

# Wootton Bassett Infants' School



## Young Carers Policy

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## **Introduction**

At Wootton Bassett Infants we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education regardless of what is happening at home. When a child looks after someone in their family with a history of long-term physical or mental health illness, a disability or alcohol or substance abuse the young person may need some extra support to help them get the most out of school. This Young Carers' policy will set out how we will help any pupil who looks after someone at home.

## **Defining a Young Carer**

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who help look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Young carers may be caring for a parent, a sibling, grandparent or other relative or person close to the family. In some cases, a young carer may be caring for more than one family member. Many young carers also help care for younger siblings.

A young carer may be a primary carer or supporting another person with caring tasks. When identifying a young carer, the main focus should be the impact on the child, rather than the hours spent, type, or level of caring tasks.

## **Caring Tasks**

Caring can involve physical and/or emotional care or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well-being. Young carers are carrying out tasks and responsibilities, which are additional to those appropriate for their age.

The person they look after may have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Mental health issues
- Learning difficulties
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Long-term illness

The person they care for may be a parent, sibling, or grandparent. A Young Carers' responsibilities may include:

- Personal care, such as bathing, dressing, feeding, changing dressings, helping with toileting needs).
- Administering or prompting medication/injections.
- Practical tasks, such as preparing meals and drinks.
- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy.
- Shopping.

- Domestic tasks, such as cleaning, shopping, managing the family budget, paying bills, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Emotional support, such as staying at home to keep the person they care for company.
- Looking after or 'parenting' younger siblings.
- Interpreting, due to hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family's first language.

### **Identifying a Young Carer.**

Unless the school is advised about a student's home circumstances, Young Carers' risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some Young Carers' worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers. Some of the factors that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

- Illness or disability in the family.
- Being late or absent (due to care responsibilities at home).
- Miss odd days or weeks off school for no apparent reason.
- Assuming a parental role to other siblings.
- Poor concentration and/or often tiredness, anxiety or worry.
- Academic performance below potential.
- Homework is often uncompleted.
- Isolated or a victim of bullying - either because of the situation in the family or because they lack social skills when with their peers.
- Maybe confident with adults.
- Not making use of out of school activities.
- Mature and responsible but can 'let go' and behave immaturely when in a safe environment.
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration.
- Limited contact with school by parents

The above may be indicators of a range of problems, some not associated with a child having a caring role at home. However, in dealing with any child or young person exhibiting any of the above signs, staff should consider asking the child or young person if they are helping to look after someone at home. Staff should also discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and with colleagues with pastoral responsibilities for the child or young person.

### **Support Offered**

Wootton Bassett Infants' School acknowledges that young carers may need additional support to access and maintain the education to which they are entitled.

Through this policy, Wootton Bassett Infants is giving the message that young carers' education is important, and we will support young carers' in making the most of their educational opportunity and to enjoy the same experiences as their peers without caring responsibilities.

The school will encourage, support, and monitor young carers' progress as agreed in their personal support plan. As a school, we will:

- Follow and support the school's policy.
- Provide a designated link teacher with special responsibility for young carers, who will be the main point of contact for all issues pertaining to young carers and who will support colleagues to understand the challenges that young carers may face. This named member of staff will also liaise with relevant colleagues, Wiltshire Young Carers Service, and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer and their family.
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to the designated teacher in private in order to share their concerns, who will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- Ensure that the whole school is committed to meeting the needs of Young Carers and that pupils and their family have access to the appropriate information regarding the support that is available.
- Respect the family and Young Carer's right to privacy - we will only share information with people on a need-to-know basis. We appreciate, for example, that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centered way, upholding confidentiality whilst considering a whole family approach.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and will inform young carers of the specialist support available to them from Wiltshire Young Carers Service. The school will refer a prospective young carer to Wiltshire Young Carers Service with the consent of the young person and parent/s.
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate caring role. For example, a referral to MASH will be made if we are concerned that the young carer may be the victim of neglect, abuse, cruelty or at risk of immediate or significant harm, or to request an assessment.
- Promote discussion and learning in all areas of curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance and respect for the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- Put young carers' family in touch with the local Young Carers Service and other organisations who can offer support e.g. Barnardo's.
- Consider the role of the school nurse in supporting improved health outcomes and reduce inequalities of family/child experience.
- Provide personalised support when necessary to enable young carers to attend and enjoy school.
- Be accessible to parents who have mobility and communication difficulties and involve them in parents' evenings and other school activities.

- Use feedback from young carers and their families to inform our policies and practices.
- Ensure that school policies, such as those for enrolment, attendance, bullying, and behaviour afford recognition to young carers.

Wootton Bassett Infants recognises that flexibility and adaptation of school arrangements may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

Available provision includes (but is not restricted to):

- Access to a telephone during school break times; allowing young carers to call home to reduce unnecessary concern or anxiety and increase their concentration in class.
- Wootton Bassett Infants School will support young carers to get home/hospital in cases of emergency.
- An awareness of attendance and punctuality being affected by caring responsibilities.
- Someone to talk to who understands, will listen, and not judge (nominated staff member)
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis).
- Consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out-of-school activities, e.g. after-school clubs, concerts or trips away due to caring responsibilities and support where possible.
- Access for parents with impaired mobility - ensure parents can access school for open evenings, etc. and if this is not possible, consider how links can be made with home.
- We will encourage effective use of the PSHE curriculum, to explore the rights of children, the roles and responsibilities of young carers, and the challenges they face. We will use PSHE lessons to promote positive images of disability, challenging stereotypes, and discrimination. We will promote discussion regarding caring and issues surrounding illness and disability, to promote a fuller understanding, acceptance, and respect.
- Adopt a healthy attitude to different illnesses to try and reduce stigmas attached to illnesses such as Mental Health problems and disabilities.
- Avoid stigmatisation or labelling of pupils who are carers and provide guidance on preventing bullying.
- Ensure we comply with the Disability Discrimination Act by offering disabled parents support to get their children to school. And provide advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.
- Consider how information on pupils' pastoral needs can be effectively passed between primary and secondary school or across other phases.
- Include mechanisms to consult with young carers and their parents about content of policies and delivery of support.
- Include methods of regularly evaluating the effectiveness of policy and support (in addition to meeting OFSTED requirements).
- Treat disclosure with sensitivity. Discuss with the child, depending upon their age what support they would like, approaching the parent/carer with the child's permission.
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound.

- Identify and discuss aspirations and improve education outcomes for young carers at pupil progress meetings.
- School to collate statistics to measure success and identify areas needing improvement. We will monitor and evaluate data on the young carers we have identified, to examine the progress they have made and to review and amend the offer of support as appropriate. We will share this data with the LA if necessary.

This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

- [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31)
- [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50)
- [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/11)
- [Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/8)
- [The lives of young carers in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321117)

### **Helpful Websites for support & guidance**

- [Help for young carers - Social care and support guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Advice and support for young carers | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)
- [UK | Carers UK](https://www.carersuk.org)
- [Young carers | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk) [Young carers | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk)
- [Young carers | Action For Children](https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)