

Developing a school policy for young carers and their families

“Over half the councils’ schools had a young carers’ policy and a designated teacher with responsibility for young carers. As a result, the highest levels of referrals to the young carers’ project came from schools.”¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School leadership team
- Governing body

This chapter will support schools to:

- ensure that there is a policy that supports young carers and their families in both a whole-school and holistic approach.
- ensure that the policy is translated and embedded into school and curriculum plans.
- monitor the effectiveness of policies in relation to young carers and their families.
- provide opportunities for pupils and their families to feed their ideas into any support that is being developed.

Synopsis

The Statutory Directors for Children’s Services (ADCS) and Adult Social Services (ADASS), (2010)² encourages schools to put a policy for young carers in place and Ofsted (2009) cited having such a policy in schools as good practice.

A caring role can impact heavily upon a young person, creating barriers to learning both in school and at home. Young carers can often be victims of bullying and so, in addition to a policy specific to young carers, it is essential to revisit all policies, including your school’s bullying policy, to make sure that they are really working for young carers.

It is vital that the voices of young carers and their families are heard in the development and delivery of these documents.

Establishing or revising a policy for young carers

Each school should have a policy in place that recognises the needs of and outlines the provision



of services for young carers. This can either take the form of a new policy developed specifically for young carers, or it can be the revision of an established policy or policies. This policy should then be monitored to make sure that it is, and continues to be, effective.

The policy should reflect a whole-school approach to supporting young carers, as well as detail how your school will work alongside other professionals and agencies, including the voluntary sector, to provide a more coherent and holistic support framework.

The policy should also consider the needs of the family as a whole, including parents who may need further assistance due to mobility or communication difficulties, so that they are fully engaged with the education of their child.

The policy must also translate into school plans to ensure that measures are embedded.

Bullying

Much of the bullying experienced by young carers results from the stigma associated with certain disabilities and health conditions, such as mental ill health or substance misuse. Strong policies on bullying, inclusion and anti-discrimination, which identify young carers as a group of pupils at particular risk, can help to reduce this.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 3** National legislation and guidance
- 10** How can school governors help?
- 11** School leadership teams
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work
- 29** Access, support and involving parents with disabilities.

Key resources

As well as the tool at the end of this chapter and those in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Young carers, parents and their families: Key principles of practice

Supportive practice guidance for those working directly with or commission services for young carers and their families.

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=1111523736.htm

→ Young Carers: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities

Developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, this document contains an exemplar school policy.

<http://static.carers.org/files/young-carers-guidance-for-schools-las-08-07-ok-3128.doc>

→ Professionals website

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website dedicated solely to professionals who work with adult and young carers in health, education or and social care:

www.carers.org/professionals



→ **Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families**

Developed by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers

¹*Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families.*(2009). Ofsted:
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers/(language)/eng-GB)

²*Working together to support young carers: A model local memorandum of understanding between statutory directors for children's services and adult social services.* (2009). Department of Children, Schools and Families: www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00678/



12.1 School policy checklist

The following points should be considered when creating/revising your school's policy for young carers. Please adapt these accordingly.

Young carers – A model school statement for pupils and families

At (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) we are aware that pupils in our school may well have caring roles at home.

We believe that all children and young people should have equal access to education, regardless of what is happening at home and that no child should have to take on inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities.

When a young person does look after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or substance misuse problem, they may need a little extra support to help them get the most out of school.

We aim to understand the issues faced by young carers and to have a separate policy for young carers stating how we will support any pupil who helps to look after someone at home.

We aim to support young carers through a whole-school approach and through working with other agencies and professionals, with the understanding that support for the whole family is in the best interests of the young carer.

Current policy	✓
<p>The school is aware of paragraph 2.28 of the School Admissions Code 2010 which under the section 'Social and medical need' states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">'...it is acceptable to give higher priority to children or families where there is a social or medical need (for example, where one or both parents or the child has a disability that may make travel to a school further away more difficult).'</p> <p>For more information, see www.education.gov.uk</p>	
The school views young carers as any other pupil, but understands that they have the additional burden of caring responsibilities.	
The school will keep up to date with national and local developments and with legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.	
The whole school is committed to meeting the needs of young carers so that they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and have equal access to their education as their peers.	



A school lead will be assigned and will have special responsibility for young carers and their families. Pupils and families will be made aware of the identity of the schools lead.	
Training on young carers' issues will be embedded in ongoing professional development for all staff.	
During the school enrolment process for new pupils, the school will identify whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → parent(s) or family members have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health problems. → the pupil helps to look after them and if this has an impact on their education. 	
Pupils who are young carers will be identified along with any additional needs they may have.	
Individual plans will recognise the child's/young person's specific needs as a young carer.	
The school will use and evaluate data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers.	
The school will aim to offer support to improve attendance and pupil's well-being.	
The right to pupil's and families' privacy will be respected and the school will only share information with professionals and agencies on a "need to know basis" in order to support pupils and families.	
Information about support available for young carers and how to access it will be made clearly available to both pupils and families.	
The school recognises that young carers and their families need to receive coordinated support by the school, working in partnership where appropriate with general practitioners, young carers' services, behaviour and education support teams.	
Young carers will be referred or signposted to other support agencies and professionals as appropriate, including the local young carers' service.	
The school will refer or signpost families to other support services when appropriate.	
The school adheres to the <i>Disability Discrimination Acts (1995, 2005)</i> .	
The school is accessible and welcoming to parents with disabilities and/or illness, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings or other school events. Home visits will be considered where appropriate.	



The school will offer additional support to remove any communication barriers with parents, so that parents are able to be fully engaged with the education of their child.	
The school will identify those young carers at risk of falling into the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) category and take appropriate actions to address this.	
The school will offer support to the young person and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school/college lead for young carers and their families.	
Relevant aspects of the curriculum, such as The National Healthy Schools Programme, SEAL, personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE education) and RRR, will be used to encourage positive approaches by all teachers and staff working with young carers.	
The school will use 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 education lessons curriculum.	
The school will consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities, such as sports coaching or concerts, due to their caring role. The school will also consider lunch time detentions rather than after school ones.	
The school will consider how best to support those parents who find it difficult to escort younger children to school.	
The school will allow 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.	
Where possible, the school will negotiate deadlines, for example, for homework and coursework, in advance.	
Other appropriate policies, such as a bullying policy, will take young carers into account.	
The school will actively seek feedback and ideas from young carers and their families in order to shape and improve provision for young carers.	