



# YOUNG CARERS POLICY

<b>GB Committee Responsible:</b>	Curriculum & Achievement
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Janice Howkins
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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.

Young carers are recognised by the DfE and the school as children who are vulnerable. This is because the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care is often inappropriate for that child's age and stage of development, and risks jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and outcomes.

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

Where a pupil has been identified as, or is suspected to be, a young carer, teaching staff will liaise with the young carer lead to ensure that the difficulties the pupil's home situation presents are accounted for and accommodated, while still ensuring high expectations and aspirations are held for the pupil in relation to their abilities and circumstances.

The school will ensure that the pupil is offered appropriate pastoral care and emotional support, and teaching staff will aim to ensure that they facilitate, as far as possible, opportunities for the pupil to bond with their classmates during lesson time

**The school reduces barriers to education and learning and supports the wellbeing of young carers, on a case by case basis, 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 young carer lead, Ms Claire Bannon, is responsible for:

- Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.
- Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need.
- Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services.
- Ensuring that any existing individual pupil plans recognise pupils' specific needs as a young carer
- Meeting regularly with young carers and liaising with teaching staff regarding their educational development.
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with the headteacher

The link Governor for this policy is Mrs Gretel Scarle who will be invited to carry out monitoring visits and report back to the Governing Body.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Exclusion Policy

## **Appendix 1**

### **Bentley Wood, Young Carers' Support Hub**

The Young Carers meet together regularly allowing them an opportunity to enjoy respite from their caring responsibilities with peers who understand some of what they may be going through. These meetings allow opportunities for socialising support, empathy and understanding.

During virtual school, an opportunity arose to create an online platform of support for our Young Carers via Teams. This allows them access to a monitored area both inside and outside of school where they can seek support from staff and support each other. We also use our Young Carers Teams page to promote opportunities both inside and outside of school.

We continue to work alongside Harrow Young Carers with their new approach to tailoring support for Young Carers outside of school time. We look for ways to promote events that Harrow Young Carers offer our students and seek solutions to help our students take up these opportunities.