

# Young Carers Policy



**ST HILDA'S**  
CE HIGH SCHOOL

WISDOM

HOPE

COMMUNITY

DIGNITY

EQUALITY

**Date policy prepared:** August 2021

**Governor Committee:** Full Governors

**Date ratified by governing body:** 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

**Policy reviewed by:** Full Governors

**Date for next review (annual/2 yearly):** August 2023

VALUE			THE POLICY	
Wisdom	Hope	Community	Dignity	Equality
<p>We aim to ensure that all students who are providing a caring role to another person are treated with dignity so that they are included fully within the community of St Hilda's.</p> <p>The policy is designed to clearly outline the processes to be followed for students who are providing care to another person and for all staff that will be involved in their pastoral and academic care.</p>				



## Identifying and Supporting

St Hilda's CE High School is committed to enabling young carers to access education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at this school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education and other services to which they are entitled.

---

### Definition

A young carer is defined in law as a *'person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care to another person'*. This includes *'providing practical or emotional support'* which is *'not under or by virtue of a contract or of voluntary Work'*. (Children and families Act 2014)

The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

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

- Physical disability
  - Sensory disability
  - Learning disability
  - Mental health problem
  - Chronic illness
  - Substance misuse problem
- 

### Caring Tasks

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. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

**Nursing care** giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.

**Personal intimate care** washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements.

**Emotional care** being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up. In cases where a young carer is supporting an adult with drug/alcohol misuse problem, they will often take a leading role in trying to keep that person safe.

**Domestic care** doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc.

<b>Financial care</b>	running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc.
<b>Child care</b>	taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities.
<b>Communication &amp; Interpreting</b>	communicating on behalf of the adult or family with agencies/services and interpreting for a language or sensory impairment

---

## Possible Effect on Education

**St Hilda's CE High School** acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its students, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's access to education and attainment.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might:

- Have erratic or poor school attendance
- Arrive late at school
- Decline in academic achievement
- Not complete homework
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips
- Lack motivation
- Have back problems, aches and pains patterns of being generally unwell
- Appear withdrawn, isolated from peers, have difficulties socialising
- Show, anxiety, depression, anger, self-harming behaviour
- Have poor concentration (due to worrying about the person who is cared for)
- Have poor home/ school relationship
- Have parents who do not attend parents evening or lack of overall contact with school
- Have false signs of maturity, assuming an adult role in social situations or have difficulty enjoying childhood activities
- Have no obvious signs

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). School may need to make alternative arrangements for communication about attainment.

---

## Support Offered

**St Hilda's CE High School** acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered through the life of a school. Through this policy, school is giving the message that young carers' education and school experience is important.

The designated school leads for young carers is **Roy Bellmon** (Deputy Headteacher and DSL) who acts as organisational lead for young carers and liaises with relevant colleagues and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated links. The school governor link is **Joan Stein**.

**St Hilda's CE High School** will ensure that appropriate information is shared with school staff in order that there is an awareness of the young carer's situation.

### Additionally...

- We will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- We appreciate that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- We will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.
- We will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and other appropriate services/agencies.
- We will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- We will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- We recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers. Available provision includes (but is not limited to):
  - Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
  - Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
  - Access to homework club
  - Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (if appropriate and where possible)
  - Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (where there is a genuine crisis).
  - Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited (DfES 2006)
  - Access for parents with impaired mobility
  - Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
  - Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school

## Why do we need a school lead for Young Carers?

### Background to the role

A young carer is a child or young person who provides care for another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development.

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

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problems
- Chronic illness
- Drug or alcohol misuse problems

They may also be taking on a caring role if they are:

- growing up with disabled siblings,
- in a family where there has been recent serious or terminal illness diagnosed,
- coping with illness in wider family.

### What young carers say makes a difference

- Being identified as a young carer
- Acknowledgement of their caring role
- Help to get the right support
- Someone to talk to and feeling safe
- Flexibility
- Not having to re-tell their 'story'
- Information transferred when they move schools
- Information and an emergency plan
- Reassurance that their family is not going to be split up
- Support for parents and the whole family
- 16-19 Bursary

---

## Identifying a Young Carer in School

Signs that someone may have caring responsibilities include:

- Arriving late at school
- Missing days at school

- Tiredness
- Hunger
- Change in hygiene/appearance
- Underachievement
- Unable to complete homework on time
- Change in behaviour – becoming angry or aggressive or withdrawn/quieter
- Difficulties with peer group, limited social skills
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Not attending after school activities or activities in local area
- Non-attendance on school trips, particularly residential
- Being bullied
- Financial difficulties – on pupil premium/free school meals/bursary
- Parent/carer uses disabled parking space
- Physical problems, such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, from assuming adult roles
- Lack of parent/carer attending parents evening or other school events
- Anxious
- Low attention span
- Low mood/mental health

Staff should notify the DSL or DDSL if they have any concerns that a student may be a young carer. They may notice some of the signs during lessons or during form/mentoring time. Staff may also notice some of the signs as an observer without the need for any 1-1 engagement with the student. The DSL or DDSL will either meet with the student or identify a suitable member of staff to meet with the student. The following questions from Action for Carers will be used to help determine a student's caring role and a plan to support the student will be produced.

