



Young Carers Policy

Effective from: April 2019
Reviewed: Autumn 2024
Next Review: Autumn 2027

Policy confirmed by the Governing Body of Grace Mary Primary School:

Date: 6th November 2024
Signature: _____
(Chair of Governors)

Signature: _____

Introduction

At Grace Mary Primary School, we believe that all children and young people have the right to a high quality education regardless of what is happening at home. When a child looks after someone in their family with a history of long term physical or mental health illness, a disability or alcohol or substance abuse the young person may need some extra support to help them get the most out of school.

This Young Carers' policy will set out how we will help any pupil who looks after someone at home.

Defining a Young Carer

A Young Carer is someone under 18 years of age who helps to care for a family member, relative or friend. Caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well-being. The level of responsibility assumed by a Young Carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up. As many as 1 in 5 children and young people are young carers in the UK (Barnardos).

Identifying a Young Carer

Unless the school is advised about a student's home circumstances, Young Carers' risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some Young Carers' worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers.

Some of the warning signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

1. Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing.
2. Tiredness in school
3. Erratic response to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks
4. Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
5. Under-achievement
6. Displaying undesired behaviours, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
7. Few or no peer friendships but possibly with a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age
8. Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to Young Carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
9. Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school
10. Apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at parent's meetings.

The above may be indicators of a range of needs, some not associated with a child having a caring role at home. However, in dealing with any child or young person exhibiting any of the above signs, staff should consider asking the child or young person if they are helping to look after someone at home.

Staff should also discuss their related concerns with colleagues with pastoral responsibilities for the pupil. Concerns about a child or young person who may be considered as a yet unidentified young carer should be reported to the member of staff with responsibility for Young Carers'. New information about identified young carers should also be passed on to this person too.

The members of school staff responsible for coordinating young carer support and therefore the key persons in school through which relevant matters need to be passed are:

Mrs L Willetts

It is preferable to start from a positive base. Therefore, our enrolment process will seek sensitively to establish if:

- The child or young person has additional support needs which may include having parents/relatives with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health problems
- The child or young person has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal, interpersonal relationships within a caring family setting
- The family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the pupil.

Information gained as a result of this process will be held securely and made available in the first instance to the designated member of school staff with responsibilities for young carers'. While we will respect the right to privacy, we would wish to establish if the family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the child or young person. We will only share information about young carers and their families with people who need to know in order to be able to help. Before sharing information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer or, if they are not able to understand, from a parent.

School support for identified Young Carers'

- A member of the staff in school will lead on our support work for young carers. This member of staff will be the point of contact for young carers and their families and will liaise with young carers' services.
- Referrals to Sandwell Young Carers service will be made where consent has been given from the parents and young person.
- Awareness raising session will take place including assemblies, PSHE lessons and staff training.
- School staff will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends unless the young carer asks for a friend to be present.
- Sensitivity to the needs of the young carer includes being careful not to ask even well- intentioned questions about how the family members are when the young carer is in the presence of his or her peers.
- Where possible, schools will negotiate deadlines for homework in advance of these being set.
- When absence reasons are not produced because of the known home circumstances of the young carer, arrangements are agreed for appropriately coding and recording absences.
- Schools will liaise with support services to ensure that families can be advised where additional help may be available to them.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parents' meetings due to family circumstances, school staff will try to make alternative arrangements e.g. offer a virtual meeting. The young carer or parent may request this.
- Schools will provide advice about how children can get into school where transport is a problem.
- School staff and services will be available for any child/young person, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help the child/young person in achieving their potential.
- Schools will take an active role in seeking to identify and provide support to hidden young carers.

Children Act 2004

Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 2004 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services.

In the event of any young carers being considered to be at risk of significant harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

Equality Act 2010

Young carers' have protected characteristics as defined by the Act because they are associated with a family member who has a disability or illness and cannot be discriminated against because of this.

Children and Families Act 2014

The Act has a section on Young Carers' and, in conjunction with the adults focused Care Act, seeks to make sure that Young Carers get the support they need. Local authorities are expected to try and identify Young Carers so they can be offered support.

Support

Sandwell Young Carers: <http://www.sandwellyc.com>

October 2024**Next review Autumn 2027**