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## School Young Carers Policy 2020-21

Review Date March 2021

Review Date	Version number	Reviewer/Owner (post holder)	Approved by (Committee)	Signature
01/03/21		Kathy Clarke		

# Red Oaks School Young Carers Policy 2020-21

## Appendix 1: Swindon Young Carers Guide to Services

Red Oak's school is committed to supporting young carers to access education. This policy aims to ensure young carers at our school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

### Definition

A young carer is a child or young person under 18 who is helping to look after **someone** at home. Most are caring for a parent, commonly in a single parent family, but some may be taking responsibility for a sibling, grandparent or other relative. 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
- Learning disability
- Mental health issues
- Long-term illness
- Alcohol or drug misuse

### 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 care** - giving or prompting medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.

**Personal care** - washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements

**Emotional care** - 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.

**Domestic care** - doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc

**Financial care** – budgeting and paying bills

**Child care** - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities

### Enrolment

During the enrolment process for new pupils and their families we will attempt to establish:

- Does the pupil have parents or other family members who have disabilities or long term physical or mental health issues?
- Does the pupil help to look after them and what impact does this have on his/her education?
- Is the family in touch with support services that could help reduce the pupil's caring role?

This information will be treated sensitively and will be shared on a need-to-know basis only.

### **Possible effect on education**

We acknowledge that there are likely to be young carers among our 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
- Underachievement resulting in a sudden drop in attainment
- Physical problems due to care duties
- False signs of maturity, because of assuming adult roles
- Isolation from peers or problems interacting with peers
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration)
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities
- Bullying (resulting from the stigma associated with certain disabilities and health conditions)
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem

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

### **Support Offered**

We acknowledge that young carers **may need extra support** to ensure they have equal access to education.

The designated **Young Carer's Lead is Kathy Clarke**. She will liaise with relevant colleagues, put young carers in touch with **Swindon Young Carers Service** [www.swindoncarers.org.uk](http://www.swindoncarers.org.uk) and also put families in touch with other support services. Pupils and families will be made aware of the schools lead through the enrolment process and the school website.

We will:

- Use and evaluate data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers.
- Aim to offer support to improve attendance and well-being.
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private and appreciate that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality and sharing on a "need to know basis."
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school.
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- Promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum where appropriate, especially assemblies and PSHE&C, to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- Offer support to the young carer and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with the next setting.

We recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers. Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
- Flexible arrangements for completing homework
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis).
- 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.

## **Conclusion**

We are committed to meeting the needs of young carers so that they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and have equal access to their education as their peers. Therefore, we will keep up to date with national and local developments and with legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families. Training on young carers' issues will be embedded in ongoing professional development for all staff.

This policy was agreed and approved\_\_\_\_\_.

It will be reviewed March 2022.