

# Merton Bank Primary School



## Young Carers Policy

Approved by Full Governing Body on \_\_\_\_\_

To be reviewed on or before \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

Reviewed March 2026 (to be reviewed annually)



# **Merton Bank Primary School**

## **Young Carers Policy**

### **Contents**

- 1.0 Policy Statement
- 2.0 Definition of a Young Carer
- 3.0 Aims of this Policy
- 4.0 Identification of Young Carers
- 5.0 Designated Young Carers Lead at Merton Bank
- 6.0 Support for Young Carers
- 7.0 Attendance and Punctuality
- 8.0 Safeguarding and Child Protection
- 9.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing
- 10.0 Working with External Agencies
- 11.0 Staff Training and Awareness
- 12.0 Monitoring and Review
- 13.0 Linked Policies

## Young Carers in Schools Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how the school identifies, supports and safeguards pupils who are Young Carers. The school recognises its statutory duties under the **Children Act 1989 and 2004**, the **Care Act 2014**, the **Equality Act 2010**, and guidance set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**.

The school is committed to ensuring that Young Carers are not disadvantaged and are supported to achieve good outcomes in line with Ofsted's expectations for **personal development, behaviour and attitudes, attendance, and safeguarding**.

### 2. Definition of a Young Carer

A Young Carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides regular and ongoing care and/or emotional support to a family member who may have:

- A physical disability or long-term illness
- A learning disability
- Mental health needs
- Substance or alcohol misuse issues

Caring responsibilities may include practical tasks, emotional support, personal care, supervision of siblings, or managing household responsibilities.

### 3. Aims of the Policy

The school aims to:

- Identify Young Carers as early as possible
- Ensure Young Carers are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted
- Remove barriers to learning and attendance
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- Support pupils to achieve their academic potential
- Ensure equality of opportunity and inclusion
- Work in partnership with families and external agencies

#### **4. Identification of Young Carers**

Young Carers may be identified through:

- Self-disclosure by the pupil
- Disclosure by parents/carers
- Staff observations (e.g. tiredness, anxiety, poor concentration, lateness or incomplete homework)
- Attendance, behaviour or pastoral concerns
- Information shared by external professionals or agencies

Identification will be handled sensitively, respecting the child's dignity and right to confidentiality.

#### **5. Designated Young Carers Lead (DYCL) – Mrs. Joanne O'Brien, Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager**

The school will appoint a **Designated Young Carers Lead**, who will work closely with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. Responsibilities include:

- Acting as a named point of contact for Young Carers
- Maintaining a confidential register of identified Young Carers
- Coordinating in-school support and reasonable adjustments
- Liaising with parents/carers and external services
- Raising staff awareness and promoting a whole-school approach

#### **6. Support for Young Carers**

Support will be needs-led and may include:

- A named trusted adult
- Flexible approaches to homework and deadlines
- Access to pastoral, emotional wellbeing or mental health support
- Time-out or quiet spaces where appropriate
- Support during transitions (e.g. class changes or transfer to secondary school)
- Referral to Young Carers services where appropriate

Support plans will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective.

## 7. Attendance and Punctuality

The school recognises that caring responsibilities may impact attendance and punctuality. In line with Ofsted expectations and statutory attendance guidance, the school will:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality closely
- Work collaboratively with families to remove barriers
- Use a supportive and restorative approach
- Avoid punitive measures where caring responsibilities are a contributing factor

## 8. Safeguarding and Child Protection

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

All concerns relating to a Young Carer's welfare will be managed in line with the school's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and **KCSIE**.

Where a pupil's caring role may place them at risk of harm or negatively impact their development, appropriate referrals will be made to children's social care or other relevant services.

## 9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to Young Carers will be treated as confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis, in line with data protection legislation and safeguarding requirements. The pupil's wishes will be considered wherever possible.

## 10. Working with External Agencies

The school will work in partnership with:

- St. Helens Local Authority Young Carers services
- Children's social care
- Health professionals
- Voluntary and community organisations

This multi-agency approach supports early help and ensures holistic support for pupils and families.

## **11. Staff Training and Awareness**

The school will ensure that:

- Staff are aware of who Young Carers are and how to identify them
- Training and guidance are provided where appropriate
- All staff understand their role in supporting inclusion, wellbeing and safeguarding

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the senior leadership team and reviewed annually. Feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff will inform improvements.

## **13. Linked Policies**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

**Policy written by: Joanne O' Brien – Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead.**

**To be reviewed – September 2026**