



Willow Tree Federation Family Help Offer

The right help, at the right time, through trusted relationships

Mission Statement

The children are at the heart of everything we do. Willow Tree Federation takes a holistic approach to child development and works with children, families and the wider community to change and enhance lives. We celebrate diversity and believe that learning in an inclusive community empowers every child: we plant the seed that grows the future.

Document	Details
Academic year	2026–27
Headteacher	Lucy Naylor
Pupil Support Manager	Kirsty Banks
School contact	01524 65880 enquiries@willow.lancs.sch.uk
Approved	
Review	September 2027, or earlier if local arrangements change

We are here to help

Everybody needs help or advice at some point. Families can speak to us before a difficulty becomes a crisis. Asking for help will be met with respect, without judgement, and will not by itself lead to social-care involvement.

1. What is Family Help?

Family Help means working with a child and family as soon as a need or concern emerges. It builds strength, reduces barriers and prevents difficulties from escalating. It is not one service: it may include support from school, health, community organisations or several agencies working together.

Our offer reflects Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Lancashire's continuum of need and Family Help Assessment and Plan arrangements. It is aligned with the federation's SEND Policy, Inclusion Strategy, Pupil Premium Strategy, Attendance arrangements and The Willow Tree Way relationship approach to positive behaviour.

Child-centred and family-focused We listen to the child, involve parents and carers, consider the whole family and agree practical outcomes. Support is proportionate, time-limited where appropriate and reviewed for impact.

2. Who may benefit?

A child or family may benefit when advice alone has not resolved a difficulty, when several issues interact, or when an emerging concern is affecting safety, learning, health, wellbeing, attendance or family life. Support may relate to:

Area	Examples
Learning and communication	Gaps in learning, phonics, reading, vocabulary or oracy; SEND; speech and language; organisation or homework routines.
Attendance and participation	Absence, persistent absence, punctuality, anxiety about school, lost learning, transport or financial barriers to trips, clubs or wraparound provision.
Emotional wellbeing and behaviour	Regulation, anxiety, low mood, relationships, bereavement, bullying, sleep, diet, behaviour that communicates unmet need or readiness to learn.

Area	Examples
Family and practical pressures	Housing, debt, benefits, food, uniform, caring responsibilities, family conflict, domestic abuse, substance misuse or a short-term crisis.
Health, disability and care	Medical needs, disability, young carers, parenting support, transition between services or coordination across education, health and care.
Safety and exploitation	Online harm, neglect, abuse, exploitation, risky behaviour or concerns outside the home. Safeguarding procedures apply immediately where necessary.

These are examples, not access criteria. Need is understood in the context of the individual child and family. Disadvantage, SEND or a medical condition does not automatically mean that an Family Help plan is required, and families do not need a diagnosis to ask for support.

3. How can a family ask for help?

- Speak to the child's class teacher or nursery key worker—the usual first point of contact.
- Ask to speak with Kirsty Banks, Pupil Support Manager, through the school office.
- For learning or SEND concerns, ask for Kirsty Birdsall, SENDCo.
- Speak with Lisa Wilson at Appletree Nursery, Duncan Webster or Lucy Naylor where appropriate.
- Telephone 01524 65880 or email head@willow.lancs.sch.uk. A private meeting, accessible information or help completing forms can be arranged.

School staff may also notice that a child needs extra support. The teacher or key worker will normally speak with the family first. If needs are broader, a member of the pastoral, SEND or leadership team may make contact.

4. Our graduated Family Help pathway

Stage	What we do	Possible outcome
1. Listen and understand	Agree what is going well, what is worrying the child/family, what has changed and what would make a difference. Check immediate safety.	Advice, a named contact and agreed next step.
2. School-based support	Use universal and targeted support, reasonable adjustments and practical help. Establish a baseline and review date.	Difficulty resolves; support continues or is adjusted.
3. Review impact	Review the child's experience, family views, attendance, learning, wellbeing and delivery of support.	End, continue, adapt or coordinate wider help.
4. Family Help Assessment and Plan	With parental consent, complete a strengths-and-needs assessment, agree outcomes and actions, identify a lead practitioner and coordinate agencies.	Regular Team Around the Family reviews until outcomes are met or another pathway is needed.
5. Escalate when necessary	Seek specialist or statutory support where needs are significant, complex, persistent or present safeguarding concerns.	Family Help, Children's Social Care, health/SEND pathway or emergency action, according to need.

