

Policy	St Helen's Primary School Young Carers Policy
Ratification date	12.1.23
Next review date	

St. Helen's Primary School is committed to supporting and meeting the needs of Young Carers so that they can attend and enjoy school in the same way as their peers. This policy aims to ensure Young Carers at St Helen's are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

Definition

A Young Carer is a child or young person who is helping to look after someone at home. Most are caring for a parent, commonly in a single parent family, 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 the following:

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

Caring Tasks

A Young Carer will take on additional responsibilities to those normal to their age. A Young Carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a Young Carer could have 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.
- Domestic care - doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc
- Financial care - running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc
- Child care - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities
- Translating - this could be at doctors' appointments discussing personal and intimate details, school meetings and other important situations.

Possible effect on education

St Helen's School acknowledges that there are Young Carers among its pupils, and that whilst being a Young Carer has some positive effects such as a sense of purpose, identity, improved self-esteem, independence, maturity and resourcefulness, it can also have an adverse effect on a young person's education, achievement and wellbeing.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a Young Carer **might** experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities and issues at home
- Concentration problems, anxiety or worry in school
- Emotional distress possibly manifesting itself as headaches, stomach ache, often tearful
- Tiredness in school
- Scruffy and dirty appearance, clothes are often ill fitting and dirty, nails long and dirty
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, because of assuming adult roles
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration) the unfairness of the situation
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Limited social skills
- Bullying

- Over attachment, frequently seeking out adults for hugs, reassurance etc
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem
- Confusion, peers don't share the same responsibly
- Parents unable to attend school assemblies, parent's evenings and other school events

Support Offered

St Helen's Primary School acknowledges and understands that Young Carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, St Helen's Primary School is giving the message that Young Carers' education and wellbeing is important and that, like all other pupils, they are a valued member of the school community.

The designated Young Carers lead at St. Helen's is Mrs Kristie Wildin, who will liaise with relevant Colleagues, Carers Trust Cambridgeshire and other agencies and professionals, with the consent of the Young Carer, being conscious at all times to respect the privacy of the Young Carer and their family and confidentiality of information shared.

All pupils will be made aware of the designated Young Carers lead at St. Helen's and will have the opportunity to speak to them in private. Staff will remember not to discuss their situation in front of their peers at any time.

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.
- We will follow child protection procedures regarding any Young Carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- We will promote discussion via whole school assemblies and through PSHE in the school curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.

Arrangements

St. Helen's Primary School recognises 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
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis). Any approved

absence for a Young Carer will be time limited.

- Access for parents with impaired mobility.
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired, housebound or have English as an additional language
- Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.

Parents/carers

We understand that parents might be resistant, at first, to complete referral for their child due to fears about the child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or shared or their parenting skills being called into question. We will ensure at all times to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the family's situation and only relevant staff such as the Head teacher, class Teacher and SENCO are informed of issues surrounding the family and Young Carer. We will not pass comment or judgement on any family, individual or situation but offer support and guidance in a mutually respectful environment.

If you require further advice or support please contact the school office or Mrs Kristie Wildin on 01487 841468.