

Information for young carers and parents

“Make sure there is a clear and up-to-date community notice board where we can get information and help from within the community.”

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School administration/web team

This chapter will support schools to:

- provide young carers with clear, accessible and up-to-date information explaining what support is available to them and their families.
- advise young carers where information is available.
- show parents where they can get more support.

Synopsis

It is vital that both pupils and families have information about the support services available in school. Information for young carers and their families is intrinsic to the whole-school approach and is a crucial foundation for support. Demonstrating what support is in place clearly will not only help shape the ethos of the school, but should also encourage pupils and families to come forward and seek support.

Provide clear, accessible, and up to date information

Young carers often do not wish to self-identify. This may be because they see no benefit of going through the difficult task of doing so. Or it may be, simply, because they are not aware that they are young carers.

It is therefore important to provide clear, accessible, and up-to-date information explaining the role of a young carer along with what support is available to them and their families. Pupils need to know how to access this support and be encouraged to do so.

Information must be permanent since anyone can become a young carer at any time and available in different settings across school. It is also useful to display photos and names of key support staff.



Methods of information

- School notice board
- School intranet/internet page
- Prospectus
- School diary
- Newsletters
- Assemblies
- Books and film
- Events, for example Carers Week (www.carersweek.org)

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 33** Raising awareness amongst all pupils

Key resources

The tools found at the end of this chapter as well as those in the above suggested chapter are key resources.



34.1 How our school supports young carers: a template

This page has been developed with the view that schools will tailor the information to fit their own school and the support put into place for young carers and their families.

This model text is suitable for use in your school literature, on your notice boards, intranet or website.

Young carers: A school statement for pupils and families

At (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) we are aware that some pupils 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. When a young person looks after someone in their family who has a disability, mental or physical ill-health or substance misuse problem(s), 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. Our policy for young carers states how we will support any pupil who helps to look after someone at home.

For pupils

This is how (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) can support you if you help to care for someone at home.

We have a member of staff (INSERT NAME) who has special responsibility for young carers. They will let all new pupils know who they are and what they can do to help.

We can provide you with confidential support and advice in school.

We can issue you with a young carers card which will flag up to staff that you have caring responsibilities at home so you do not have to keep explaining your situation at home.

We work closely with the (INSERT NAME) young carers' service and can put you in touch with them and other support services. We can also put your family in touch with services who will be able to help you all.

We have a support group at lunchtime where young carers can meet and talk to other pupils who also have caring responsibilities.

We will respect your right to privacy as a young carer and will only share information about you and your family with people who need to know so that they can help you.

If you are unable to attend out of school activities, such as sports coaching or concerts, due to your caring role, then we will consider alternatives. Please speak to us if this is an issue. Additionally, after-school detentions will be enforced at lunchtimes.

(INSERT SCHOOL NAME) allows young carers to telephone home during breaks and lunchtimes.

We also include lessons on the challenges faced by young carers in PSHE in Year (INSERT YEAR).



For parents

This is how (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) can support you if you or another family member has a disability, mental or physical ill-health or substance misuse which has an impact on your child's education.

(INSERT SCHOOL NAME) is accessible to parents who have mobility and communication needs.

If your child is unable to attend out of school activities, such as sports coaching or concerts, then we will consider alternatives. Please speak to us if this is an issue. Additionally, after-school detentions will be enforced at lunchtimes.

Please come and speak to us if you have difficulties attending school events, such as parents' evenings, sports days or concerts, or if you have specific difficulties with supporting your child with their education.



34.2 Information and contacts for young carers: a template

You may find the following text and information useful to include in your literature, on your school notice board, intranet or internet, alongside any other information on how your school supports young carers.

Do you help to look after someone at home?

Then you may be a young carer. Young carers are children or young people who look after someone (normally in their family) who has an illness, a disability, mental ill-health or a problem with drugs or alcohol. You may take on practical or emotional caring tasks that an adult would normally do.

If you are a young carer, you may be looking after your mum or dad, or maybe your brother or sister.

The first thing to know is that you are **NOT ALONE**. There are **THOUSANDS** of other young people like you who care for someone in their family.

