



# Young Carers Policy

**Date of Review:** February 2019  
**Approved by:** Trust Board  
**Next Review Date:** February 2020

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## Introduction

The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust is committed to supporting young carers to access education. It is recognised that a young carer's personal and physical development, physical and emotional health, and social opportunities can be affected by the family situation and their caring role. This policy aims to ensure young carers within The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

## Definition

A young carer is defined as *"a child/young person under the age of 18 who provides care in, or outside of, the family home for someone who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misusing drugs or alcohol. The care provided by children may be long or short term and, when they (and their families) have unmet needs, caring may have an adverse impact on children's health, well-being and transitions into adulthood"* DfE 2017 Lives of young carers in England: Omnibus research report.

Most are caring for a parent, but some may be taking responsibility for a sibling. In some instances, a young carer may care for more than one family member.

The person they look after will have one or more of:

- Physical disability (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

## Caring Tasks

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

- **Nursing/ physical care** - administering medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility lifting, helping down stairs, physiotherapy etc.
- **Personal intimate care** - washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements;

- **Emotional care** - being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, calming, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up, being present;
- **Domestic care** - doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc;
- **Financial care** - running the household, managing finance, bill paying, benefit collection etc;
- **Child care** - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities e.g. putting to bed, walking to school, parenting;
- **Interpretation** – for hearing/speech impairment or English as an additional language.

### **Impact of caring on young people**

- Physical health: 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 in young carers
- Isolation: feeling different or isolated from their peers, limited opportunities for socialisation, bullying and harassment – more than two out of three young carers are bullied at school (The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, 2010 and Dearden, C and Becker S, 2004)
- Unstable environment: traumatic life changes such as bereavement, family break-up, losing income and housing, or seeing the effects of an illness or addiction

### **Possible effect on education**

The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its pupils, and that 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;
- Emotional distress;
- Tiredness in school;
- 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 or frustration);
- Mood swings due to pressure outside of school;
- 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.

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

## **Support for Young Carers within The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust**

Schools play a vital role in both early identification and in the provision of support for young carers and their families. The desired outcome is that children and young people are able to engage fully with the educational and social opportunities available to them.

The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust is giving the message that young carers' education is important. At each Academy there are members of staff who are the designated links for young carers.

## **Responsibilities of Nominated Staff Member**

**The nominated staff members across the Trust are:**

Rodillian Academy	–	Dave Thomas
The Featherstone Academy	–	Amanda Ballance
BBG Academy	–	Michelle Ashby
Brayton Academy	–	Julie Pirie
Southway	–	Dahna Miller

These members of staff will liaise with relevant colleagues and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer as necessary. All pupils will be made aware of the designated links in school.

Available provision **subject to approval** includes (but is not limited to):

- Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home;
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed);
- Access to homework clubs (where these are available);
- Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible);
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis). Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited. (DfES 2006);
- Access for parents with impaired mobility;
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound;
- Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.

## **Responsibilities of the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust**

All academies in the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust:

- will provide training on young carers to all relevant school staff where necessary and raise awareness of issues faced by young carers to staff;
- will provide opportunities and activities where children and young people can identify themselves as young carers;
- will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers;
- 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;
- provide non face-to-face communication opportunities, such as a post box, texting service or online method;
- will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality;
- will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school & publicise information about how students can access support effectively;
- will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring;
- will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding positive images of disability, illness, mental ill health and caring throughout the academies curriculum and environment;
- recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers;
- develop policies and practice to prevent bullying and stigma and to raise the self – esteem of children who are young carers;
- develop good working partnerships with local young carers service to support identification of young carers, engage with students that have been identified by the young carer service but not in school, and to ensure that identified learners access relevant support;
- ensure that the academies meet the Equality Act 2010.

The policy will be reviewed annually and presented to the Trust Board for ratification.

### **Useful Websites with support:**

[www.barnardos.org.uk/willow.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/willow.htm)

[www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)