



Stockport School

Young Carers Policy

Identifying and Supporting

Stockport School is committed to enabling young carers to access education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at this school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education and other services to which they are entitled.

Definition

Young carers are children and young people who provide care to another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

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

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

Caring Tasks

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has 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. In cases where a young carer is supporting an adult with drug/alcohol misuse problem, they will often take a leading role in trying to keep that person safe.
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.
Communication & Interpreting	communicating on behalf of the adult or family with agencies/services and interpreting for a language or sensory impairment.



Possible Effect on Education

Stockport School acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its students, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's access to education and attainment.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might:

- Have erratic or poor school attendance
- Arrive late at school
- Decline in academic achievement
- Not complete homework
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips
- Lack motivation
- Have back problems, aches and pains patterns of being generally unwell
- Appear withdrawn, isolated from peers, have difficulties socialising
- Show, anxiety, depression, anger, self-harming behaviour
- Have poor concentration (due to worrying about the person who is cared for)
- Have poor home/ school relationship
- Have parents who do not attend parents evening or lack of overall contact with school
- Have false signs of maturity, assuming an adult role in social situations or have difficulty enjoying childhood activities

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). School may need to make alternative arrangements for communication about attainment.

Support Offered

Stockport School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered through the life of a school. Through this policy, school is giving the message that young carers' education and school experience is important.

The designated school leads for young carers are **Jude Irwin** (Associate Deputy Headteacher) and **Matt Williamson** (Director of Transition and Community Engagement) who acts as operational lead for young carers and liaises with relevant colleagues, Signpost Young Carers and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated links. The school governor link is **Karen Bailey**.

Stockport School will ensure that appropriate information is shared with school staff in order that there is an awareness of the young carer's situation.

Additionally, ...

- We will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- We appreciate that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. 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 and other appropriate services/agencies.
- We will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- We will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- We recognise 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
 - Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
 - Access to homework club
 - Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible)
 - Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (where there is a genuine crisis).
 - Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited (DfES 2006)
 - Access for parents with impaired mobility
 - Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
 - Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school

For further information please contact Jude Irwin, Matt Williamson or Katy Frankland, Young Carers on Tel: 0161 947 4690 or katy@signpostforcarers.org.uk

Why do we need a school lead for Young Carers?

Background to the role

A young carer is a child or young person who provides care for another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development.

The person or persons that they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problems
- Chronic illness
- Drug or alcohol misuse problems

They may also be taking on a caring role if they are:

- growing up with disabled siblings,
- in a family where there has been recent serious or terminal illness diagnosed,
- coping with illness in wider family.



Key findings from 'Hidden from view' report from the Children's Society, 2013:

1. Latest census statistics 2013 reveal there are 166,363 young carers in England, compared to around 139,000 in 2001. This is likely to be an underrepresentation of the true picture as many remain under the radar of professionals.
2. One in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours per week. Around one in 20 misses' school because of their caring responsibilities.
3. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to be from black, Asian or minority ethnic communities, and are twice as likely to not speak English as their first language.
4. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have a special educational need or a disability.
5. The average annual income for families with a young carer is £5000 less than families who do not have a young carer.
6. There is no strong evidence that young carers are more likely than their peers to come into contact with support agencies, despite government recognition that this needs to happen.
7. Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
8. Young carers are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19.
9. Around 21% of young carers identified in Stockport miss school because of their caring responsibilities. Many will be late to school and unable to complete their homework on time. When at school young carers may have difficulty concentrating due to anxiety about the person they care for. In addition to academic problems, many young carers have difficulty integrating socially within the school environment, with some being teased or bullied by their peers.

In spite of these problems the majority of young carers will not be identified as such by staff in schools, partly because young carers and their families often remain silent about their caring responsibilities due to fears of the reactions of statutory agencies and peers and the stigma surrounding some health conditions, addictions and disabilities or they are unaware that help may be available.

Principle 4 from the Key Principles of Practice (The Children's Society 2008) recommends that:

"Schools and colleges take responsibility to identify young carers at an early stage and have a named staff member with lead responsibility for young carers to ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers; and to be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating the support they need in school and liaising with other agencies as appropriate."

Stockport CYPD Scrutiny Committee Review (February 2010) recommends that schools identify a school lead with responsibility to monitor young carer provision and support:

Role Description - School Lead for Young Carers

This is senior role and is an integral part of the responsibilities shared by leadership team in the school. The School Lead for Young Carers role is to oversee the policy and provision for young carers in the school. The person undertaking the role should have sufficient influence in the school to advocate for young carers and their families.

This description is presented as a role rather than a job description as a leadership team could share these tasks to manage identification, provision and support for young carers and their families.



However, whether the role is shared or not, one person should hold the title, take the lead and network with other agencies so that the school benefits fully from local and national support and guidance available.