Some young carers have to:

- help lift someone to help them get around or help them wash, go to the toilet or get dressed.
- look after a brother or sister and make sure they are safe.
- cheer someone up or support them when they are feeling down.
- help care for someone by doing the cooking or housework or other jobs in the home.
- Interpret for someone or help them communicate.

If you are a young carer, juggling all your responsibilities may be difficult and it can be hard to find time for homework, activities after school or friends.

What other young people who care have said

“It’s not just the caring that affects you... what really gets you is the worry of it all. Having a parent who is ill and seeing them in such a state, of course it’s upsetting – you think about it a lot.”

“I’m not on my own! I didn’t realise how many young carers were in my school.”



Getting help and support

As a young person, you have the right to a good education. So if your caring role is getting in the way of your education please seek advice and support.

There is a lot of information that might help you if you are a young carer. There are also a lot of people who can help you. Sometimes you might not know where to get help, so here are a few suggestions:

→ **Speak to someone at your school**

(INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL LEAD/APPROPRIATE STAFF MEMBER)

→ **Speak to a good friend who you trust.**

→ **Go online at www.youngcarers.net**

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers has a website where you can chat to other young carers, for advice, information and support. Make sure you look at “Who Can Help Me?”

→ **Young carers’ services**

There are many young carers’ services in the UK. Although each one is different, they will generally offer support from adult workers, the opportunity to meet other young people who have caring responsibilities and who may be in a similar situation to you, fun activities and information for you and your family. See if there is a young carers’ service near you at

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

→ **Further sources of information and advice**

- Speak to your doctor
- Call the Carers Helpline on 0808 808 7777
- Go to Carers Direct **www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx**



34.3 Information and contacts for parents: a template

In order to support young carers more effectively, it is important that parents are aware of what support is available for them and their family and how to access this.

The text below can be used by your school to inform parents where they can find additional support. You may find it useful to include this text as part of school communications to parents or on your intranet.

Parents of young carers

Some children help look after someone in their family by:

- helping them to get up, get washed or get dressed, or helping with toileting.
- doing lots of the household chores like shopping, cleaning, cooking.
- staying in the house a lot to be there for them or to keep them safe.
- looking after brothers and sisters.
- providing emotional support or a shoulder to cry on.

For many families, relying on your child to care for you may seem like the only option; however, your children should not be expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. It should not be assumed that children should take on similar levels of caring responsibilities to adults.

How you might feel

If your children are caring for you, you may feel guilty, stressed, helpless or angry and find it hard to talk. You may be worried about your child's school attendance and education and worried about the future.

Step 1

If you are ill, disabled, have mental ill-health or are affected by substance misuse and need someone to help look after you, or if you need support to look after your own children, you should contact your GP or ring your local social services department and ask for someone to give you an assessment.

Or, you may have a child who is disabled or has a long-term illness and needs lot of extra care and attention from you. You can also ask for an assessment to help support them and you.

Any assessment should be able to identify what services you need for yourself and to help you look after your children.

Make sure that the person who does the assessment asks the whole family what would help them and tell them about the *Whole Family Pathway*. The *Whole Family Pathway* is a resource for all professionals who may be able to help you or your children. It can be found at www.youngcarer.com



Step 2

Find out if there is a young carers' service near you that offers young carers breaks, activities and someone to talk to. They may also be able to give you advice and information about the kind of help your family might be able to get. They should also be able to refer you to other professionals who can help.

If you can, be open with your child and tell them what is going on. Keeping them in the picture can allay their fears. Involve them in discussions with professionals if appropriate so that they can understand and ask questions themselves.

Talk to your child's school in confidence about the situation and ask what support they can offer.

Further sources of information and advice for you

- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website for young carers contains information for parents at www.youngcarers.net/parents
- The Disabled Parents Network provides information, advice and peer support to disabled parents, their families and supporters at www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk/
- If you are also a carer, visit the The Princess Royal Trust for Carers website to chat, for advice, info and support at www.carers.org

Further sources of information and advice for your child

- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website dedicated solely to young carers for chat, for advice, info and support at www.youngcarers.net
- Your local carers' service can be found at www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=projects.htm