



George Stephenson
High School

YOUNG CARERS POLICY

Governance	Curriculum Committee Governing Body
Policy Officer	Deputy Headteacher
Review Date	October 2021
Next Review Date	October 2023

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1.0 Policy statement

At George Stephenson High School, we are committed to and fully recognise our responsibilities for supporting young carers; this policy has been developed to ensure that all adults are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of young carers. We will ensure timely and effective identification of students who are taking on a caring role.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining George Stephenson High Schools' approach to identifying, assessing, and supporting young carers. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

This policy is written with regard to the [Children and Families Act 2014 – Section 96](#), the [Care Act 2014 – Section 63](#), and the [Care Act 2014 – Section 64](#). The Government recognises that schools have a vital role to play and are ideally positioned to identify young carers and to initiate support.

To reinforce this Ofsted recognises young carers as a vulnerable and disadvantaged group. It has strengthened its guidance in The Common Inspection Framework: Education, Skills and Early Years (Ofsted, 2015) stating that “in making judgements inspectors will pay particular attention to young carers”.

3.0 Policy Aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of young carers.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school by increasing understanding and awareness of, and communication about, young carers.
- To ensure students at the school with caring responsibilities are identified and supported so they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy, and achieve their academic potential.
- To enable staff to understand how and when to request a statutory young carers assessment via the Early Help Assessment Tool.
- To encourage students who are impacted by parental ill-health, disability or substance misuse to self-identify and that the school works to a whole family approach and will signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support through the Early Help Framework.

4.0 Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to identify young carers.

The School's Young Carer's Champion is Kathryn Williams

They will act as a point of contact for on-going information, advice and guidance via the commissioned young carers' service.

They will delegate the day to day operational management to Alison Miller (Family Liaison Worker)

Other key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff –Alex Lunn (AHT)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead- Kath Williams (DHT)
- SENCO –Rebecca Bennett
- Mental Health Champion – Rebecca Ronan
- PSHEe Coordinators : Catherine Patrick and Eleanor Little

5.0 Raising awareness of young carers

Who are they?

A young carer is defined in law as a 'person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'. This includes 'providing practical or emotional support' (Children and Families Act 2014).

The scale

The 2011 census identified over 166,363 young carers in England, although research conducted in 2018 by the BBC and the University of Nottingham suggests that as many as 800,000 young people could be providing unpaid care in England alone. This is 1 in 12 children.

In North Tyneside, there are an estimated **7,000 young carers**. This amounts to six young carers in every North Tyneside secondary school class.

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.

How does caring affect a child or 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 wellbeing:** 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 difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (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.

6.0 Possible Indicators that a child/young person 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.

7.0 Early Help

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the right to a young carers' assessment, as well as the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, pastoral hub etc.) and through our communication channels (letters, social media, websites, tutorials, assemblies), we will share and display relevant information about young carers and how they can access support as well as who they can talk to in school.

Young Carer's Assessment

North Tyneside Council is committed to ensuring that young carers' identified in the borough are offered a Young Carers' Needs Assessment and a 6 month review of their support plan.

To support this process, in 2019, the local authority collaborated with North Tyneside Carers' Centre to create the new post of Young Carers' Link Worker.

The Young Carers' Link Worker provides ongoing training and support to local authority staff such as Social Workers, Family Partners and school staff, to support them to identify young carers and complete statutory Young Carers' Needs Assessments.

Once assessments are complete, the Link Worker quality assures the plans for young carers and ensures that annual reviews take place. The overall aim of the collaboration is to help young carers to thrive and access the best available support where they need it.

The service can be contacted directly for advice and discussion about the pathway and if guidance is required.

The Young Carers' Link Worker, Anne Longstaff on anne.longstaff@ntcarers.co.uk or the Young Carers' Project team on (0191) 643 2298

8.0 Support at school

School-Based Support –

- When appropriate, staff will acknowledge the young person's caring responsibilities so they feel valued.
- Staff will be trained in offering support
- Staff will provide age appropriate information about their relative's illness/disability and given help to identify a trusted adult/professional in their life whom they can talk to.
- The school will identify opportunities for the young carer to access a break from their caring role
- The school will help the young carer to access activities where they can mix with their peers and young carers.
- The school will include the young carer in decision making about them and their family.
- The school will encourage and support young carers to reach their potential e.g. young carers who want to attend further education or seek employment.
- The school will provide opportunities for young carers and their families to self-identify and make them aware what support is available to them.
- The school will allow young carers to use a phone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes to reduce the worry that they may have about a family member.
- The school actively seeks feedback from our young carers and their families to look at how we can improve the support we put in place for young carers.
- Pupil premium funding will be used where possible to minimise any barriers to education and learning experienced by an eligible young carer.

Local Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health and this includes young carers. In North Tyneside, there is a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

<https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-services/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service-camhs/#06aa79e3>

9.0 Whole school approach

We will ensure all appropriate policies reflect the needs of young carers and have mechanisms in place to monitor how many students are taking on a caring role and the outcomes for this group.

10.0 Supporting parents

George Stephenson High School's pastoral systems will be used to identify, support and signpost young carers and their families as needed. Any additional concerns or needs will be escalated to SLT for support and resolution. All staff at George Stephenson High School deliver pastoral support as needed and Young Carers will be encouraged to choose staff they feel most comfortable with for accessing direct support, where appropriate.

11.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is October 2023. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Kathryn Williams.