Dallimore Primary and Nursery School

Young Carers Policy

February 2023

Introduction

Dallimore Primary and Nursery School is committed to supporting young carers to access and maintain the education to which they are entitled to. This policy supports our commitment to ensure young carers at Dallimore Primary and Nursery School are identified, respected, listened to and fully supported.

Who are Young Carers?

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who help look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Young carers may be caring for a parent, a sibling, grandparent or other relative or person close to the family. In some cases a young carer may be caring for more than one family member. Many young carers also help care for younger siblings.

A young carer may be a primary carer or supporting another person with caring tasks. When identifying a young carer the main focus should be the impact on the child, rather than the hours spent, type, or level of caring tasks.

Caring Tasks

Caring can involve physical and/or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well – being. Young carers 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.

A Young Carers' responsibilities may include:

- Personal care, such as bathing, dressing, feeding, changing dressings, helping with toileting needs)
- Administering or prompting medication/injections
- Practical tasks, such as preparing meals and drinks
- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy
- Shopping
- Domestic tasks, such as cleaning, shopping, managing the family budget, paying bills, collecting benefits and prescriptions
- Emotional support, such as staying at home to keep the person they care for company.
- Looking after or 'parenting' younger siblings
- Interpreting, due to hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family's first language

Number of young carers in school

We have no definite figure on how many young carers there are in the UK although 2001 census figure states that 139,000 under 18s were providing care for a family member. The real figure is believed to be many more than that, for example a survey conducted by the BBC in 2010 suggested that that the figure is more likely to be closer to 700, 000.

Home office figures from 2003 suggest that there are between 250,000 -350,000 children with parents who are problem drug users. Alcohol Concern suggests that there are 1.3 million children affected by a parental alcohol problem. On this basis we can presume every school will have a significant number of young carers, many unknown to the school.

Currently young carers spend an average of 4 years in their caring role prior to being identified.

Identifying Young Carers

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

- Illness or disability in the family
- Being late or absent (due to caring responsibilities at home)
- Assuming a parental role to other siblings
- Poor concentration and/or often tired
- Academic performance below potential
- Homework often uncompleted
- Isolation from peers or problems interacting with peers
- Not making use of out of school activities
- Mature and responsible but can 'let go' and behave immaturely when in a safe environment
- Behavioural problems
- Limited contact with school by parents

Possible impact on education

Dallimore Primary and Nursery School acknowledges that there are likely to be a significant number of young carers in school and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.

Due to responsibilities at home, a young carer might experience:

- Being late or absent
- Poor concentration, anxiety or worry in school
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in school
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment or drop in attainment expected
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting or pushing a wheelchair
- False signs of maturity, due to assuming an adult role
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration)
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home

- Limited social skills or not age appropriate
- Bullying
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem

Young carers can feel tired, worried and isolated. Their social life is often restricted with few opportunities for fun and after school activities. It might also be difficult to engage with parents (due to fears about a child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

In addition young carers may be reluctant to share their own experiences.

Dallimore Primary and Nursery School will train and support school staffs to make them aware and sensitive to the issues faced by young carers and their families. The school will develop a culture where the school and pupils celebrate the positive contribution young carers make to their families and communities and the schools success in supporting young carers in school allowing them to fully participate in all aspects of their learning, personal development and school experience.

Support Offered

Dallimore Primary and Nursery School acknowledges that young carers may need additional support to access and maintain the education to which they are entitled.
Through this policy, Dallimore Primary and Nursery School is giving the message that young carers' education is important and we will support young carers in making the most of their educational opportunity and to enjoy the same experiences as their peers without caring responsibilities.
The school will encourage, support and monitor young carers progress as agreed in their personal support plan.

As a school, we will:

- Provide a designated link teacher with special responsibility for young carers; a 'Young Carers Champion' who will be the main point of contact for all issues pertaining to young carers and who will support colleagues to understand the challenges that young carers may face. This named member of staff will also liaise with relevant colleagues, Derbyshire Young Carers Service and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer and their family.
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to the 'Young Carers Champion' in private in order to share their concerns, who will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- Ensure that the whole school is committed to meeting the needs of Young Carers and that pupils have access to the appropriate information regarding the support that is available.
- Respect the family and Young Carer's right to privacy – we will only share information with people on a need to know basis. We appreciate, for example, that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.

- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality whilst considering a whole family approach.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and will inform young carers of the specialist support available to them from Derbyshire Young Carers Service. The school will refer a prospective young carer to Derbyshire Young Carers Service with the consent of the young person and parent/s.
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate caring role. For example, a referral to Starting Point will be made if we are concerned that the young carer may be the victim of neglect, abuse, cruelty or at risk of immediate or significant harm, or to request an assessment.
- Promote discussion and learning in all areas of curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance and respect for the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- Put young carers' family in touch with the local Young Carers Service and other organisations who can offer support e.g. Barnados.
- Consider the role of the school nurse in supporting improved health outcomes and reduce inequalities of family/child experience.
- Incorporate into individual pupil plans recognition and support for the positive aspects of the young carer's role, as well as providing the personalised support necessary to enable young carers to attend and enjoy school.
- Be accessible to parents who have mobility and communication difficulties and involves them in parents' evenings and other school activities.
- Use feedback from young carers and their families to inform our polices and practices.
- Ensure that school policies, such as those for enrolment, attendance, bullying and behaviour afford recognition to young carers.

Dallimore Primary and Nursery School recognises that flexibility and adaptation of school arrangements may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

Available provision includes (but is not restricted to):

- Access to a telephone during school break times; allowing young carers to call home to reduce unnecessary concern or anxiety and increase their concentration in class.
- Dallimore Primary and Nursery School will support young carers to get home/hospital in cases of emergency.
- An awareness of attendance and punctuality being effected by caring responsibilities e.g. taking younger siblings to and from school or when caring tasks during the night cause lateness.
- Someone to talk to who understands, will listen and not judge (nominated staff member)
- Negotiated deadlines for homework (if needed)
- Access to homework clubs (where these are available and not after school)
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis)

- Consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities, e.g. after-school clubs, concerts or trips away due to caring responsibilities and support where possible.
- Ensure parents can access school for open evenings, etc. and if this is not possible, consider how links can be made with home.
- We will encourage effective use of the PSHE curriculum, to explore the rights of children, the roles and responsibilities of young carers, and the challenges they face. We will use PSHE lessons to promote positive images of disability, challenging stereotypes and discrimination. We will promote discussion regarding caring and issues surrounding illness and disability, to promote a fuller understanding, acceptance and respect.
- Adopt a healthy attitude to different illnesses to try and reduce stigmas attached to illnesses such as Mental Health problems and disabilities.
- Avoid stigmatisation or labelling of pupils who are carers and provide guidance on preventing bullying.
- Ensure we comply with the Disability Discrimination Act by offering disabled parents support to get their children to school. And provide advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school
- Consider how information on pupils' pastoral needs can be effectively passed between primary and secondary school or across other phases.
- Include mechanisms to consult with young carers and their parents about content of policies and delivery of support.
- Include methods of regularly evaluating the effectiveness of policy and support (in addition to meeting Ofsted requirements).
- Treat a disclosure with sensitivity. Discuss with the child, depending upon their age what support they would like, approaching the parent/carer with the child's permission.
- Access for parents with impaired mobility.
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
- Agreed Personal Support Plan – to set targets and discuss aspirations and improve education outcomes for young carers
- School to collate statistics to measure success and identify areas needing improvement. We will monitor and evaluate data on the young carers we have identified, to examine the progress they have made and to review and amend the offer of support as appropriate. We will share this data with the LA if necessary.

Legislation and guidance

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 28 and 29 states:

Children and young people have the right to the best available education and to opportunities to develop their personality, mental and physical ability to their fullest potential.

The Children Act 1989 – The Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, which gives guidance on S. 17 of the Act, has a section on young carers which states that effective support will require "good quality joint work between adult and children's social services

as well as co-operation from schools and health workers . . . Young carers can receive help from both local and health authorities." See paragraphs 3.61-3.63.

DFE Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk (replaced Circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support):
"Young carers should not be expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. However, there are children and young people who undertake caring roles. Young carers of a sick or disabled relative at home may be late or absent from school because of their responsibilities. A study in one authority suggested there may be up to 30 young carers in a secondary school."

"In a genuine crisis, a school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made...."

"Schools should consider designating a member of staff to have responsibility for young carers. They can also contribute to schemes that support them, working with local authorities and voluntary agencies."

