



# The Family Networking Approach in Schools

What it is, why it's important and our service offer to you



## What is the Family Networking Approach?

The Family Networking Approach complements Signs of Safety, the practice framework we use in Norfolk. Both approaches put networks at the centre of practice and provide the opportunity for families to draw on those around them to help with aspects of family life and to make sure their children feel safe and loved.

### **The Family Networking Approach has four principles:**

- 1.** Everyone has a network and we can find out about that network and the strengths within it if we ask.
- 2.** Networks help develop and maintain a sense of belonging and identity. This approach is to strengthen the network around families.
- 3.** Connected networks = Positive Outcomes, boost health, attainment and achievement outcomes through promoting trusted adults and strong relationships.
- 4.** The network can help with planning and decision making. You can facilitate this opportunity and work together to bring about change.

## Benefits of embedding the Family Networking Approach in Schools

- Offers a framework for conversations with families;
- Helps you broaden the family's support network;
- Enabling families to take more ownership and creating a shared plan reduces the need for your involvement;
- Allows you time and space to focus on needs that require a professional response;
- Encourages the network to support the child or young person to engage with school and learning;
- The family plan is led by the network, allowing the school to become the facilitator rather than the leader.

## **FGC and Family Networking Advisory Service Offer**

Free Family Networking Approach Support Package for Schools  
Our comprehensive service offer provides you with the tools to embed the Family Networking Approach in your School.

### **Our offer has 4 key elements:**



- 1.** Meet and communicate offer - to ensure you have the information you need to identify the key people to be part of the implementation group and embed the approach as a way of working in your School.
- 2.** Learning sets - to give you the tools to use the Family Networking Approach across your school.
- 3.** Coaching and mentoring - enables you to build capacity and confidence in the Family Networking Approach, embed it in your day to day processes and bring together a child's network at a Family Network Meeting to make a plan for positive change.
- 4.** Keep in touch - with termly visits and on-going coaching to help you continue to use the approach and remain family thinking.

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## **For more information regarding Family Networking and how we can support you:**

**Email:** [FNA@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:FNA@norfolk.gov.uk)

**Visit:** [www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/our-services/family-networking](http://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/our-services/family-networking)

## Feedback from schools

'Initially, we had discussed an EHAP to support a family, but after further discussion it was agreed that a Family Network Meeting would be the best next step. [FGC and Family Networking Advisor] contacted us and explained the process and offered to support us to set this up. The family were really pleased and engaged well with this approach.

[FGC and Family Networking Advisor] then came to school and delivered learning sets about Family Networking and facilitating meetings. It was really clear and the handouts user friendly.

The whole process has been fantastic! It has supported us as a school to identify when a Family Network Plan would be beneficial and not initiating an EHAP in the first instance.'

**(Pastoral Support Worker)**

'We use the approach all the time with all the pupils and families in our school' **(PSA)**

'The Family Networking Advisor is the professional voice of reason, support and challenge. We have learnt lots through this across the school. It has encouraged professional dialogue and challenge between the DSL's and other professionals' **(Headteacher)**

'Be true to the core thread of appreciative inquiry, safety first, mapping and planning. FNMs are now one of our tools.' **(Deputy Headteacher)**

'Working with Family Networking Advisory Service has given us good insight in to how we can support families that have previously been hard to engage' **(DSL)**

