



Althorpe and Keadby Primary School Young Carers Policy

Approved by: Althorpe and Keadby Primary School Governing Board

Date approved: October 2022

Review Date: Every 3 years or as guidance changes

Reviewed By: S Tate and L Layton

Althorpe and Keadby Primary School is committed to supporting young carers to access education. This policy aims to ensure young carers at our school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled, in order to ensure that our children achieve their potential and don't place their education in school in jeopardy due to their caring responsibilities.

Definition

A young carer is a child or young person who is helping to look after someone at home. Most are caring for a parent but some may be taking responsibility for a sibling, grand parent or other relative. In some instances, a young carer may be looking after more than one person.

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

- Physical or mental illness
- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Substance misuse problem

Our aim is to identify our young carers or our pupils at risk of becoming young carers before they become entrenched in an inappropriate caring role or a negative relationship with school.

Caring Tasks

Many young carers will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care, or share the responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

Child care – taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities. Some young carers help parents to look after a disabled sibling.

Domestic care – doing a substantial amount of housework, shopping, cleaning.

Emotional care – 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.

Financial care – running the household, paying bills, benefit collection etc.

Nursing care – giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility.

Personal intimate care – washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements.

Possible effect on education

Althorpe and Keadby Primary School acknowledges that there are very likely to be young carers amongst our pupils, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.

We recognise that because of their responsibilities at home a young carer might experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home
- Concentration problems, anxiety or worry in school
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in school
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, because of assuming adult roles
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration)
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Limited social skills
- Bullying
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem

It might also be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about the child/young person being taken into care fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting schools being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

Warning signs

We understand that young carers are not easy to spot and may actively try to conceal their caring role from teachers, pastoral staff and peers for fear of bullying or outside interference in their families. All of the warning signs listed below could be indicators of another problem, but staff noticing these signs should sensitively ask the child/young person if they are helping to look after someone at home.

- Regular or increased lateness or absence
- Concentration problems
- Anxiety
- Tiredness
- Under achievement – there may be a sudden drop in attainment
- Late or incomplete homework
- Few or no peer friendships, the child/young person may get on well with adults and present as very mature for their age
- Victim of bullying. Sometimes explicitly linked to a family member's disability, health or substance misuse problem
- Behavioural problems, may be the result of anger or frustration expressed inappropriately
- Unable to attend extra-curricular activities
- Difficulties in engaging parents, parents not attending parent' evenings

Support Offered

Our school acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, our school is giving the message that young carers' education is important.

The designated link member of staff/teacher for young carers in our school is
Mrs L Layton.

This member of staff will liaise with relevant colleagues, parents and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated link.

Althorpe and Keadby Primary School will:

- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone they trust or feel comfortable with – in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.

- Appreciate that young carers may not wish to discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school.
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- 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.

Our school recognises 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 (when needed)
- Access to homework club
- Arrangements will be made for school work to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis)
- Any approved absence will be time limited (DfES 2006 – doc ‘Advice and Guidelines to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: Groups of pupils at particular risk.
- 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.

Reviewing this Policy

The policy will be reviewed annually, when staff, Governors and families will have an opportunity to discuss it and make any amendments that are required.