

West Kilbride Primary School & EYC



Young Carers Policy

March 2026



WEST KILBRIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL & EYC

Young Carers Policy



Supporting Our Young Carers Through Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Nurture

1. Aims

At West Kilbride Primary School and Early Years Class, our vision commits us to ensuring every child is included, supported and able to achieve their best. In line with this, the aims of our Young Carer Policy are to:

- Identify, support and champion all Young Carers, ensuring they experience a safe, nurturing and understanding school environment.
- Increase awareness across our school community of the role and experiences of Young Carers.
- Work collaboratively with North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and the Carers Service to ensure that Young Carers receive timely, personalised and compassionate support.
- Ensure our practice reflects our school values of inclusion, nurture, challenge and community.

2. Introduction

At West Kilbride Primary and EYC, we recognise and celebrate the strength, compassion and resilience shown by our Young Carers. We understand that caring roles can be both rewarding and demanding, and we are committed to providing an environment where Young Carers feel valued, understood and supported.

In line with North Ayrshire Council guidance and our school vision, we:

- Promote awareness and understanding of Young Carers among staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Work to remove stigma and ensure Young Carers feel safe to seek help.
- Adopt a GIRFEC-based, child-centred approach.
- Ensure that support is inclusive, respectful and responsive to individual needs.

Our goal is for every Young Carer to experience equity, wellbeing and success as part of our school community.

3. Definition of a Young Carer

A Young Carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who helps care for someone due to:

- Physical or mental health needs
- Disability or additional support needs
- Neurodivergence
- Age-related difficulties
- Challenges related to alcohol or substance misuse
- Communication or literacy barriers
- Undiagnosed but significant support needs

Young Carers may:

- Share responsibilities with others
- Have their own health or support needs
- Support more than one person
- Provide care regularly or occasionally- there is no minimum requirement

Caring responsibilities may include:

- Household tasks
- Personal or physical care
- Emotional support
- Helping siblings
- Managing finances or routines
- Medication collection or support
- Supporting communication

4. Identifying Young Carers

Young Carers are not always immediately visible. Some children may hide their caring role out of fear of stigma or uncertainty about asking for help.

Possible indicators include:

- Lateness or frequent absence

- Tiredness or lack of concentration
- Anxiety or changes in behaviour
- Difficulty completing homework
- Withdrawal from social or after-school activities
- Being a target of bullying

These signs may relate to a variety of wider needs; however, staff should sensitively consider whether caring responsibilities may be a factor. North Ayrshire's enrolment procedures also support early identification.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will:

- Ensure all staff understand Young Carer policy and procedures.
- Provide training annually (August in-service) using updated HSCP/Carers Service materials.
- Ensure confidentiality and safe storage of Young Carer information.
- Promote a school ethos where Young Carers are treated with respect and dignity, in line with our vision and values.

Young Carer Champion

The Young Carer Champion will:

- Be the named contact in school for Young Carers, families and external agencies.
- Work closely with HSCP and the Carers Service.
- Support children through Young Carer Statements where appropriate.
- Help raise awareness in school through assemblies, displays and classroom discussions.
- Provide drop-ins or regular check-ins for Young Carers if needed.

All staff will:

- Complete Young Carer awareness training.
- Follow clear procedures for recognising and supporting Young Carers.
- Foster a nurturing, respectful ethos where children feel safe to talk.

Pupils will:

- Be encouraged to speak openly and respectfully about caring roles.
- Know who they can speak to if they or a friend need support.

Parents and carers will:

- Feel welcome contacting the school for advice, reassurance or support.
- Know how to access Carers Service support or make a referral.

6. Referrals and Support

North Ayrshire Carers Service provides:

- Group support sessions
- One-to-one support
- Advocacy
- Social events and activities
- Residential opportunities
- Financial support, including grants

Referrals may be made by staff, parents/carers or the pupils themselves. All identified Young Carers will be recorded on SEEMiS. Where caring responsibilities impact safety or wellbeing, staff must follow the **Child Protection Policy** while continuing to recognise and support the child as a Young Carer.

7. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is underpinned by:

- **Carers (Scotland) Act 2016**
- **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**
- **Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 & Amendment 2017**
- **GIRFEC**
- **UNCRC**

