St Francis of Assisi
Catholic Primary School

Young Carers Policy

Learning and growing together in God's love

September 2025
Review Date: September 2026

Young Carers' Policy for St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Introduction

At St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School 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.

A Young Carer is a student under 18 years of age who helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well- being. Young carers might also be defined as a young person whose own care and emotional need is significantly impacted by the needs and care of a member of the immediate family. The level of responsibility assumed by a Young Carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up.

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 warning signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing.
- Tiredness in school.
- Erratic response to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks.
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry.
- Under-achievement.
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration.
- Few or no peer friendships but possibly with a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age.
- Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to Young Carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school
- Apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at parent's meetings.
- Difficulty with completing homework tasks.

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.

School support for identified Young Carers'

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School has a named Young Carer Lead, who monitors the support in place for identified Young Carers. School makes every effort to understand the particular needs and circumstance of the young carer and their family.

- Where possible, practical help will be offered to enable the young carer to attend school regularly and to take part in all school's activities.
- School seeks to support children who cannot complete homework tasks in the home environment due to their family responsibilities and supports young carers to attend extracurricular school based activities.
- Schools will liaise with support services to ensure that families can be advised where additional help may be found, this includes 'Carers Matter Norfolk' and 'BOOM! Young Carers' with The Benjamin Foundation.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parents' meetings due to family circumstances, school staff will try to make alternative arrangements. The young carer or parent may request this.
- Schools will take an active role in seeking to identify and provide support to hidden young carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Leaders

- Ensure that the Young Carers Policy is implemented effectively across the school.
- Provide yearly training for staff to recognise and support young carers.
- Monitor the progress and wellbeing of identified young carers.
- Organise workshops or Whole School Assemblies (March) for pupils to raise awareness about young carers and promote empathy and support among peers.
- Invite young carers to share their experiences and views in shaping policy and action in school.

Staff

- Identify pupils who may be young carers and refer them to the designated lead.
- Create an inclusive environment that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by young carers.
- Adapt teaching methods and provide additional support to ensure young carers can achieve their potential.

Designated Lead for Young Carers

- Act as the main point of contact for young carers and their families.
- Maintain accurate records of identified young carers and their needs.
- Coordinate support services and liaise with external agencies as necessary.
- Establish clear lines of communication between the school, young carers, and their families.

Parents and Carers

- Inform the school if their child is a young carer or if they have any concerns regarding their child's wellbeing.
- Engage with the school to support their child's education and emotional needs.

Wider School Community

- Raise awareness about young carers and promote understanding within the community.

- Collaborate with local organisations to provide resources and support for young carers.

Children Act 2004

Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 2004 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services. In the event of any young carers being considered to be at risk of significant harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

Equality Act 2010

Young carers' have protected characteristics as defined by the Act because they are associated with a family member who has a disability or illness and cannot be discriminated against because of this. Children and Families Act 2014 The Act has a section on Young Carers' and, in conjunction with the adults focused Care Act, seeks to make sure that Young Carers get the support they need. Local authorities are expected to try and identify Young Carers so they can be offered supp

Emotional Well-Being & Mental Health

At all times, the implementation of this policy will be mindful of the emotional wellbeing and mental health of all stakeholders, in line with the school's 'Culture of Wellbeing' Statement.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

We will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.