

Young Carers Policy

Summary	Young Carers Policy
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Applies to: (please check as appropriate)	Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/>
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Document Control

Date	Version	Action	Amendments
30.09.24	1	Policy amended and reformatted	New precedent adopted

Introduction

1. RMAT 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 RMAT are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

Definition

2. A young carer is defined as "a child or 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).
3. 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.
4. 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

5. 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 care** – administering medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility, lifting, helping downstairs, physiotherapy etc;
 - **Personal intimate care** - washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements etc;
 - **Emotional care** - being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, 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, bill paying, benefit collection etc;
 - **Childcare** - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities eg putting to bed, walking to school, parenting;
 - **Interpretation** – for hearing and speech impairment or English as an additional language.
6. The Impact of caring on young people can include
- **Physical health** – can be 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 possible symptoms;
 - **Isolation** – feeling different or isolated from their peers, limited opportunities for socialising, bullying and harassment;
 - **Difficult home 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

7. RMA acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its students, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.
8. 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.
9. The Academy may find it is difficult to engage with the students' parents/carers (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 or unwilling to attend parents' evenings.

Support for Young Carers at RMAT

10. Academies 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 as a student within RMAT.
11. RMAT acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, the RMAT is giving the message that young carers' education is important. At each Academy there are designated members of staff for young carers in addition to the support they can receive from the Pastoral Teams.

Responsibilities of Designated Staff Members

12. The nominated staff members across RMAT are:

BBG Academy	Tanya Binns
Brayton Academy	Suse Graham
The Featherstone Academy	Amanda Balance
Rodillian Academy	Dave Thomas
Southway	Dahna Miller
UTC Leeds	Sarah Ellis

13. These designated staff will liaise with relevant colleagues and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer as necessary. All young carers will be made aware of the designated links in their Academy.

Support for Young Carers

14. RMAT recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.
15. 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 the Academy.
16. All academies in RMAT:

- will provide training on young carers to all relevant academy 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 academy's 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.

Useful Websites with support:

www.barnardos.org.uk/willow.htm

www.childrensociety.org.uk

www.carers.org