

WARWICKSHIRE YOUNG CARERS



Young Carers' Policy

At Rokeby 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 illness, mental health issues, 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.

Defining a Young Carer

A Young Carer is someone under the age of 18 whose life is in some way affected because of a caring role for a family member who has a long term illness, mental health issue, a disability, or who misuses substances. The Young Carer may be impacted by what is going on at home and may help in many different ways such as: doing household chores, providing personal care, administering medication, giving emotional or communication support, looking after siblings and themselves. The level of responsibility assumed by a Young Carer can be inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home which is a normal part of growing up.

Identifying a Young Carer

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.

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
- 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 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.

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. Education Welfare Officers 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. Any concerns about a pupil who may be considered an as yet unidentified Young Carer should be reported to the member of staff with responsibility for Young Carers (the Young Carers Lead) as should new information about already identified Young Carers. The Young Carers Lead responsible for co-ordinating Young Carer support is the key person in school through which relevant matters need to be passed.