

Addressing bullying

*"That is why I left school...because of the bullying...being different."*¹

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Peer mentors
- Pastoral support lead
- School leadership team

This chapter will support schools to:

- understand the reasons why young carers can be bullied.
- identify and address incidences of bullying towards young carers.
- reduce incidences of bullying towards young carers.

Synopsis

Research by the National Centre for Social Research found that one of the main characteristics of bullying victims aged between 14 and 16 was that they had a caring responsibility.²

Young carers may experience bullying due to a number of different reasons³:

- They may have greater maturity than (and therefore not accepted by) their peers.
- They may have minimal social skills.
- They may find it harder to make and sustain friendships.
- They may be withdrawn.
- They may be over-sensitive.
- They may have untidy or unclean clothing or general appearance.
- They may be teased or ostracised because of family circumstances.
- They may be seen as isolated or different.
- Fellow pupils may make fun of them or of their family's problems.
- They may find it difficult to have a social life, or be isolated from peers.



To help support young carers who are bullied, your school can:

- make sure that any bullying policies reflect the specific needs of young carers.
- train peer mentors on the specific issues that affect young carers.
- set up a peer support group within school.
- ensure that staff are available to offer emotional support and understanding.
- ensure tight confidentiality, so that young carers can identify themselves as young carers, access support discretely and know that conversations and questions about their home life are carried out in private.
- work towards an environment where disabilities and issues around caring are taught and understood.
- address bullying through good partnership working between the school and an outside agency such as a young carers service.
- try to ensure that young carers are able to attend after school clubs and activities where they can build peer groups.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 12** Developing a schools policy for young carers and their families
- 33** Raising awareness amongst all pupils

Key resources

→ YCNet

Information for young carers on being bullied.

www.youngcarers.net/at_school_and_college/12

→ Beatbullying

Charity working with children and young people deeply affected by bullying.

www.beatbullying.org

→ DCSF

Embedding anti-bullying work in school.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01136-2009&>

→ Teachernet

Information on specific types of bullying.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/specifictypesofbullying/

¹Dearden, C. & Becker, S. (2000). *Growing Up Caring: Vulnerability and Transition to Adulthood – Young Carers' Experiences*, Youth Work Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

²www.natcen.ac.uk/study/the-characteristics-of-bullying-victims-in-schools/findings

³Frank, J. (2002). *Making It Work: Good practice with young carers and their families*. The Children's Society.