

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Young Carers Policy

January 2026

Review date: January 2027

This Policy was produced by the Inclusion Leader



## **1. Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1 A Young Carer is under 18 years of age and helps to look after a family member who has a disability, long term physical or mental health illness, or misuses substances. Caring can involve household chores, personal care, emotional support, communication support or looking after siblings and themselves. The level of responsibility assumed by a Young Carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home which is a normal part of growing up.
- 1.2 At Westfield Primary 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 who has a long term physical or mental health illness, a disability, or misuses substances then he or she may need extra support to help them get the most out of school. This Young Carers' Policy says how we will help any pupil who helps to look after someone at home

## **2. Identifying a Young Carer**

- 2.1 Unless the school is advised about a pupil's home circumstances, Young Carers risk first being identified by 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.
- 2.2 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 for potential capability.
  - Communication through behaviour, 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.
  - Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school.
  - Apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at parent's meetings.
- 2.3 All the warning signs mentioned may be indicators of a range of problems, some not associated with caring, however in dealing with any pupil exhibiting any of the signs staff should consider asking the pupil if they are helping to look after someone at home. Staff should also enquire from colleagues with pastoral responsibilities for the pupil. Surrey County Council's Inclusion Team and Education Social Workers, together with pastoral support staff, investigating pupils causing concern should also consider the possibility of caring roles, especially when working directly with family members.
- 2.4 Any concerns about a pupil who may be considered an as yet unidentified Young Carer should be referred to the Inclusion Leader as should new information about already identified Young Carers.

- 2.5 It is much better to start from a positive base so our enrolment process will seek to establish if:
- The pupil lives with a family member who has a disability or long-term physical or mental health illness.
  - The pupil has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal inter-personal relationships within a caring family setting.
  - The family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the pupil.
- 2.6 Some families will choose not to disclose this information. Any information gained as a result of this process will be held on the pupil's personal file, kept securely and made available in the first instance to the Young Carers Lead. We will respect the right to privacy and 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 and from a parent.

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

#### **3.1 Our school:**

- Has a designated member of its Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who has special responsibility for young carers. Our designated member of SLT is the Inclusion Leader, Ms. Julia Findlay.
- Has a Young Carer's Champion within school, the school SENCO Rachel Sadler. She will be the point of contact for Young Carers and their families and will liaise with the Young Carers' Service. Their name and contact details will be displayed in the school, on the school website or from reception.
- Is sensitive towards Young Carers' needs, and aims to show discretion. We respect pupils' privacy and will only share information about their circumstances with people who need to know, in order to provide help and to ensure safety. Pupils and parents are consulted before information is shared. Wherever possible staff will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their peers.
- Expects pupils to arrive at school on time and attend school every day. However, in exceptional circumstances absence may be authorised should an emergency situation arise. Please always speak to us if this occurs.
- Has links with local services providing support to families with care needs, including local young carer services who may deliver assemblies to all children.
- Provides flexibility on homework, if required. Please speak to us if you require this support.
- Provides individual listening support for Young Carers. Each pupil has a well-being bubble which enables them to seek support daily whenever needed.

- Organises a Young Carers' Group within school where young carers can socialise with each other.
- Provides access to a telephone in the office to enable children to call home, if required so as to reduce any worry they may have about a family member
- Liaises with the Local Authority to provide assistance for disabled parents in getting their children to school.
- Assists parents with disabilities and health problems in accessing parents' evenings, and communicates in a way that meets their needs.
- Uses school funds where possible to assist eligible Young Carers in their education, including accessing curriculum-based trips
- Will consider alternatives if pupils are unable to attend after school activities (e.g. clubs) due to their caring role. Please speak to us if this is an issue.
- Arranges awareness raising sessions to take place including assemblies, PSHE lessons and staff and Governor training.
- Will liaise with support services to ensure that we can refer and signpost families to additional help.
- Will identify additional support needs for Young Carers struggling to achieve their potential to be provided where appropriate and in consultation with Young Carers' Service.
- Establishes individual pupil support plans for those Young Carers with specific needs where appropriate.
- Seeks feedback and ideas from Young Carers and their families.
- The Inclusion Leader and the Young Carers Champion keep up to date with national and local developments and with legislation and guidance affecting Young Carers and their families
- We welcome any child, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help the child in achieving their potential.

#### 4. 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.

5. Equality Act 2010

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

6. 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 Young Carers get the support they need.

**Useful numbers and links**

Surrey Young Carers

01483 568269

[syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:syc@actionforcarers.org.uk)

[www.actionforcarers.org.uk](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk)

Surrey Youth Focus

[www.surreyyouthfocus.org.uk](http://www.surreyyouthfocus.org.uk)

Surrey young Carers - Action for Carers Surrey

<https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/>