



The  
Westminster  
School

# Young Carers Policy 2020-21

*Safe Happy and Learning Together*

*Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational and independent members of our community.*

Approved by Governing Board:

23/02/2021

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Head Teacher:

O Flowers

Lead Personnel:

J Turner

Date of Review:

23/02/2022



## **1. Introduction**

At The Westminster School we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education regardless of what is happening at home. When a child looks after someone in their family with a history of long term physical or mental health illness, a disability, alcohol abuse or substance abuse the young person may need some extra support to help them get the most out of school. This Young Carers' policy will set out how we will help any pupil who looks after someone at home.

## **2. Defining a Young Carer**

A Young Carer is a student under 18 years of age who helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or wellbeing. The level of responsibility assumed by a Young Carer is often disproportionate to their age and at a level beyond simply 'helping out' with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up. At The Westminster School, many of our pupils are cared for by family members rather than being young carers themselves. However, there is always the possibility that they may become a carer at some point.

## **3. Identifying a Young Carer**

Unless the school is advised about a student's home circumstances, Young Carers' risk first being identified as a result of negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some Young Carers' worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers.

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

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing
- Tiredness in school
- Erratic response to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Under-achievement compared to normal
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
- Few or no peer friendships but possibly with a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to Young Carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school
- Apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at parent's meetings.

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 at home. Staff should also discuss their related concerns the Senior Leadership Team and record concerns on Safeguard Software.

## **4. Concerns about a child or young person**

Children who may be considered as a yet unidentified Young carer should be reported to the member of staff with responsibility for Young Carers'. At The Westminster School this is the SENCo.

The SENCo will determine if:

- the child or young person has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal, interpersonal relationships within a caring family setting
- The family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on

the pupil.

While we will respect the right to privacy, we would wish to establish if the family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the child or young person. We will only share information about young carers and their families with people who need to know in order to be able to help. Before sharing information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer or, if they are not able to understand, from a parent.

## **5. School support for identified Young Carers**

- The SENCo will lead on our support work for young carers. This member of staff will be the point of contact for young carers and their families and will liaise with young carers' services.
- Awareness raising session will take place including assemblies, SHaLT lessons and staff training.
- School staff will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends unless the young carer asks for a friend to be present.
- When absence reasons are not produced because of the known home circumstances of the young carer, arrangements are agreed for appropriately coding and recording absences.
- School will liaise with support services to ensure that families can be advised where additional help may be available to them.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parents' meetings due to family circumstances, school staff will try to make alternative arrangements. The young carer or parent may request this.
- School will provide advice about how children can get into school where transport is a problem.
- School staff and services will be available for any child/young person, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help the child/young person in achieving their potential.
- School will take an active role in seeking to identify and provide support to hidden young carers.

### **Children Act 2004**

Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 2004 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services. In the event of any young carers being considered to be at risk of significant harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

### **Equality Act 2010**

Young carers' have protected characteristics as defined by the Act because they are associated with a family member who has a disability or illness and cannot be discriminated against because of this.

### **Children and Families Act 2014**

The Act has a section on Young Carers' and, in conjunction with the adults focused Care Act, seeks to make sure that Young Carers get the support they need. Local authorities are expected to try and identify Young Carers so they can be offered support.

## **6. Young Carers in Sandwell**

Sandwell Young Carers provides guidance and support to children and young people (aged 5-18) whose health, education and social lives have been affected as a result of caring for a dependent family member. Support can be accessed via their website:

<https://www.sandwellyc.com/>

The aim of this site is to be able to offer guidance and support to young carers, their parents, and professionals whose work life may bring them into contact with young carers, directly or indirectly.

You may wish to follow the links which describe you best, or telephone our support hotline on 0121 525 8002