



SUMMERHILL ACADEMY

YOUNG CARERS POLICY



Young Carers draft: December 2023

Date adopted: January 2024

Review date: December 2024



Empowering Learning

Cabot Learning Federation

Summerhill Academy provides an inclusive, caring environment for all members of its community. Children that are identified as Young Carers are given a range of opportunities to support their feeling of belonging and purpose in our school.

1. Introduction

At Summerhill Academy we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education regardless of what is happening at home. When a child looks after someone in their family with a history of long-term physical, mental or emotional health illness, for example, a disability, a wheelchair user, alcohol abuse or substance abuse, depression, diseases such as MND - Motor Neurone Disease, deaf, visually impaired, cancer, ADHD the young person may need some extra support to help them get the most out of school. This Young Carers' policy will set out how we will help any pupil who looks after someone at home.

2. Defining a Young Carer

A Young Carer is a pupil under 18 years of age who helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically, mentally, or emotionally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Caring can involve physical or emotional care or taking responsibility for someone's safety or wellbeing. The level of responsibility assumed by a Young Carer is often disproportionate to their age and at a level beyond simply 'helping out' with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up.

3. Identifying a Young Carer

Unless the school is advised about a pupil's home circumstances, Young Carers' risk first being identified as a result of negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some Young Carers' worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers. Some of the warning signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing
- Tiredness in school
- Varied responses to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks
- Loss of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Learner experiencing disadvantage
- Behavioural issues, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
- Few or no peer friendships but possibly with a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age



- Target of unkind behaviours, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to Young Carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
- Less or no interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school
- A parent or carer not attending parent's meetings

The above may be indicators of a range of problems, some not associated with a child having a caring role at home. However, in dealing with any child or young person exhibiting any of the above signs, staff should consider asking the child or young person if they are helping to look after someone at home. Staff should also discuss their related concerns with the DSL/Senior leadership Team.

Concerns about a child or young person who may be considered as a yet unidentified young carer should be reported to the member of staff with responsibility for Young Carers'. New information about identified young carers should also be passed to the school's Young Carers' Co-ordinator. The member of school staff responsible for coordinating young carer support (Young Carers' Co-ordinator) is the key person in school through which relevant matters need to be passed.

Summerhill Academy's Young Carers Lead: Louise Dunbar

Young Carers Coordinator: Lily Lowther

When identifying a child or young person who has additional support needs which may include having parents/relatives with disabilities or long-term physical, mental or emotional health problems we will seek sensitively and be thoughtful to establish if:

- the child or young person has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal, interpersonal relationships within a caring family setting
- The family is in contact with a support service that could help support less reliance on the pupil.

Information gained as a result of this process will be held securely and made available in the first instance to the designated member of school staff with responsibilities for young carers. While we will respect the right to privacy, we would wish to establish if the family is in contact with a support service that could help support less reliance on the child or young person. We will only share information about young carers and their families with people who need to know in order to be



Empowering Learning

Cabot Learning Federation

able to help. Before sharing information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer or, if they are not able to understand, from a parent.

4. School support for identified Young Carers'

- A member of staff in the school will lead on our support work for young carers. This member of staff will be the point of contact for young carers and their families and will liaise with young carers' services. Their name and contact details will be made available in the school handbook or, by telephone, from the school office. For ease of reference, this person will be termed the Young Carers' Co-ordinator.
- Awareness raising session will take place including assemblies, PSHE lessons and staff training.
- School staff will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends unless the young carer asks for a friend to be present.
- Where possible, schools will negotiate deadlines for homework and the submission of coursework in advance of these being set.
- When a young carer is absent from school, the attendance team will sensitively contact the parent/carer or carry out a home visit to check in and ask the reason they are not in school.
- Schools will liaise with support services to ensure that families can be advised where additional help may be available to them.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parents' meetings due to family circumstances, school staff will try to make alternative arrangements, such as an arranged phone call or an online teams meeting. The young carer or parent may request this.
- Schools will provide advice and support about how children can get into school where transport is a problem.
- School staff and services will be available for any child/young person, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help the child/young person in achieving their potential.