Key tasks and responsibilities

- As a member of the school leadership team, ensure appropriate strategies, policies and procedures are in place to proactively identify young carers, ensuring that their needs are recognised and met.
- To ensure that those young people who have caring responsibilities are supported effectively and enabled to meet Every Child Matters outcomes and that they have the same access to educational and career choices as their peers.
- To lead on establishing staff induction, training and information to enable staff to:
 - recognise the signs that a child or young person has caring responsibilities
 - increase their understanding of the impact of such responsibilities
 - ensuring that they are aware of the identified school lead with responsibility for young carers, and
 - help young carers and their families understand how this support can be accessed
- To ensure that the curriculum promotes a full understanding and acceptance of, and respect for, the issues and needs of young carers and their families, promoting positive images and challenging stereotypes around disability and impairment.
- Monitor relevance of existing school policies e.g. attendance, anti-bullying, procedures and practice on the wellbeing and specific needs of young carers. Report strengths, weaknesses and recommendations to school leadership team and governors for inclusion in school development plan.
- Use and evaluate existing data effectively to monitor the welfare and progress made by young carers. Highlight barriers to achievement such as poor attendance and punctuality, failure to complete homework, non-engagement with extended school or extra-curricular activities and work with appropriate colleagues to remove / reduce these barriers enabling young carer to achieve their full potential.
- To establish a first point of contact for young carers and their families within the school, encouraging young carers and their families to self-identify and to discuss any barriers they face and additional help they may need. The designated lead may choose to have Key Contacts in each Year group or key stage in larger schools.
- Ensure that young carers and their families receive coordinated support by communicating effectively and working in partnership with internal and external support agencies using Common Assessment Framework.

Identifying a Young Carer in School

Signs which may indicate that a child is caring for someone at home may include:

- Arriving late at school
- Missing days at school
- Tiredness
- Hunger
- Clothing or appearance may not be clean or tidy
- Underachievement
- Unable to complete home work on time
- Withdrawn, over sensitive, low self esteem
- Behavioural problems
- Difficulties with peer group, limited social skills



- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Not attending after school activities or activities in local area
- Non-attendance on school trips, particularly residential
- Being bullied
- Financial difficulties
- Physical problems, such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, from assuming adult roles

Parents may have little or no contact with school, be unable to attend parents' evenings, review days, or social activities.

Young Carers are normally identified through our Induction process as this is part of the yellow induction booklet given to parents/carers in summer. See our 'Wave' model below.

All Young Carers who come into Year 7 automatically receive fortnightly mentoring from Mrs Wild (Pathways/Intervention mentor). This is either through small group work or 1:1s.

YOUNG CARER IDENTIFICATION WAVE MODEL

Wave 1

Students who have been identified/referred to MWi for further investigation

- Complete 'Initial observation checklist' with the student
- Keep on file for future reference should concerns be raised later on.
- Email staff to make them aware of need/impact

Wave 2

Students who have significant caring responsibilities at home and/or are impacted by the health or wellbeing of a family member/close relative.

- 1) Go over again their actual responses on the questionnaire – highlight them, try to categorise them
- 2) Meeting with student – possibly also do School Stress Survey?
- 3) Consider meeting with parent / carer but be mindful of over-alarming them
- 4) Referral to Signpost if required
- 5) Meet regularly with the student to update file

Ways to support Young Carers in School

The suggestions below illustrate some ways in which schools may support young carers.

- Use a child centred approach – listen to young carers, respect and be open to believing what they say.
- Respond to young carers' needs sympathetically and sensitively and be sensitive to the needs of all family members – do not discuss young carers' situations in front of other students or parents.
- Communicate information about young carers and their families only on a 'need to know basis' and inform young carers of your intentions regarding the information provided.



- Make information regarding health issues and local community services available and accessible to all young people, including who and what is available locally to meet young carers' needs.
- Provide flexible and sensitive support for young carers when their caring role is particularly stressful and may be affecting attendance, punctuality, engagement or completion of work. However, a balance does need to be struck that ensures these young carers do receive a full education and are not distinguished as being different from the rest of their class.
- Challenge bullying or isolation of young carers and where necessary help them to integrate into existing school groups.
- Establish a confidentiality statement in case of the need to share information with others (particularly in relation to safeguarding issues), and explain this clearly to young carers.
- Offer young carers the use of a telephone, in private. (This allows them to 'phone the person they care for during the day to check on their welfare, thus reducing anxiety and improving attendance and concentration.)
- Allow young carers the opportunity to talk to someone they trust – again this may reduce anxiety and relieve tension.
- Be aware that frequent absences may indicate difficulties with levels of support from community care/adult services and family may be willing for advocacy on their behalf, if not, this must be respected. The school should still address the pupil's welfare using their assessment procedures.
- Support parents with mobility problems in visiting the school and attending school events, for example by ensuring that the premises are wheelchair accessible. Maintain regular contact with parents who are unable to come into school.

Review:

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Last reviewed and modified: October 2023

Review date: October 2025

Useful Links:

Signpost Young Carers:

An overview of Stockport's Young Carer Project and the services it provides.

<http://www.signpostforcarers.org.uk/>

Carers Trust:

The Trust gives information to young carers and their families about where to go for help and Do You Care? A resource for schools

<http://www.carers.org/>

Young carers.net:

Online resource for practitioners

<http://www.youngcarers.net/>



The Children's Society:

Has two major initiatives for young carers as part of their Include Project, the National Young Carers Initiative and the Family Inclusion Project

<http://www.youngcarer.com/>

NHS:

Advice from the NHS for young carers to help them get help, understand their rights and to deal with their feelings. Includes Teen life check.

<http://www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/young/Pages/Youngcarershome.aspx/>

ADASS:

Working Together to Support Young Carers: A Model Local Memorandum of understanding between Statutory Directors for Children's Services and Adult Social Services

<http://www.adass.org.uk/>