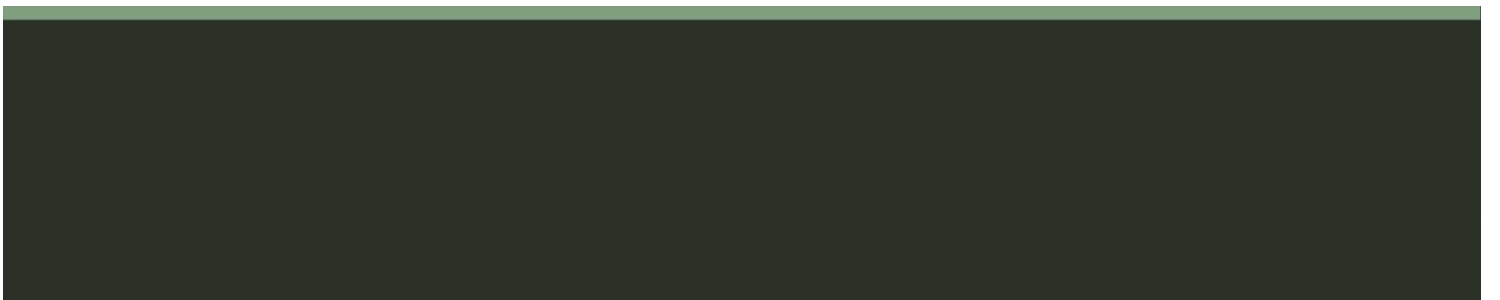




YOUNG CARERS POLICY

GB Committee Responsible:	Curriculum & Achievement
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BENTLEY WOOD HIGH SCHOOL YOUNG CARERS POLICY

Introduction

Bentley Wood 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 Bentley Wood, 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.

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

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

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.

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 is underpinned by the following aims:

- To identify young carers within Bentley Wood
- To engage with students and families to support young carers to achieve educationally
- To promote a positive culture in which young people are safeguarded by the prevention of undertaking inappropriate care
- To use 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 such as trips and rewards

At Bentley Wood we understand the issues faced by young carers and their families, what to look and listen for and how to respond, by:

- Keeping up to date with national and local developments affecting young carers and their families.
- Displaying information about young carer issues on staff noticeboards and the school intranet.
- Embedding training on young carer issues in induction training and continuous professional development for all staff including specific training about how to identify young carers affected by stigmatised conditions (such as parental mental ill health and substance misuse).

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 student 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, including signposting to other resources such as the young carers service and school nurse, on the school noticeboards, webpage and prospectus, and by including information in the school newsletter and communication to families on a regular basis.
- Using the curriculum to promote a full understanding, acceptance of and respect for, issues such as caring, disability and impairment, for example, embedding the challenges faced by young carers into PSHE lessons and delivering regular assemblies raising awareness of young carer issues.

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

- Using student progress meetings and the internal management system to identify changes in attendance and attainment and consider whether these may be due to a potential caring role.
- Using school enrolment and annual 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.

- Referring to lists of children on child protection and looked-after children plans, to identify students who are living with adults experiencing mental ill health or addiction problems.
- Checking School Census data on students with disabilities, to identify sibling carers.
- Implementing self-identification systems for students, for example drop-in sessions, a school message box or a questionnaire.
- Asking feeder schools/early-years providers to inform the school if a student has already been identified as a young carer.
- Checking whether any young carer status has been recorded on the Common Transfer File when a student transfers to your school from another and including this information when transferring a student.
- Asking other schools attended by siblings to tell you when the sibling has been identified as a young carer.
- 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.

The school is aware of other physical signs that help to identify young carers

In addition to the measures taken above, a student may display certain characteristics that may identify them as a young carer. Staff are aware of the warning signs below and consider that the student may be a young carer when asking about the following:

- Regular or increased lateness or absence
- Concentration problems, anxiety, tiredness
- Under-achievement and late or incomplete homework: may be a sudden unexplained drop in attainment
- Few or no peer friendships; conversely the student may get on well with adults and present as very mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, sometimes explicitly linked to a family member's disability, health or substance misuse problem
- Behavioural problems, sometimes the result of anger or frustration expressed inappropriately
- Unable to attend extra-curricular activities

- Difficulties in engaging parents; parents not attending parents' evenings

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

- Considering the needs of young carers when planning and reviewing quality first teaching.
- Providing targeted interventions to students, including young carers, for example homework/coursework support; emotional support; health support; peer mentoring or 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. (See appendix 1 for more details on the lunch time young carers drop in.)
- 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.
- Offering support to the student and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school/college/university lead for young carers and their families.
- Identifying young carers at risk of falling into the not in education, employment or training category and taking appropriate actions to address this.
- Referring/signposting young carers to other resources such as the school nurse and local young carers' service.
- Signposting and/or undertaking whole family work that aims to support parents/siblings in order to prevent or reduce a caring role.

The school understands the needs of families of young carers by:

- Ensuring the school is accessible and welcoming to parents with disabilities and/or illness, offering additional support to enable them to attend parent's evenings or other school events. Home visits will be considered where appropriate.
- Offering additional support to remove any communication barriers with parents, so that parents are able to be fully engaged with the education of their child.
- Considering how best to support those parents who find it difficult to escort younger children to school.

The school monitors and reviews policy and practice, taking into account the views of young carers and their families by:

- Implementing and reviewing individual student support plans and/or provision maps, which recognise the student's specific needs as a young carer.
- Using tracking of young carers on internal management systems and actively engaging with young carers and their families, for example drop-in sessions and questionnaires, to shape and improve provision for young carers.
- The link Governor for this policy is Ms Shelley Shah who will be invited to carry out monitoring visits and report back to the Governing Body.

Appendix 1

Bentley Wood, Lunchtime Young Carers' Drop-in

The lunchtime Young Carers' drop-in club is an opportunity for pupils to enjoy respite from their caring responsibilities with peers who understand some of what they may be going through.

Pupils get an early lunch card so they can get their lunch first and then come across to spend time with other Young Carers.

Run with the monthly support of Nisha Thakershi from Harrow Carers, Young Carers Project, the club is a great space for Young Carers to relax and unwind as well as enjoy a range of games, chitchat, arts and crafts and refreshments.

Activities include flower-making, creative crafts for Black History Month, jewellery making and Mindfulness chocolate eating! There are also board and word games, badge-making and occasional liaison with Young Carers in other schools. This included a Christmas meal at Nandos in Harrow in December 2018, where Young Carers in a number of schools across Harrow, had a chance for a meal and socialising and a validation that they are not alone.

The Bentley Wood Young Carers' club offers many opportunities for socialising and support, empathy and understanding.

There is a '**Worry Box**' available for Young Carers to gain confidential additional support as well as an '**Inspirational Book**', to share positive aspects of being a Young Carer in slogans, stories, poetry or pictures.

The Young Carers' Drop-in Club takes place on alternate Thursdays from 12.30-1.20pm in U6. With Sixth Form Ambassador Young Carers also on hand to help and chat to – it's a great place for all our Young Carers.