



St Mary's CE VC First School

Nurturing deep, strong Christian roots, helping us to grow and flourish

West Hill, Charminster, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 9RD 01305 263880 office@charminster.dorset.sch.uk charminster.dorset.sch.uk

Family Support Advisor

Karen provides support and access to services for families by helping parents and carers develop confidence and a sense of empowerment when dealing with difficulties.



Hello, my name is Karen Bennett and I am Mum to a girl who attends St Osmund's and a boy who is in Year two here at St Mary's. I have lived in Charminster for twenty-four years and am passionate about the local communities which I want to support through this role.

I am a trained youth worker and have worked with young people for over 15 years. I was a Participation Worker with Action for Children for just under 12 years, working with vulnerable children, young people and their parents. I worked creatively to help them have a voice in the services they used and ensured decision-makers listened to their views when shaping and funding services.

As the Family Support Advisor at St Mary's, I have the children at the heart of everything I do, to ensure they realise and aspire to achieve their full potential. Through fostering positive relationships between families and staff, we can work together to help all children enjoy and thrive at school...

"It takes a whole village to raise a child." (Nigerian Proverb)

I am in school Monday - Wednesday 8.30am-3pm & Thursday 10.30am-3pm and I am contactable via email at karenbennett@charminster.dorset.sch.uk



The role of the Family Support Advisor includes:

Being someone to talk to – a friendly face to listen and support -

Our Family Support Advisor is a dedicated single point of contact who is always available as a listening ear to provide support for parents in addition to the teaching staff.

Providing moral support, help and advice in dealing with family difficulties -

Our Family Support Advisor can help with difficulties you may be having, such as relationship difficulties between parent and child.

Being an advocate and guide to accessing the right support and services -

Our Family Support Advisor can act as a link between the family, the school and the wider range of agencies who provide extended services for families. In some cases, providing information will be enough but in other cases our Family Support Advisor can act as an advocate for the family in accessing external agency support.

Improving outcomes for children and families by enhancing family stability and wellbeing -

Parents are the experts in the lives of their family and the Family Support Advisor will work alongside parents using this expertise to improve outcomes for their children.

Supporting parents and children to feel more confident and empowered -

By supporting parents to feel more confident in their abilities, they are empowered to deal with difficulties, allowing them to act more autonomously. Our Family Support Advisor can offer support, advice and guidance in this area.

Enabling smoother transitions -

Our Family Support Advisor can provide valuable support for both parents and children at times of transition. Identifying vulnerable children at transition and providing the correct level of intervention can support children in making smoother transitions.

As our Family Support Advisor, Karen aims to:

- Provide direct and confidential support for families within the school environment.
- Offer support on a range of parenting issues.
- Provide information about school matters.
- Provide families with information regarding learning opportunities for both the parents and children.
- Provide access to family programmes such as Strengthening Families, Getting Ready for School, Helping in School and the Family Jigsaw workshops.
- Assist families at times of transition, entering school, changing classes and moving to middle school.
- Act as a link between the family and external agencies.
- Provide information to families for supporting children at home.
- Support new families with transition into Reception.
- Work with families to improve attendance and raise their child's educational achievements.
- Offer support for families to attend school meetings and parent consultations.
- Work alongside parents and carers to give them the strategies and tools to help themselves and their children.
- Use Incredible Years Parenting concepts and strategies to support parents.



Timetable

If I am proving tricky to track down please leave a message with the office and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning	Family Support Room	Family Support Room	Family Support Room	Family Support Room (from 10.30am)	Not in school
Afternoon	Family Support Room	Family Support Room	Family Support Room	Family Support Room	

I am contactable via email throughout the week and aim to respond promptly.

karenbennett@charminster.dorset.sch.uk

I very much look forward to working with you and your family throughout your St Mary's journey.