No "wrong door"

If school is not the best service, we will help the family identify the appropriate route. Support should not be delayed merely because responsibility sits with another organisation.

5. What support can Willow provide?

Learning, SEND and communication

- High-quality adaptive teaching, explicit vocabulary/oracy work and accessible classroom routines.
- Diagnostic assessment and closely aligned small-group or one-to-one support, including phonics, reading, writing, mathematics and pre-teaching.
- SEND identification and assess–plan–do–review through TLPs/pupil passports where special educational provision is required.
- Catch-up for pupils returning after absence, based on identified missed prerequisite learning.
- Specialist advice or EHC needs assessment discussion where appropriate.

Wellbeing, relationships and readiness to learn

- A trusted adult, pastoral check-ins and needs-led nurture or social-emotional support.
- Boxall profiling where appropriate, with outcomes reviewed alongside observation, behaviour information and pupil voice.
- Regulation teaching, sensory or movement support, transition planning, social stories and restorative practice.
- Trauma-informed, relationship-based responses through The Willow Tree Way.
- Referral or signposting to mental-health, bereavement, young-carer, domestic-abuse or other specialist services.

Attendance, engagement and access

- Early contact and barrier-led attendance conversations with the child and family.
- A practical attendance support plan, reviewed at an agreed frequency, and coordination with relevant services.
- Prompt academic catch-up after absence and vulnerable-pupil tracking.
- Support with uniform, essential school experiences, educational visits, clubs or wraparound provision where an identified financial barrier would otherwise prevent participation.
- Accessible enrichment and transition support to strengthen belonging.

Family and practical support

- Help to identify food, uniform, housing, debt, benefits, parenting, sleep or diet support.
- Short-term practical assistance where appropriate, alongside referral to sustainable external support.
- Family workshops, “Talk at Home” prompts, vocabulary activities and bilingual or accessible materials where available.
- Help contacting services or completing forms, and coordinated meetings so families do not have to repeat their story unnecessarily.

6. How Pupil Premium strengthens Family Help

The Pupil Premium Strategy 2026–27 recognises that disadvantage may interact with weaker vocabulary and communication, gaps in prior learning, attendance, emotional needs and reduced access to enrichment or resources. Pupil Premium does not replace statutory or universal provision. It strengthens prevention and targeted support through:

Tier	Family Help contribution
High-quality teaching	Oral-language frameworks, adaptive teaching, feedback, metacognition, vocabulary mapping, structured talk, active participation and a broad reading diet.
Targeted academic support	Diagnostic small-group/one-to-one teaching, pre-teaching and rapid catch-up for learning lost through absence.
Wider strategies	Pupil-support capacity, attendance and family work, social-emotional learning, Boxall-informed nurture, parental engagement, enrichment access and short-term crisis support.

Eligibility for Pupil Premium is never used as a label or a barrier to support. Decisions are needs-led and consider SEND, safeguarding, attendance and family circumstances together. The school monitors whether disadvantaged pupils can access support and whether gaps in learning, participation and wellbeing are narrowing.

7. Family Help Assessment and Plan (EHA/EHP)

Where needs are significant or complex, or several services need to work together, school may suggest Lancashire’s Family Help Assessment and Plan. It records

strengths and needs, the child's and family's views, agreed outcomes, actions, responsible people and review dates. A lead practitioner coordinates the plan and Team Around the Family meetings bring the right people together.

- The assessment is completed with the family, not done to the family.
- Parents with parental responsibility normally give informed consent before an EHA/EHP and before information is shared for Family Help purposes.
- The child's views are gathered in a way appropriate to age, communication and understanding.
- Families should know what information will be shared, with whom, why and how it will help.
- The plan is reviewed until outcomes are achieved, support can step down, or a different pathway is required.

