

Young Carers Policy

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Rationale

Filton Avenue is committed to supporting young carers to access education. This policy aims to ensure that when a student is identified as a young carer, they are offered support to fully participate, make progress and feel safe and happy at school, by alleviating some of the issues and concerns that young carers may have.

A young carer is a young person who is helping to look after someone at home. Most are caring for a parent, but some may be taking responsibility for a sibling, grandparent or other relative. In some instances, a young carer may care for more than one family member.

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member.

Young carers are recognised by the DfE and the school as children who are vulnerable. This is because the level of caregiving can risk jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and outcomes.

The person they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

We acknowledge that there are young carers amongst our students, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education. We strive to ensure we do all we can to meet the needs of these students.

The school's work with young carers has the following aims:

- To identify young carers
- To engage with students and families to support young carers to achieve their best educational outcomes
- To promote a positive culture in which young people are safeguarded by the prevention of undertaking inappropriate care
- To support a whole family, inter-agency approach to accessing services
- To reduce the impact of caring on the wellbeing of young carers
- To provide enrichment opportunities for young carers

Possible effects of being a young carer on education

As a result of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might experience:

- Frequent lateness or absence
- Concentration problems due to anxiety or worry
- Tiredness
- Lack of time for homework or extra-curricular activities
- Poor attainment
- Isolation/Loneliness
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem

As a result of a young carer within the home, parents/carers might:

- Find it difficult to engage with school due to fears about their condition being misunderstood or frightened that their family might be broken up.
- Find it difficult to attend Parents Evening and other events held in school

Identification of Young Carers

The school takes a proactive approach to identifying young carers by:

- Providing opportunities for children to identify themselves as young carers, by providing information about young carers in assemblies, PSHE lessons and displays, and by providing discrete reporting mechanisms through communication boxes, wellbeing surveys and accessibility of trusted adults for children with concerns to talk to
- Identifying changes in attendance and attainment and considering whether these may be due to a potential caring role.
- Using school enrolment processes to check student information, to ask families whether the student has relatives who have an illness or disability, or who are affected by mental ill health or addiction problems and whether they would like more information about the types of support available to young carers.
- Identifying students who are living with adults experiencing mental ill health or addiction problems, and those who have siblings with disabilities, to identify sibling carers.
- Establishing information sharing protocols with the young carer services and health and social care services to ensure that the school is informed when they identify young carers.

Awareness and Training

The school will ensure that children and staff are aware of the issues faced by young carers by:

- Promoting understanding of and respect for issues surrounding illness, disability and caring, through the curriculum e.g. PSHE lessons, assemblies
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments affecting young carers and their families.
- Displaying information about young carer issues on noticeboards and the school website.
- Embedding training on young carer issues in induction training and continuous professional development for all staff

Support for Young Carers

- We have a Young Carers Lead to help provide equal access to educational opportunities. This is Sam Crane, Pastoral manager.
- Young Carers are identified on the school vulnerable list and their needs and support plans are discussed as part of weekly safeguarding meetings.
- There is a board member on the school improvement board who is responsible for overseeing the school's provision for young carers, and this is discussed at school improvement board meetings.

- Where a pupil has been identified as, or is suspected to be, a young carer, teaching staff will liaise with the young carer lead to ensure that the difficulties the pupil's home situation presents are accounted for and accommodated, while still ensuring high expectations and aspirations are held for the pupil in relation to their abilities and circumstances.
- The school will ensure that the pupil is offered appropriate pastoral care and emotional support, and teaching staff will aim to ensure that they facilitate, as far as possible, opportunities for the pupil to bond with their classmates during lesson time
- The flexible support which may be needed will vary for each young carer but could include:
 - Targeted interventions
 - Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home (when necessary)

- Negotiable deadlines for homework (when required) and/or opportunity to complete in school
 - Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis).
 - Advice to parents/carers if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.
 - Talking therapies in school to support the young carer
 - Access to free clubs
 - Small group work to support the young carer to build friendships and pursue interests
 - Enhanced transitions
- All students will be made aware of the designated member of staff for young carers
 - Students will be able to talk about their situation and any issues arising in private.
 - The young carers' role will be acknowledged and respected.
 - We will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, maintaining confidentiality as requested unless there are safeguarding or child protection issues involved.
 - We will follow safeguarding procedures if we feel a young carer is at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring. See Safeguarding policy.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

