



FCAT Young Carers Policy

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1.Introduction and Philosophy

A Young Carer is a young person who provides regular or ongoing care and/or emotional support towards a family member, such as for a disability, health condition or substance misuse issue. They often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. They may provide physical care, personal care, help with medication or practical tasks, or provide emotional support. When a young person has a caring responsibility they may need extra support to help them get the most out of school.

Across Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT), we acknowledge that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to a high-quality education. Through this policy, FCAT and our schools are giving the message that young carers' education is important. We believe every Young Carer should have the same opportunities as other children and young people of a similar age. This policy outlines how we will seek to identify, raise awareness of and offer support to any pupil who looks after someone at home.

2. What do young carers do?

The tasks and level of caring undertaken by young carers can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care, and the structure of the family as a whole.

Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.

These can include:

- Practical tasks – cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care – lifting or helping someone use the stairs.
- Personal care – dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Emotional support – listening, calming, being present.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Medication management.
- Looking after younger siblings.
- Helping someone communicate.

3. How might caring affect a young person's life?

- **Physical health:** Young carers are often severely affected by caring through the night, repeatedly lifting a heavy adult, poor diet and lack of sleep.
- **Emotional well-being:** Stress, tiredness and mental ill-health are common for young carers.
- **Socialisation:** Young carers often feel different or isolated from their peers and have limited opportunities for socialising. A quarter of young carers in the UK said they

were bullied at school because of their caring role. Locally this was reported as high as 60% (Schools Anti-Bullying Audit).

- **Stable environment:** Young carers can experience traumatic life changes such as bereavement, family break-up, losing income and housing, or seeing the effects of an illness or addiction on the person they care for.

As a result, caring responsibilities have a significant impact on a pupil's learning:

- 27% of young carers of secondary school age in England experience educational difficulties or miss school (Dearden and Becker, 2004).
- If left unsupported, young carers can continue to struggle with school and have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level. (The Children's Society, 2013).
- Young carers are more likely than the national average not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) between 16 and 19. Of these, 75% had been NEET at least once (compared with 25% of all young people) and 42% had been NEET for six months or more (compared with 10% of all young people) (The Children's Society, 2013).

Why young carers can be hidden

- Their parent's condition is not obvious, so people don't think they need any help.
- They do not realise that they are a carer or that their life is different from their peers.
- They don't want to be any different from their peers.
- They believe that the school will show no interest in their family circumstances.
- They want to keep their identity at school separate from their caring role.
- It's not the sort of thing they feel can be discussed with friends.
- There has been no opportunity to share their story.
- They are worried about bullying.
- They worry that the family will be split up and taken into care.
- They want to keep it a secret and/or are embarrassed.
- They see no reason or positive actions occurring as a result of telling their story.

4. Possible indicators that a child may be a young carer

- Low attendance - lateness to or absence from school.
- Achievement – failing to reach their potential.
- Presentation –tired/ hungry/ unkempt.
- Not taking part in extracurricular activities.
- Social skills – under or overdeveloped.

- Isolated/ being bullied.
- Homework /coursework is late or poor quality.
- Anxiety/constantly worried.
- Behavioural problems and poor concentration.
- Physical problems.
- **No obvious signs – school may be a break from caring.**

5. Our Aims

- To improve the progress and raise the standard of achievement for young carers.
- To address any underlying inequalities between young carers and other pupils.
- To raise awareness of young carers among staff and to ensure the identification of all young carers as early as possible on entry to the school.
- To ensure that young carers feel as included and supported within their school community as possible.
- To foster respect and understanding towards young carers among all pupils.
- To ensure that young carers take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- To ensure that young carers are involved in discussions and decisions affecting young carer provision.
- To ensure that young carers have access to appropriate careers guidance and opportunities.
- To ensure that schools recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

We will not make assumptions about family members with disabilities, mental and physical health conditions or substance misuse issues, or label young people and their families. We will respect the young carer's right to privacy and only share information on them and their family with people who need to know. Their home situation and caring role will not be discussed in front of their peers.

6. Identification and Oversight

To maintain and regularly review our young carer's policy. This will be reviewed annually.

To include space on school application forms for parents to declare:

- a) Whether or not their child is a young carer.
- b) Whether or not their child is registered as a young carer.

To work with Blackpool Carers Centre to ensure that all relevant school staff receive training around how to identify and support young carers. To deliver staff training on the topic as regularly as is necessary to keep staff informed about identification and support.

To create a young carer, register accessible to all relevant members of the pastoral team and teaching staff.

To appoint a member of the Governing Body who will be responsible for ensuring that provision of a high standard is offered to young carers.

To appoint a senior leader responsible for overseeing young carer provision.

To appoint a member of staff to lead on young carer provision who will be responsible for maintaining a young carer support group and corresponding with external agencies such as Blackpool Carers Centre to stay up to date on a young carer's circumstances and needs.

To monitor the progress of young carers and respond accordingly with appropriate intervention where necessary.

To monitor the attendance of young carers and respond accordingly with appropriate intervention where necessary

7. Strategies

We maintain high expectations for young carers' punctuality, attendance and school work whilst making case-by-case reasonable adjustments to usual school policies around sanctions. We recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Ensuring that the designated professional for young carers liaises with relevant colleagues and other relevant agencies regarding young people's caring responsibilities, with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated professional.
- Making staff aware, with permission from the young carer and their family, when circumstances are likely to interfere with lessons and/or homework.
- Making referrals to the Blackpool Carers Centre where appropriate and with the family and young carer's permission.
- Welcoming visits from the Blackpool Carers Centre to work with pupils referred for support so they can meet in a safe setting for 1:1 support sessions. Encourage attendance at Blackpool Carers Centre respite sessions and clubs.
- Working with Blackpool Young Carers to raise awareness of young carers and develop a culture of respect for young carers among the pupil community and also to encourage young carers to come forward and make themselves known by delivering assemblies and PSHE lessons.
- Providing information on our support for young carers on school websites for current and prospective pupils and parents.
- Ensuring that young carers have access to the mental health support available across the school where necessary.
- Offering young carers extra-curricular opportunities for relaxation, leisure and social connection.
- Providing a safe and confidential space for peer support groups, overseen by a member of staff, allowing young carers in the school to provide emotional support to each other regarding their caring role.
- Ensuring that young carers have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion around the school's provision for young carers.
- Offering a programme of careers advice and guidance and, where possible, work experience placements.
- With permission, informing Careers Advisors about any young carers and offering pupils additional careers advice about future opportunities.
- To provide young carers with opportunities to access pastoral support when needed.
- Agreeing extended deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed and in advance of deadline)
- Providing access to homework clubs where available

- Working with Blackpool Carers Centre to identify support for young carers and their family to enable them to attend school trips and educational activities or gain support around food and/or transport.
- Offering a young carer access to a school office telephone during breaks and lunchtime to phone home if they have concerns. **Due to DFE expectations, use of a mobile telephone is not appropriate.**

The school appreciates that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.

The school will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

8. Key staff members

The name of the member of the school's Senior Leadership Team that oversees young carers provision is Rachael Hazlewood.

The name of the young carers champion is Bex Watson. They will act as a point of contact for on-going information, advice and guidance via Blackpool young carers' service.

Other key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Class teachers/ Teaching Assistants
- SEND team