8. Consent, confidentiality and information sharing

We explain what information is needed and handle it in line with data-protection, safeguarding and record-management requirements. Family Help is normally voluntary and relies on informed family participation. Consent can be discussed or withdrawn, although this may affect what coordinated support can be offered.

Safeguarding exception

Consent is not required to share information or make a referral where a child may be at risk of significant harm, where seeking consent could increase risk, or where another lawful safeguarding basis applies. The child's welfare is paramount and the federation follows its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Lancashire procedures.

9. When Family Help is not enough

Family Help does not delay child-protection, medical or emergency action. Staff consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow Lancashire's continuum of need when concerns indicate intensive, specialist or statutory support.

Situation	Action
Immediate danger or medical emergency	Call 999.

Situation	Action
Immediate safeguarding concern	Contact Lancashire Children's Services: 0300 123 6720; out of hours: 0300 123 6722. School staff follow safeguarding procedures without delay.
Concern about abuse, neglect or exploitation	Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; a referral may be made without consent where required to protect the child.
Complex or significant needs without immediate danger	Discuss coordinated Family Help, Children's Social Care, SEND, health or other specialist assessment, according to Lancashire thresholds.

10. How will we know help is working?

Every plan starts with a clear picture of need and agrees a small number of meaningful outcomes. Measures are proportionate and may include:

- the child's and family's view of whether life is improving;
- attendance, punctuality and participation;
- learning, communication and progress from a baseline;
- regulation, relationships, behaviour patterns and readiness to learn;
- access to food, uniform, housing advice, enrichment or other practical support;
- whether agreed actions were delivered and coordinated as intended.

School-based support is reviewed at the agreed date. TLP outcomes are reviewed at least half-termly and formally with families at least termly; attendance plans are reviewed according to the level of concern; EHA/EHP and Team Around the Family reviews follow the agreed plan. Each review records whether to continue, adapt, step down, close or seek additional support.

11. Roles and accountability

Role	Responsibility
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Role	Responsibility
Governing body and headteacher	Set the inclusive culture; assure safeguarding, resources, Pupil Premium alignment and impact; challenge barriers and inequalities.
Designated Safeguarding Lead/team	Oversee safeguarding decisions, referrals, information sharing and liaison with statutory partners.
Pupil Support Manager	Provide accessible family contact, practical/pastoral help, coordination and signposting; contribute to assessment and review.
SENDCo	Coordinate identification, SEN Support, specialist advice and SEND transitions; align SEND and Family Help plans.
Teachers/key workers	Notice concerns, listen, provide day-to-day support, assess progress and maintain trusted family communication.
Lead practitioner	Coordinate an agreed EHA/EHP, actions, information and review when school takes this role.
Children and families	Share strengths and concerns, help agree outcomes and say whether support is working. Participation is supported accessibly.

12. Feedback, complaints and review

Families are encouraged to raise concerns with the named practitioner, class teacher/key worker, Pupil Support Manager or headteacher so that the plan can be clarified or changed promptly. Formal complaints follow the federation's Complaints Policy. Safeguarding concerns are never delayed by the complaints process.

Leaders review the Family Help offer through case supervision, plan quality, timeliness, attendance and participation information, pupil and family voice, safeguarding audit, intervention impact and patterns in referrals or unmet need. Governors receive proportionate, anonymised information. This offer is reviewed annually and updated sooner when local arrangements change.

Key contacts and useful links

Contact	Details
Willow Tree Federation	Willow Lane, Lancaster, LA1 5PR 01524 65880 head@willow.lancs.sch.uk
Pupil Support Manager	Kirsty Banks – request contact through the school office.
SENDCo	Kirsty Birdsall – 01524 65880 k.birdsall@willow.lancs.sch.uk
Lancashire Children's Services	0300 123 6720 out of hours 0300 123 6722
Lancashire SEND IAS	0300 123 6706 information.lineteam@lancashire.gov.uk
Emergency services	999 where someone is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical help.

- [Willow Family Help and support page](#)
- [Lancashire Children and Family Wellbeing Service](#)
- [Lancashire Family Help Assessment and Plan](#)
- [Lancashire: requesting support from Children's Services](#)
- [Lancashire SEND Local Offer](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)