

Young Carer School Policy

Aims

- To ensure all young carers are identified & supported.
- To ensure all pupils, staff and parents/carers are aware of who a young carer is.
- To work in partnership with HSCP Young Carers team and the carers service team.
- To provide a safe secure environment for all pupils.

Introduction

In South Ayrshire, we celebrate our young carers. We have a wide range of support and opportunities available for young carers.

We will work across the authority to offer training for all staff and inputs for pupils and parents/carers on young carers to raise awareness for identification (including self-identification) and to tackle stigma and associated stigmas.

Defining a Young Carer

A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 who supports, or helps to support a relative, friend or neighbour. They don't have to live in the same home and can be older or younger than the young carer. They might need extra support due to an illness, disability, mental health condition, because they are elderly, neurodiverse, due to issues with drugs or alcohol, or because they need help to communicate. The young carer does not have to be the primary carer – someone else can be responsible for providing most of the support. There is no minimum caring requirement and young carers can look after more than one person. Young carers can have health issues of their own and can also be cared for.

Young carers can help support the cared for person in lots of different ways. This might include...

- Practical tasks, like shopping, cooking, and cleaning.
- Physical care, like pushing a wheelchair or helping someone get in and out of bed.
- Emotional support, for example, talking to someone when they are having a bad day, looking out for changes in behaviour, or getting up through the night with someone.
- Personal care, like helping someone to get washed or dressed.
- Managing budgets, household finances and paying bills.
- Helping someone communicate. This might mean translating for someone due to a language barrier, helping someone read or write due to a literacy barrier, or signing for someone.
- Looking after siblings. For example, taking siblings to school or nursery, helping them dress, or taking care of them while the cared for person rests.
- Collecting prescriptions, measuring and dispensing medications.

These are just some examples...there are so many ways young carers can provide support.

Identifying a Young Carer

Unless the school is advised about a pupil's circumstances, young carers may first be identified as a result of negative aspects of their behaviour or work, although this isn't always the case – sometimes young carers do not display any signs. Some young carers worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and teachers.

Some of the signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised caring responsibilities are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing
- Tiredness in school
- Erratic response to homework with incomplete or late set tasks
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Behavioural problems
- Victim of bullying
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school/residentials

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.

Our enrolment process will ask if a young person is supporting, or helping to support, a loved one.

Roles & Responsibilities

Head Teacher

- Ensure that young carer information and procedures are known to all new and visiting staff.
- Conduct young carer training at the August in-service day using the most up to date SAC Young Carer PowerPoint.
- Ensure all new staff receive the same training and that the Young Carer policy is shared with staff via staff shared area/email and with parents/carers via the school website.
- Ensure that young carer procedures are followed within the school and that any records are kept in a confidential file and contained within a locked cabinet in the Head Teacher's office.

Young Carer Champion

A Young Carers Champion is a member of the school staff who acts as a point of contact for all young carers in each school. Some of the supports a Champion may offer are:

- be the main point of contact in the school for HSCP and carers service.
- liaise with HSCP/carers service to receive support, policy updates and any other relevant information.
- understand the role of the Young Carers Statement and know how to complete this, when appropriate.
- work alongside HSCP and carers service to raise awareness of young carers.
- attend Young Carer Champion Network meeting every quarter.
- support carer service drop-ins in schools (if required).

Teachers/school staff

All teachers and school staff will complete young carer awareness training and be aware of the school Young Carer policy and procedures.

Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to have open and honest discussions about their own, or peer's, caring responsibilities.

Pupils should be aware of the school's Young Carer Policy and where to seek help, if required.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should feel comfortable approaching school staff to discuss their child's caring responsibilities or ask questions about the support available.

Parents and carers should be aware of the school's Young Carer Policy and where to seek help, if required.

Referrals

Our commissioned carers service provides a range of support for young carers, including, group sessions, one to one sessions, advocacy, activities, residentials and funding. Young carers can be referred by emailing a completed referral form to southayrshire.carers@unity-enterprise.com. The referral form can be completed by anyone, including, school staff, pupil, or parent/carer.

All young carers should be recorded on SEEMiS.

If a child or young person is deemed to have inappropriate caring responsibilities, please refer to the Child Protection Policy.

Legislation

- Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 – young carers must be identified and supported and offered a Young Carers Statement.
- Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- Additional Support for Learning (2017)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)