

Easthampstead Park Community School

Young Carer Policy



What is a young carer?

A young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person who is ill, disabled, has a mental health condition or addiction problem. 'A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring roles risks impacting upon their emotional or physical well-being and their prospects in education and life.' (Department of Health, 2014).

Young carers may be primary carers i.e. caring for a parent or carer or a secondary carer i.e. helping to care for a sibling or older relative.

Definition of Caring

Caring responsibilities are defined not just in terms of practical support, such as carrying out practical tasks, for instance, shopping, cooking, cleaning etc. but also in terms of emotional support recognising the emotional impact on young people of care needs within a family.

Possible Impact on Child's Education

Caring responsibilities can impact on young people's education in a number of ways:

- Punctuality - 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 assignments - many young carers will find it difficult to find time to complete school assignments and may also have no one at home who can offer assistance with more difficult assignments.
- 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 get home promptly 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.
- 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 lack of disposable income or caring responsibilities, they may also have restricted access to out of school clubs and activities that other children take for granted.
- 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.
- Low income - 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.

Identification

The SLT and governing body are accountable for ensuring the school provides a highly cohesive learning environment which fosters equal opportunities and meets the diverse needs of the pupils at the school. To fulfil this role effectively, the SLT and governing body should be aware that:

- Many pupils attending their school will have caring responsibilities
- Young carers are a vulnerable and disadvantaged group, specifically mentioned in Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook (Ofsted, 2015). As a result, these pupils will have specific needs to which the school must respond.

If a staff member believes a student is young carer they should then refer to a member of the Inclusion Team where a Wellbeing Questionnaire will be completed to provide a picture of the young carer's wellbeing and to inform the types of support they might need. Young Carers are always encouraged to come forward and make themselves known.

Those students identified as young carers

To meet the needs of young carers in school, it is vital that all school staff:

- Understand why young carers need support to enjoy and achieve at school.
- Sign up to the school's whole school commitment for young carers.
- Know the simple things they can do to identify, support and signpost young carers as part of their wider roles within the school.

Supporting Young Carers

The school respects the privacy of young carers and their families:

- A young carer's privacy is respected and information about their caring role is not communicated in front of their peers.
- The school views young carers as any other pupil but understands that they have the additional pressure of caring responsibilities, which may require additional support or flexible arrangements.

The school ensures young carers and their families know how to access support by:

- Displaying information about available support on the school noticeboards and website, and by including information to families on a regular basis via parents' eve.

The school reduces barriers to education and learning and supports the wellbeing of young carers by:

- Providing targeted interventions to pupils, including young carers, for example homework/coursework support; emotional support; health support; peer support groups. The school takes the needs of young carers into account when planning and delivering this support, for example running homework support at lunch-time.
- Being flexible, where appropriate, for example allowing young carers to use a telephone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes so as to reduce any worry they may have about a family member; and negotiating deadlines for homework and coursework.

Reviewed:

October 2018

Responsibility for Implementation and Review:

Assistant Headteacher Inclusion
Student Support Committee

Date of Next Review:

Autumn 2020