---

## Young Carer Identification questions

<https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Young-Carers-Identification-Guide-a-tool-for-education-staff.pdf>

Please see Appendix A for a useful guide and questions to help identify a young carer

---

## Ways to support Young Carers in School

The suggestions below illustrate some ways in which schools may support young carers.

- Use a child centred approach – listen to young carers, respect and be open to believing what they say.

- Respond to young carers' needs sympathetically and sensitively and be sensitive to the needs of all family members – do not discuss young carers' situations in front of other students or parents.
  - Communicate information about young carers and their families only on a 'need to know basis' and inform young carers of your intentions regarding the information provided.
  - Make information regarding health issues and local community services available and accessible to all young people, including who and what is available locally to meet young carers' needs.
  - Provide flexible and sensitive support for young carers when their caring role is particularly stressful and may be affecting attendance, punctuality, engagement or completion of work. However, a balance does need to be struck that ensures these young carers do receive a full education and are not distinguished as being different from the rest of their class.
  - Challenge bullying or isolation of young carers and where necessary help them to integrate into existing school groups.
  - Establish a confidentiality statement in case of the need to share information with others (particularly in relation to safeguarding issues), and explain this clearly to young carers.
  - Offer young carers the use of a telephone, in private. (This allows them to 'phone the person they care for during the day to check on their welfare, thus reducing anxiety and improving attendance and concentration.)
  - Allow young carers the opportunity to talk to someone they trust – again this may reduce anxiety and relieve tension.
  - Be aware that frequent absences may indicate difficulties with levels of support from community care/adult services and family may be willing for advocacy on their behalf, if not, this must be respected. The school should still address the pupil's welfare using their assessment procedures.
  - Support parents with mobility problems in visiting the school and attending school events, for example by ensuring that the premises are wheelchair accessible. Maintain regular contact with parents who are unable to come into school.
  - Monitor outcomes and provide appropriate intervention as required.
-



## Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

**Last reviewed and modified:** August 2021

**Review date:** August 2023

---

## Useful links

### **Support in Liverpool:**

Support for young carers is delivered by the commissioned service Barnardo's Action with Young Carers Service and Liverpool CAMHS. Their contact details are:

- Barnardos Action with Young Carers, 0151 228 4455, [youngcarers.liverpool@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:youngcarers.liverpool@barnardos.org.uk)
- Liverpool CAMHS, [www.liverpoolcamhs.com](http://www.liverpoolcamhs.com)

### **Other local authority areas:**

- Knowsley, <https://www.vibeuk.org/me-time>
- Sefton, [www.sefton-carers.org.uk/index.php/young-carers-service](http://www.sefton-carers.org.uk/index.php/young-carers-service)
- St Helens, <https://www.sthelensyoungcarers.org/>
- Warrington, <https://wired.me.uk/services/warrington-young-carers-service>
- Wigan, [www.walyc.org.uk](http://www.walyc.org.uk)
- Wirral, <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/action-young-carers-wirral>

### **Other national support services:**

- The Childrens Society, <https://bit.ly/2MFn1Gt>
  - Carers Trust, <https://carers.org>
  - Barnardos , [www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/young-carers](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/young-carers)
  - Young carers.net, <http://www.youngcarers.net/>
-

## Appendix A: Identifying hidden and new young carers: A tool for education providers

Young carers are children and young people who provide care for family members who have physical or mental illnesses, disabilities or substance misuse issues. 1 in 5 young people are young carers, with 1 in 12 taking on mid- to high-level care. Young carers are a particularly vulnerable group, especially during lockdown and as we come out of it.

### Why we need to ask questions:

- Many young people with caring responsibilities **aren't known** to their schools or colleges and don't see themselves as being young carers or feel too worried or embarrassed to ask for help
- **Early identification is vital.** Often young carers don't get identified until a crisis. The sooner we can find out someone is a young carer, the more support can be put in place to help keep them safe, well and able to attend and achieve their best
- Lots of people will have had an **increase to their caring role** due to the Covid-19 pandemic too, because they won't have had their usual support or breaks at school/college or with friends
- Some young people may also have **become carers** as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, due to increases in ill health and substance misuse, and lack of access to services and support.

Education staff have a key role in identifying and supporting young carers. Just asking a few simple questions can help identify these vulnerable young people in your school or community and also help reduce the stigma of caring, making it feel OK and normal to talk about it at school or college.

We know some staff might not feel like they have the experience or training to talk about this though, so here are some questions that young carers have written to help you do this. You could use some or all of the questions on pages 3-6:

- If you're speaking to young people who aren't attending over the phone
- On forms (e.g. admissions or transfer forms, assessment forms, well-being surveys etc)
- As part of regular meetings with students, especially if you've noticed anything has changed about their behaviour or well-being (see 'Signs someone might have caring responsibilities' on page 2)
- By adapting them as group discussion questions if you're doing work to raise awareness about young carers in your school or college.

Thanks to all the young carers from these organisations who created this document (August 2020)



## Things to remember though!

- If there is an information session or assembly, make sure there's a follow up as some young carers won't identify themselves in large groups.
- It might be harder for young people to speak openly over the phone or for you to pick up on their feelings if you aren't seeing them face-to-face.
- If you do add questions to forms, ask these regularly so it's not just a one-off tick box exercise. And make sure there is some follow up – if people let you know they're a young carer on a form, they need to be acknowledged and offered support.

### How to use this tool – IMPORTANT!

- We recommend these questions are asked by **someone who the young person knows and feels comfortable with**
- This is **not meant to be read out as a full script**. These are ideas for you to work into your everyday conversations with students using your skills, experiences and knowledge of the young people in your school/college
- Think about the **right time and place** to have this conversation so people aren't rushed and feel safe and comfortable to talk
- It's also important to be aware that lots of people might **feel worried** about being open about what is happening in their family or that social care might get involved. Explain this is a **confidential conversation** and you will only share what you talk about if you're worried anyone is at risk of harm or to try and get extra help for them and their family.

### Signs someone might have caring responsibilities

- Regular lateness
- Low attendance
- Not completing homework
- Tiredness
- Low attention span
- Lack motivation
- Low mood/mental ill-health
- Anxious
- Parent/guardian uses disabled parking space
- Lack of parent/guardian attending parents evening/other school events
- On pupil premium/free school meals
- Change in hygiene/appearance
- Change in behaviour – becoming aggressive or angry, withdrawn or quieter.

## Young Carer Identification Questions

The questions in **blue** are for you to use/adapt in your conversations using your skills, experiences and knowledge of the young person.

The text in **black** below each question is to help you understand more about young carers, not to be read out to them.

A list of just the questions can also be found on P.15 for you to type or write on.

1. I wanted to have a quick chat to ask how you are. I've noticed you've *[see signs listed above etc]*. I just wanted to check if you're OK or if there's anything we can do?

Explain again that this is a confidential conversation and you will only share what you talk about if you're worried anyone is at risk of harm or to try and get extra help for them and their family.

2. Sometimes when things are happening at home it can affect how we feel at school/college. So, I wondered if there's anyone in your family who needs extra support because of physical or mental illnesses, or any disabilities, or because of drugs or alcohol?

If the answer is YES – this person could be a young carer or young adult carer. Continue with the rest of the questions.

3. Do you do anything to help them or look after them? Or to help anyone else in your family because of their *[illness/disability/drug or alcohol use]*?

*[If yes]* What kind of things do you do?

This might be practical things like cooking or cleaning, looking after siblings, self-care, providing emotional support, managing finances, personal care (washing/toileting etc), giving medicines, or providing emergency help or first aid.

4. Is there anyone else at home who helps out? Or anyone who doesn't live at home who helps with looking after your family?

Explore this with them. If this young person is the sole carer, or is taking on a lot of caring, they might be very isolated, struggle with their emotions, or need help or support. They might get some support already from services or family/friends who live nearby though, so it's important to ask what they think and feel they need, perhaps offering or referring for a Young Carers Assessment if they want this *[look for information online about Young Carers Assessments in your area]*.

5. Do you often think about or worry about your family when you're not with them?

*[If yes]* Does it distract you or make it hard to concentrate?

*[If yes]* Is this on your mind all the time or just when you're away from home?

*[If yes]* What kind of things do you worry about?

- They might worry they might fall, not take medication, not eat, harm themselves, drink too much alcohol, take drugs, not care for their siblings properly etc.

- This could make the young person anxious, stressed and/or unable to concentrate at school/college.
- It might also mean they are really tired, can't pay attention, are always be checking their phone, or aren't able to meet deadlines with homework.

## 6. How does this make you feel?

- Allow time for this question – it might take young people time to open up and understand how they feel if they've not talked about this before. They might also get upset so make sure they don't have to go straight back to lessons if that happens.
- You could use feelings cards, picture cards, ask people to draw or use other interactive activities to help them understand and share their feelings. Adapt these activities to the age and interests of the young person you're talking to.
- They might not realise that they are a young carer or think what they do is 'normal' and that everyone does it. They might also have been caring a really long time and so feel indifferent to it as it's how life has always been.
- They might feel worried that talking about this might get them or their family in trouble.
- They may feel they have no choice but to care and that nothing can help.
- Sometimes young carers can feel very alone - that feel no-one asks how they are or how they feel about caring. The focus is on the person they care for.
- Sometimes people feel very positive about their caring and feel they can manage it really well. But sometimes caring can make people feel lonely, left out, misunderstood or not listened to.
- It is important to recognise and celebrate what an amazing thing young people are doing as carers. If they don't mention any, you might want to ask them if there are any positive feelings, things they're good at as a carer or things they're proud of about what they do. Celebrate the positives with them as well as letting them know they can get support for the things that are hard.



## 7. Do you get time to yourself to relax, see friends or do any hobbies on your own away from the people you care for? Does looking after someone ever take up too much time and stop you doing things you want to do? What kind of things?

Caring responsibilities can mean young people can't always get time for themselves to attend after-school activities, go out with friends, have friends over or have a hobby, leading to isolation and stress.

## 8. Does caring have any effects on your own health? *[physical and/or emotional]*

- Caring can sometimes cause health problems like back strain, headaches, difficulty sleeping, eating disorders, self-harming, depression, anxiety, and panic attacks
- The 2017 GP Patient Survey found that 39% of young adult carers reported experience of anxiety or depression compared with 28% of young people without a caring responsibility
- If they say yes, think about advising them to see their GP or offer emotional well-being support when talking through Q10 below.

## 9. How are things going at school/college? How does caring affect school/college for you?

- For some young carers, school/college is a break from home and they do really well (although stressful periods like transitions, exams or things getting worse at home can affect this)
- For others though, school/college can be hard. They might not be able to attend all the time or be late because of their caring. Some find it hard to concentrate, they might not be able to complete homework on time, or they may get upset/angry which can get them into trouble
- Education can suffer and, on average, young carers GCSE grades are 9 grades lower than non-carers. Support, understanding and flexibility at school/college can make all the difference though.

## 10. Do you have anyone you already talk to about your caring? You're not alone and there is support out there if you want any [more] support.

- In school / college we can offer young carers .....  
*Tell them about all types of support available – e.g. someone to talk to, flexibility about homework, not asking questions when you're late, a weekly group for young carers, funding to help you get a break or manage with essentials etc.*
- Would any of this be helpful for you?  
*Agree a support plan with the young person.*
- Is there anyone you'd like me to talk to who you've already spoken to about this?
- There is also support outside school/college from...  
*Talk through local support agencies and what they offer e.g. your local young carers organisation or city council support.*
- Would you like any more information about this?  
*If yes, signpost or make referrals if they want this.*

**Remember this might have been a hard conversation. Ask them if they need anything now and let them know what will happen next. And remember to check how they are again soon – they might feel worried about what they have shared with you afterwards.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I wanted to have a quick chat to ask how you are. I've noticed you've [see signs listed above etc]. I just wanted to check if you're OK or if there's anything we can do to help?

2. Sometimes when things are happening at home it can affect how we feel at school/college. So, I wondered if there's anyone in your family who needs extra support because of physical or mental illnesses, or any disabilities, or because of drugs or alcohol?

3. Do you do anything to help them or look after them? Or to help anyone else in your family because of their *[illness/disability/drug or alcohol use]*?  
*[If yes]* What kind of things do you do?

4. Is there anyone else at home who helps out? Or anyone who doesn't live at home who helps with looking after your family?

5. Do you often think about or worry about your family when you're not with them? Does it distract you or make it hard to concentrate?

*[If yes]* Is this on your mind all the time or just when you're away from home?

*[If yes]* What kind of things do you worry about?

6. How does this make you feel?

7. Do you get time to yourself to relax, see friends or do any hobbies on your own away from the people you care for? Does looking after someone ever take up too much time and stop you doing things you want to do? What kind of things?

8. Does caring have any effects on your own health? *[physical and/or emotional]*

9. How are things going at school/college? How does caring affect school/college for you?

10. Do you have anyone you already talk to about your caring? You're not alone and there is support out there if you want any [more] support. Agreed plan – in and out of school/college: