

## Young Carers Policy

### Commitment

Leighton's commitment to young carers is to support the emotional and academic needs of young carers to achieve in their education and to aspire in education as people regardless of complexities of needs and home circumstances.

This policy explains how we will live up to our commitment

### Definition

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 living with or carrying out a significant physical or emotional caring role and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would normally be undertaken by an adult.

They can be caring for any of the following-

- Parent/guardian or sibling suffering from mental health issues
- Parent/guardian or sibling with a physical disability
- Parent/guardian or sibling with substance misuse problems
- Parent/guardian or sibling with learning disabilities
- Parent /guardian or sibling with a terminal illness

### Young Carers and the effects on their education

Being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education. 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/college
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in school/college
- 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 and 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

## Quotes from young carers

"I worry about my dad all day when I am at school and find it hard to concentrate" Tom age 10

"I need someone to talk to at school about my home life" Jenny age 9

"I feel worried about my mum when I am at school; I feel upset and can't tell my friends"

Amy age 8

## Support offered

Leighton Academy ensures that the following support is available for all young carers within the school.

- Leighton has an identified young carer's representatives – Mrs Dow who is in contact with Sarah Dickinson, the education officer at Cheshire Young Carers
- All staff are made aware of who their young carers' representative is and the reporting/referral process to this person.
- Leighton has an internal effective reporting system between all staff and the young carers' representative.
- Any child/young person who is identified as a young carer whilst at Leighton will be referred to the appropriate services.
- Leighton has a procedure for identifying young carers on enrolment into school
- When a young carer leaves Leighton, either to proceed into secondary education or for any other reason, details of their caring role and home situation will be passed on to the next school subject to consent from the family.
- Leighton will be flexible with late attendance due to a young carer's caring role (where this is a regular occurrence provision will be put into place, complying with all current policy.)
- Leighton will make every effort to ensure that the root cause of any lateness is made apparent and appropriate support is sourced.
- (Where applicable and if required) Cheshire Young Carers will supply lesson plans for PSHE and these will be reviewed on an annual basis. The lesson plans will help to reduce stigma, prevent bullying and will cover young carers issues resulting in a fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- All staff at school will at all times be flexible with regards to young carers and their issues upholding confidentiality.

- All staff at school acknowledge that young carers will not be obliged to discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- Leighton will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school.
- Leighton will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- Leighton will provide access to a phone during breaks and lunchtime, for young carers to call home.
- Leighton will be flexible and accommodating with deadlines for homework/coursework
- Arrangements will be made for work to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis) N.B This needs to be agreed with young carer and must have a set time limit.
- Leighton will provide access for parents with impaired mobility.
- Leighton will provide alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or are housebound; this will include alternative communication options for parents' evenings.
- Appropriate provisions will be put into place for young carers whose parents do not drive due to illness or disability. (Following safe guarding procedures at all times).
- Leighton will always report any cases of a child/young person who may be carrying out an inappropriate caring role, which is causing immediate concern for their safety, in line with guidance as set out in the Safeguarding policy.
- Leighton will work in partnership with Cheshire Young Carers to ensure that a high quality standard of support for young carers is achieved at all times.
- Leighton will commit to accessing and providing training for staff about young carers and their issues.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Leighton Academy and Cheshire Young Carers