Also, Effective Attendance Practice in Schools: An Overview of attendance guidance states that schools should have "support systems in place for vulnerable groups which provide" among other things, signposting and access to external support for parents and pupils" and "training for staff on specific needs of pupils e.g. young carers".

The National Carers Strategy (1999) - Chapter 8 of this Government strategy states that "schools need to be sensitive to the individual problems faced by young carers" and that "The Government will draw schools' attention to effective practice in meeting the needs of pupils who are young carers, for example, through link arrangements with young carers' services. . . . Schools might find it helpful to have one member of staff to act as a link between young carers, the education welfare service, social services and young carers' services." It suggests that their may be 30 young carers in every school.

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995; Carers and Disabled Children Act 2001; Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 - Between them these Acts give young carers varying rights to an assessment of their needs, which must take into account their right to an education. See the SCIE practice guide to the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004: www.scie.org.uk, commissioned by the Department of Health.

The Children's Society Young Carer's Initiative aims to develop Key Principles of Practice in supporting young carers and their families. Key Principle 4 states: Young carers will have the same access to education and career choices as their peers:
Standard: Schools and colleges take responsibility to identify young carers at an early stage and ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.

Further information

- DfES 2006 guidance on young carers in Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk (http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/advice-and-guidance-schools-and-local-authorities-managing-behaviour-and-attenda)
- Teachernet guidance at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/y/youngcarers/

and at www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/library/youngcarersandschools/ which includes case studies from teachers themselves.

- The section for education professionals at www.youngcarers.net/professionals
- The Children's Society's Principles of Practice for all services coming into contact with young carers and their families: www.youngcarer.com
- Young Carers Research Group Reports: Young carers in the UK 2004 and Young carers in schools. www.carersuk.org/Policyandpractice/Research

YOUNG CARERS POLICY APPENDIX 1

Young Carers – Information for Staff

Young carers are children and young people up to the age of 18 who provide care for another family member who has a physical disability or illness, mental ill health, a sensory disability or a problem use of drugs or alcohol.

How do I identify a Young Carer?

Possible signs at school:

- Often late
- Often miss odd days or weeks off school for no apparent reason
- Often tired or withdrawn
- Difficulty joining in with extra-curricular activities
- Isolated or a victim of bullying – either because of the situation in the family or because they lack social skills when with their peers
- Maybe confident with adults
- Under-achievement
- Homework may be of poor quality, not submitted on time or not handed in at all
- Anxiety or concern over ill/disabled relative
- Behavioural problems – there is often a big difference between the young person who seems 'mature beyond their years' in their home environment where they are very protective of a disabled relative, and the young person who takes out their pent-up frustration or stress at school.
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting an adult

How can you support young carers in school?

- Support the school's policy
- Discuss any concerns with the designated member of staff
- Help children identify their caring role in their family
- Show understanding
- Be sensitive to the needs of the young carer
- Ensure young carer has a support plan (see Appendix 2)
- Use resources information as appropriate
- With agreement pass on any support needs and relevant information to the young carer's new school

YOUNG CARERS POLICY APPENDIX 2

Young Carers Support Plan/Agreement

NAME:.....

Someone close to me needs me to care for them. I can't always find time for myself and I get stressed out. These are some of the things you could do to help me at school.

- I have a lot to cope with and I want to stay in the background in class.
- I have very little time for my homework and no time if my family are in crisis.
- My _____ can get ill very quickly. This can make me scared, worried stressed and angry.
- It can be weird when _____ gets well again-everything changes and people expect me to be different.
- If I have to stay after school people at home may go without care they need.
- I need my mobile on during the day, or be able to use a phone. Knowing I can be contacted will relieve stress and help me concentrate.
- Please tell the other teachers at school, although I might not want to talk about it.
- I'm being bullied because my _____ is ill or disabled.
- I feel stressed sometimes- people are relying on me.
- I worry when I am at school. If I'm not concentrating it is for a reason. Don't make a big deal of this
- It is important to me to care for my _____ (I might still get angry about it though!)
- I am working 24/7. Sometimes I feel I've done a day's work before I even get to school.
- Don't judge my family- this is just how it is.
- Please support me in school and help me manage my work.
- My parent/s is/are deaf/blind. To communicate with them you need to use _____
- My parent is often ill at home and unable to talk to school if you phone.

My own ideas: