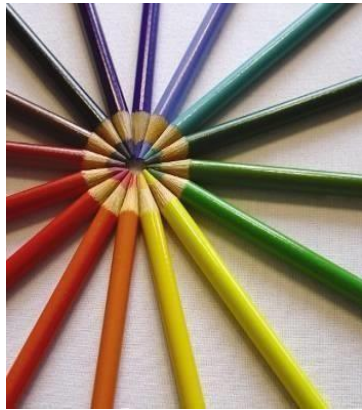


Early Help Assessment Policy

Reviewed 2020



To fulfil their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children must be adhering to their Safeguarding Policy. All Local Authorities and relevant partners should also take account of guidance published by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

"The Family Assessment (FA) for children and young people is one of the elements of integrated frontline service delivery. This is outlined in the statutory guidance supporting section 10 (inter-agency co-operation) and section 11 (safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children) of the *Children Act 2004*, and Keeping children safe in Education 2018 Early Help - Part 1 section 24

All Local Authorities and relevant partners have to take account of this guidance. If they decide to depart from it, they must have clear reasons for doing so."

Published in 'The Family Assessment Framework for Children and young people: A guide for managers' (July 2009), CWDC.

The purpose of the FA is to help the early identification of children's additional needs and promote co-ordinated service provision to meet them. An unmet need may be considered to be where a child is not achieving one or more of the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters. The Salford Safeguarding Children's Board have agreed that where there are additional needs that cannot be met by the service identifying that need a FA must be completed.

A separate FA Policy should be drawn up alongside the organisations existing Safeguarding Policy so that they complement one another. The FA policy must demonstrate:

- A clear commitment by senior management to the implementation of the FA process as part of promoting children's welfare.
- Clear protocols to enable the FA processes to be embedded into the practices of the organisation.
- A clear line of accountability and defined roles and responsibilities within the organisation for following the FA process as part of promoting children's welfare.
- Arrangements to ensure that all staff undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities in relation to the FA effectively.
- Arrangements to work effectively with other organisations to promote the welfare of children, including arrangements for gaining consent and sharing information.

- A culture of listening, and engaging in dialogue, with children and their families – seeking their views in ways that are appropriate, and taking account of those views in individual decisions and in the establishment or development of services.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document is the FA Policy for Oasis Academy MediacityUK which will be followed by all members of the organisation and followed and promoted by those in the position of leadership within the organisation.

1.2 Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring that their employees are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for completing FA.

1.3 The purpose of the organisation is education.

1.4 This document is written in accordance with 'The Family Assessment Framework for children and young people'

1.5 Principles upon which the FA policy is based:

- Increasing the focus on supporting families and carers – the most critical influence on children's lives.
- Ensuring necessary intervention takes place before children reach crisis point and protecting children from falling through the net.
- Addressing the underlying problems identified in the report into the death of Victoria Climbié – weak accountability, poor integration, poor communication and no holistic assessment.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/about/background/background/>

1.5 Improving outcomes for all children and young people requires integrated working and as part of that – information sharing.

For the most up-to-date guidance see 'Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers' published and re-printed by the DCSF in March 2009.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications Search using the ref: DCSF-00807-2008

1.6 Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below.

2. Communication & Accountability

2.1 The Lead Officer for Oasis Academy MediacityUK is Paul McEvoy

It is a requirement of the SSCB, in accordance with the National FA Guidance, that each organisation nominate a FA Champion.

FA Champions must have the authority to ensure that necessary actions are taken to implement the FA within their operational settings. They will have the;

- authority to make decisions in relation to FA policies, procedures and performance management.
- ability to identify staff training requirements in relation to FA processes.
- expertise to advise staff within their organisation on issues relating to FA.

2.2 The designated FA Champion for Oasis Academy MediacityUK is:

Name Alison Pears
Job Title Deputy DDSL/ Inclusion Manager
Address King William St, Salford Quays
Tel No 0161 886 6500
E-mail: alison.pears@aosismediacityuk.org

2.3 The FA Champion is the person to whom staff can report concerns to and who can relay unresolved issues onto the FA Coordinators.

2.4 The FA Champion will liaise directly with Natalie Lunn who is the FA Coordinator for the Central Locality to discuss any FA related issues.

2.5 Any FA related issues that cannot be resolved by the FA Champion or Head of Organisation together with the FA Coordinator or Manager within Locality Teams will ultimately be discussed with the SIP Officer

3. Training

3.1 The FA Champion has responsibility for determining which practitioner will undertake Family Assessments, identify any additional training needs for staff and put them forward for the necessary training which in addition to the mandatory training mentioned above includes;

- Team Around the Family Skills and Processes
- Lead professional
- Chairing

4. What to do if you identify an unmet need

4.1 The practitioner should firstly speak to their FA Champion to check the best course of action.

4.2 The FA Champion should decide whether;

- To speak to the parent/carer to see if the concern can be addressed without any additional support
- Undertake a FA to determine exactly what the needs are and if there are any underlying causes behind those unmet needs
- Refer to Referral and Initial Assessment Team if there are any child protection concerns

5. Consult about your concern

5.1 If the FA Champion is unsure as to the best course of action then they should consult with:

- FA Coordinator
- Practice Manager
- Referral and Initial Assessment Team if there are any child protection concerns

5.2 Consultation is not the same as making a FA Enquiry (see paragraph 6.1 below) but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a FA is the best course of action.

6. Completing a FA

6.1 Before any member of staff initiates a FA speak to the FA Coordinator to check if a FA already exists. The Locality Team will record this as a FA Enquiry.

6.2 If you are going to undertake FA you should ask the parent/carer and child/young person to attend a meeting.

6.3 Explain the FA process and check that they are willing to accept support and give consent to share information.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 “The FA is a voluntary assessment process and, as such, a child or young person and/or their parent/carer must give their consent at the start of the process for the assessment to take place in the full knowledge of what will happen to this information” (CWDC, 2009)

□ 7.2 It is always good practice to seek consent unless to do so would place the child/young person at risk of harm.

8. Parents who refuse to give consent

8.1 Salford Children's Services have decided that where a parent/carer refuses to give consent for a FA to be undertaken the employee or FA Champion of that service should advise the Locality Team.

8.2 The Locality Team will have already recorded that a FA Enquiry has been made by the employee/FA Champion of that service. The Locality Team will then also record that the FA has been declined.

8.3 Where 3 FA enquiries are made and the parent/carer has refused to give consent on each separate occasion an alert will be raised to the Locality Team.