

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL (WIMBORNE MINSTER)

Young Carers Policy

Review:

Title of Policy	Young Carers Policy
Policy Type	School
Review Cycle	Three Years
Policy prepared by	Sally Dean, AHT
Committee responsible	Community and Environment
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Next Review	Under Review

1. Introduction and Aims

At Queen Elizabeth's School we believe that all young people have the right to an Education, regardless of their home circumstances.

We are aware of Young Carers within our school community and acknowledge that there are likely to be some we are not aware of. We also acknowledge that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.

We have adopted our Young Carers policy so that we will be able to relieve some of the worries, which Young Carers may have about home and their school work, and show that we believe Young Carers' education is important.

Aim of the policy

The aim of this policy document is to raise the awareness among school staff about the needs of young carers and to support them in establishing a whole school approach to address the issues that may arise within a school setting.

The policy will hopefully provide teachers with a range of referral routes, also enabling them to provide young carers with information and advice on where to seek assistance.

2. Scope

Who are Young Carers?

Young Carers are children and young people whose lives are affected by looking after someone at home. They are carrying out tasks and responsibilities, which are additional to those appropriate for their age. The person they look after may have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Mental health issues
- Learning difficulties
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Long-term illness

The person they care for may be a parent, sibling, or grandparent and the care they give may be physical and/or emotional. Young Carers' responsibilities may include:

- Personal care (e.g. bathing, dressing, feeding)
- Giving or prompting medication/injections
- Shopping
- Housework
- Emotional support
- Looking after younger siblings
- Budgeting and paying bills

Young Carers can feel tired, worried and isolated. Their social life is often restricted with few opportunities for fun and after school activities.

3. Procedures, Responsibilities and Reporting

Under reporting

Recent research has indicated an under-reporting of Young Carers in Britain. Young carers are frequently a 'hidden group of carers and less likely to be identified than adult carers due to a number of factors.

- Young people frequently hide their caring responsibilities in an attempt not to be seen as 'different' by their peers.
- Families frequently do not admit to the amount of care being provided by children and young people for fear of repercussions and a perception that agencies will judge them negatively, rather than provide support.
- Young people often feel embarrassed to talk about their caring responsibilities, particularly if the care need arises from poor mental health or substance and alcohol use.
- Agencies concerned with care for adults, who may be working with disabled adults or adults with long term health issues, may not be picking up on the needs of the family group and may not be linking effectively with agencies tasked with the provision of social care for children and young people.
- The needs of secondary carers will rarely meet the thresholds for support by statutory social care agencies, despite the fact that secondary carers are frequently subjected to the same demands emotionally and physically- as primary carers.

Factors which may indicate that a young person is caring include:

- **Assuming a parental role to other siblings and or illness or disability in the family**
- **Lateness-** many young people may be late for school on a regular basis as a result of caring duties within the home or as a result of overtiredness causing them to oversleep.
- **Tiredness-** many young carers will have interrupted sleep patterns or be over-tired as a result of having to complete household tasks.
- **Non-attendance-** some carers will take time off school because they are worried about the person they are caring for, or because they are carrying out caring tasks that prevent attendance at school.
- **Late/no submission of homework and other school work-** many young carers will find it difficult to find time to complete homework and other school tasks and may also have no-one at home who can offer assistance with more difficult tasks.
- **Lack of participation in extracurricular activities and school trips-** many families of young carers will be totally dependent on benefits and activities may be difficult to afford for many families. Many young carers will also be unable to stay at school or access other activities if they have to rush home to support family members.
- **Challenging behaviour-** some young carers will exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from the home setting, to offset the fact that they have to take on adult responsibilities and behave in an adult fashion within the home. Mature and responsible but maybe 'letting go' and behaving immaturely when in a safe environment.

- **Difficulties in establishing friendships**- many young carers will be unable to develop school friendships outside school, as they may not be able to invite other children home or visit friends in their homes. As a result of poverty or caring responsibilities, they may also have restricted access to out of school clubs and activities that other children take for granted. At its worst some young carers may be the victims of bullying by their peers because they have a disabled parent and or sibling.
- **Poor health**- many young carers are carrying out tasks for which they are physically ill equipped, which in turn impacts on their overall health. In addition to this, long term caring responsibilities can impact significantly on the mental health of young people. Both aspects can affect school attendance.
- **Poverty**- many families will be dependent solely on state benefit for their income, affecting their ability to afford clothing and materials for school and the ability to access school trips.
- **Family isolation/involvement**- parents will often be unwilling or unable to attend school functions and parents evening, thus becoming more isolated from the school environment and unaware of issues and problems their children may be experiencing.
- **Poor education/career choices**- young carers will often not achieve as well as they could at school and may have poor initial exam results. They will also often feel that they are good at caring and should therefore automatically go into a care profession, without thinking through the implications of this choice.
- **Academic performance below potential**- due to all of the above factors young carers may not be able to put their efforts into reaching their full potential and their progress checks may indicate they are not performing as expected.

If we believe that someone is a young carer we will be sensitive when we approach them about this, as we appreciate they may not want their peers to know. Before passing this information on to relevant colleagues we will obtain the consent of the young carer.

Support Offered

As a school we will:

- A supportive environment for young carers by establishing a whole school approach to the identification of need and the establishment of an appropriate referral mechanism and network to meet the individual support needs of young people with caring responsibilities.
- Designate a member of staff with specific responsibilities for Young Carers. This person is Mrs Sally Dean or Mr Gavin Rusling in her absence. We will make sure all pupils know who this is.
- Providing a trusted adult within the school setting with whom the young carer feels comfortable in addressing difficult issues arising from their situation. This may not be the same person as the named person with responsibility for carers.
- Ensuring that school records identify the support needs of individual young carers and that these support needs are reflected in records accompanying children and young people within any transition to other educational providers while ensuring that the appropriate confidentiality procedures are in place to cover the necessary information sharing.

Support Offered (cont'd)

As a school we will:

- Inset training for staff to include training on the possible identification of young carers, issues impacting on education and support/referral mechanisms available via external agencies
- Promotion of additional links with adult care agencies, who may be able to support families and relieve care responsibilities of young people and maintenance of an up-to-date referral manual.
- Can put students in touch with support from the local Young Carers Services, and families in touch with other support services
- Offer assemblies on Young Carers and PSHE Sessions during morning tutorials
- Give information to the young person about Young Carers and what information and support is available
- Liaise with appropriate agencies i.e. Dorset Young Carers
- Supporting parents with mobility and/or access issues to facilitate and maintain regular contact with the school.
- Consider alternatives and be flexible when responding to the needs of Young Carers; this may include (but is not limited to) access to a telephone at break times, lunchtime detentions, negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework or opportunities to do homework at lunch times.