



YOUNG CARERS POLICY

Recommended by:	Vice Principal
Recommendation Date	25 th June 2025
Ratified by:	LAGB
Signed:	<i>J Goodman</i>
Position on the board	Chair of Governors
Ratification Date	25 th June 2025
Next Review:	July 2026
Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School):	School

1. Statement of intent

At Gospel Oak School we aim to provide a community for pupils which keeps them safe, supports their creativity and enables them to meet their full potential.

The school is committed to supporting young carers' access to a full education. This policy will be implemented by all staff members in order to ensure young carers at our school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

Gospel Oak School is committed to develop provisions for young carers and their family.

Our aim:

- The whole school is committed to meeting the needs of young carers so they can attend and enjoy school in the same way as their peers and achieve their potential.
- We will designate a young carers lead within the school. Pupils and families will be made aware of how to connect them to access support.
- The school will only share information with professionals and agencies on a need-to-know basis.
- We will seek feedback and ideas from young carers and their families to shape and improve support.
- The school will have an effective referral system and a strong partnership in place with relevant external agencies including the school nurse and Sandwell young carers.
- We will strive to achieve best practice for students and families in our school in order to provide them with the best chance of success in their future.

The aim of this policy is to raise awareness among school staff about the needs of young carers and to support them in establishing a whole-school approach to address the issues that may arise within a school setting.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015
- DfE (2011) 'Improving support for young carers – family focused approaches'
- DfE (2016) 'The lives of young carers in England'

3. Definition

- A young carer is a person under the age of 18, who is helping to look after someone at home caring for a parent, sibling or grandparent/ relative. Who may have one or more of
 - Physical or sensory disability
 - Learning disability
 - Mental health problems
 - Alcohol or substance misuse problems
 - Elderly or infirm
 - HIV /AIDS
- A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development.
- Young carers may be primary carers, such as caring for a parent, or a secondary carer, such as helping to care for a sibling.
- A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child and risks jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement, and life chances.
- A young carer may undertake some or all the following:
 - Practical tasks
 - Physical care
 - Personal and intimate care
 - Emotional support
 - Household management
 - Looking after siblings
 - Interpretation
 - Administering medication

4. Issues faced by young carers

- Caring responsibilities can impact on young people's education in a number of different ways including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Lateness
 - Tiredness
 - Non-attendance
 - Late or no submission of homework and assignments
 - Not participating in extra-curricular activities and school events
 - Experiencing bullying or isolation
 - Underachieving academically
 - Poor education or career choices
 - Non-compliance / poor behaviour choices
 - Lack of engagement

- Young carers may exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from home in order to offset the fact that they have to take on adult responsibilities and behave in an adult fashion within the home.
- Many young carers may be unable to develop friendships outside of school, due to reasons such as being unable to invite friends to their home, restricting the development of a pupil's social skills.
- Some young carers carry out tasks for which they are physically ill equipped, which can impact on their overall health. Long-term caring responsibilities can also impact significantly on the mental health of young people, which like their physical health, can lead to poor attendance.
- Some families will be dependent solely on state benefits, affecting their ability to afford proper school clothing and/or extra-curricular activities, such as school trips.
- Families involving a young carer may be unwilling or unable to attend school functions, leading to them becoming more isolated from the school environment and unaware of issues that the young carer may be experiencing.

5. Identifying young carers

- During the school enrolment process for new pupils, the school will:
 - Identify parents or family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health conditions.
 - Clarify whether the pupil has caring responsibilities.
 - Identify whether the young carer has any additional needs that need to be supported, e.g. any SEND or social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs.
 - Establish individual pupil plans to recognise the child's specific needs as a young carer.
 - Where appropriate, a young carer may be referred to the Local Authority or other support agencies for a needs assessment.
 - The school will continuously bear in mind that where a parent has a disability, mental health or substance abuse issue, the pupil might be the carer whilst showing none of the indicative signs of a young carer.

6. Young carers and the school

- The relevant Year Team Lead is the main point of contact for young carers in the school. This appointed person is responsible for:
 - Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.
 - Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need.
 - Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services.
 - It is important that staff members can effectively identify young carers and that young carers feel that they can ask for help; therefore, raising awareness among staff and pupils about the issues relating to young carers and what support is available is vital.
 - To ensure that staff members understand the issues faced by young carers, training and ongoing professional development about the matter is provided for staff and the Local Academy Governing Board.
 - Staff members will keep up to date with national and local developments, legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.

- The school aims to create a welcoming and friendly environment for all pupils, in which young carers feel comfortable to discuss their situation.
- The school will publish clear information regarding how pupils and their families can access support, ensuring that all pupils are aware of this information.
- The Academy will make provision for inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and promote good communication with their families.
- The curriculum, primarily PSHE lessons, will be used to promote a full understanding, acceptance of, and respect for, issues such as the work of young carers.
- The school premises are accessible to people with disabilities and/or illnesses, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings and other school events.
- Staff members will not discuss a young carer's personal situation and related arrangements in front of their peers.
- The school will follow child protection procedures regarding any pupil who they believe to be at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

7. Providing support

- The relevant Year Team Lead will meet with young carers on a regular basis and will liaise with teachers regarding difficulties, attendance and deadlines.
- The relevant Year Team Lead will ensure that existing individual pupil plans recognise the pupil's specific needs as a young carer.
- The school offers support to the pupil and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school, college or university where appropriate.
- Additional support is offered to remove any communication barriers with parents, allowing them to be fully engaged with the education of their child.
- Targeted early interventions are used to provide support to young carers, ensuring that they can reach their full potential.
- The school uses and evaluates data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers, and reviews plans accordingly.
- Young carers are provided with access to a telephone during breaks and lunches, allowing them to call home with the intention of reducing any worry they may have about a family member.
- Where appropriate, homework and assignment deadlines for young carers will be negotiated.
- Where appropriate, the school will schedule around young carers' duties, such as setting lunchtime detentions instead of after-school detentions.
- Where parents are unable to physically attend parents' evening due to their disability, medical condition or substance abuse, home visits will be considered where necessary.
- Young carers are provided with opportunities to speak to someone in private regarding their role as a young carer.
- Staff members treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.

- The school will continuously promote additional links with adult care agencies which may be able to support families and relieve care responsibilities.
- The school will discuss and provide advice to parents regarding transport arrangements, where necessary, for those who find it difficult to escort their young children to school.

