

# Woodchurch High School A Church of England Academy



## Young Carers Policy

Policy approved: Spring 2025  
Next review: Spring 2027

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Contents                                   |          |
| <b>1. Purpose</b>                          | <b>3</b> |
| <b>2. Policy Statement</b>                 | <b>3</b> |
| <b>3. Definition of a Young Carer</b>      | <b>3</b> |
| <b>4. Identification of Young Carers</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>5. Support for Young Carers</b>         | <b>4</b> |
| <b>6. Raising Awareness</b>                | <b>4</b> |
| <b>7. Role of School Staff</b>             | <b>4</b> |
| <b>8. Engagement with Families</b>         | <b>5</b> |
| <b>9. Confidentiality and Safeguarding</b> | <b>5</b> |
| <b>10. Monitoring and Review</b>           | <b>5</b> |
| <b>11. Support Networks</b>                | <b>5</b> |

## 1. Purpose

This policy aims to recognise and support the needs of young carers in our school community. A **young carer** is a student under the age of 18 who provides care, assistance, or support to a family member or another person who has a disability, long-term illness, mental health problem, or substance misuse issue. This policy will ensure that the school provides appropriate support to young carers so they can thrive academically and socially.

## 2. Policy Statement

Our school is committed to:

- Recognising the contributions of young carers.
- Offering appropriate and confidential support to young carers, ensuring their well-being.
- Raising awareness among staff, students, and parents about the needs of young carers.
- Reducing barriers to learning and participation in school life.
- Providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for young carers.
- Understanding, with compassion, the issues that come with being a young carer.

## 3. Definition of a Young Carer

A **young carer** is someone under 18 years old who provides care to a family member or a person with:

- Physical illness or disability
- Mental health difficulties
- Addiction problems
- Other long-term conditions requiring regular care.

This can include tasks like personal care, cooking, cleaning, helping with medication, or offering emotional support.

## 4. Identification of Young Carers

The school will:

- Encourage staff to be vigilant in identifying students who may be young carers.
- Create an environment where students feel comfortable disclosing their caring responsibilities.
- Regularly assess the needs of young carers to ensure they receive the necessary support.
- Treat pupils with discretion and dignity.

Staff can look out for signs such as:

- Frequent absences or lateness due to caring duties.
- A drop in academic performance or lack of focus.
- Increased stress, anxiety, or fatigue.
- Reluctance to participate in extracurricular activities.

## 5. Support for Young Carers

The school will offer a range of supports for young carers, including:

- **Confidentiality:** Respecting the privacy of young carers and only sharing information with consent.
- **Academic Support:** Flexibility with deadlines, extra help with assignments, and additional resources if needed.
- **Well-being Support:** Access to counselling services or mental health support.
- **Time Management Support:** Assistance with balancing caring responsibilities and schoolwork, such as modified timetables or reduced homework.
- **Peer Support:** Offering opportunities to connect with other young carers through support groups or informal peer networks.
- **Emergency Support:** Having contingency plans for students in case their caring responsibilities change suddenly (e.g., if their family member's condition worsens).

## 6. Raising Awareness

The school will:

- Provide training for staff to recognise the signs of a young carer and to understand their needs.
- Include information about young carers in school newsletters, assemblies, and awareness events.
- Encourage students to be understanding and supportive of their peers who are young carers.
- Work with external agencies and charities to offer additional resources and advice.

## 7. Role of School Staff

All staff members will:

- Be alert to the signs that a student might be a young carer.
- Treat all disclosures with respect, ensuring that the student feels supported.
- Encourage open communication between the student and the school, ensuring they are aware of the available support.
- Work with parents and carers to ensure the young carer's needs are met.

The designated **Young Carer Lead** in the school will be responsible for:

- Coordinating the support for young carers.
- Liaising with external agencies for additional support.
- Ensuring young carers are aware of the support available to them.
- Providing regular updates to the senior leadership team about young carer issues.

## **8. Engagement with Families**

The school will:

- Work collaboratively with parents and carers to ensure the young carer's home and school life are balanced.
- Offer regular communication with parents to discuss how best to support their child's needs at school.
- Encourage parents to notify the school about any changes to their child's caring responsibilities.

## **9. Confidentiality and Safeguarding**

The school recognises that young carers may be reluctant to disclose their caring role due to fear of judgement or concern for their family member. Therefore:

- All information provided by a young carer will be kept confidential unless there is a safeguarding concern.
- The school will act in accordance with safeguarding procedures if there is concern for the welfare of the young carer or the person they are caring for.

## **10. Monitoring and Review**

The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the needs of young carers are being met effectively. Feedback will be sought from young carers, their families, and staff to assess the success of the support provided and to identify areas for improvement.

## **11. Support Networks**

The school will work closely with local agencies and support services, such as:

- Local young carer services and charities.
- Social services.
- Mental health services.
- Family support services.

This collaboration will ensure that young carers and their families receive the appropriate support both inside and outside of school.

This policy ensures that young carers are valued and supported in their education and well-being. By implementing this policy, our school aims to create an environment where young carers can thrive academically and socially while managing their caring responsibilities.