

## **Young Carers Policy**

### **Introduction**

When a child or young person cares for a family member or friend who is ill, disabled, has a mental health challenge or addiction challenge, they may need extra support to help them get the most out of school. At My Online Schooling we are committed to supporting and meeting the needs of young carers so that they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school.

This Young Carers' policy will set out how My Online Schooling aims to support pupils who are young carers.

### **Defining a Young Carer**

A Young Carer is a young person under 18 years of age who helps look after a family member or friend who is ill, disabled, has a mental health challenge or addiction challenge.

A young carer may support by undertaking some or all of the following tasks:

- Physical tasks - cooking, housework, shopping
- Physical care - lifting, helping up the stairs, physiotherapy
- Personal care - dressing, washing, toileting needs
- Emotional support - listening, calming, being present
- Household management - paying bills, managing finances
- Looking after siblings - putting to bed, walking to school
- Interpretation - for hearing/speech impairment or English as an additional language
- Administering medication - insulin needles, preparing daily tablets

### **Identifying a Young Carer**

Parents/carers may advise the school if their child is a young carer and we will share this information with our teachers and any other staff who we feel need to be aware of this in order to best support the pupil. However, some young carers may worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may wish to conceal their caring role from their peers and teachers.

Some of the signs that indicate that a pupils may be a young carer include:

- The pupil is often late to school or has poor attendance
- The pupils is often tired, anxious or withdrawn
- The pupil is having challenges socially or with making friends. They may get on well with adults and present very mature for their age
- The pupil is being bullied
- The pupil is showing signs of low mood or depression
- The pupil is finding it difficult to concentrate on their work
- The pupils is having difficulty in joining in extracurricular activities or is unable to attend school trips
- The pupil is isolated
- The pupil is not submitting homework/assignments on time and/or to a low standard
- The pupil is anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative
- The pupil is displaying behavioural problems
- The pupil is having physical problems such as back pain (perhaps from heavy lifting)
- The pupil is secretive about home life
- The pupil is showing signs of physical neglect or poor diet
- The pupil is listed as a Child in Need, subject to a Child Protection plan, or Looked-after Child Plan where parental ill health or addiction issues are involved
- The pupil has a sibling at the school who is registered with disabilities or ongoing health challenges, including mental health challenges.

The signs that a child or young person may be a young carer can also be indicators of other wellbeing or safeguarding concerns. However, in dealing with a child or young person exhibiting any of the above signs, staff should consider if the child or young person is looking after someone at home. Staff should also log their related concerns via the Wellbeing Manager to be reviewed by the Head of Wellbeing, Young Carers Operational Lead, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is preferable that parents/carers inform us from the start of their child's enrollment at My Online Schooling if they are a young carer. Therefore, our enrollment process will seek to sensitively establish if a child or young person is a young carer.

Information gained as a result of this process will be held securely and we will only share information about young carers and their families with members of staff who need to know in order to be able to help and support. Before sharing any information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer, or, if they are not able to provide consent, from their parent/carer.

## Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take a responsibility for supporting young carers, however, key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Director of Inclusion and Wellbeing: Euan MacLean
- Head of Wellbeing & Young Carers Operational Lead: Vanessa Baker
- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Euan MacLean
- Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Laura Hendry & Scarlett Campbell

## Support for Young Carers at My Online Schooling

- **Young Carers Operational Lead:** Our Young Carers Operational Lead will lead the support available for young carers. They will also be the point of contact for young carers and their families. Their name and contact details are available on our website and in the school Common Room.
- **Young Carers Support Page:** We have a Young Carers Support Page available in the Common Room for pupils to learn more about young carers and the support that is available to them if they think that they may be a young carer.
- **Peer Support Group:** We run a weekly Peer Support Group for young carers to attend. This group session allows young carers to socialise with and get to know other pupils at MOS who are also young carers.
- **ILA Support Group:** We run a weekly ILA support group for young carers to allow them a dedicated time and space to complete ILAs and receive support with this if needed.
- **1-1 Drop in Sessions:** Our Head of Wellbeing & Young Carer's Operational Lead hosts weekly drop in sessions for pupils to drop in for support, advice, or just a friendly chat. Information about these sessions and how to attend is available to pupils on the 'Mental Health and Wellbeing' page of the Common Room and the Young Carers Support Page.
- **Awareness Events:** We run regular awareness events and assemblies so that pupils at MOS are aware of the responsibilities that a young carer may have. We also aim to post regular information in the Common Room about young carers and about the support available for young carers.
- **Staff Training:** Staff receive training about young carers and how to support them in the classroom. Documents with information about young

carers, their responsibilities, and how to support them are also available to staff in the staff room.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is August 2024.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Head of Wellbeing.