The Priory Primary School

Young Carer’s Policy

The Priory Primary School is committed to supporting young carers to access education. When a child looks after someone in their family with a history of long term physical or mental health illness, a disability or alcohol or substance abuse the young person may need some extra support to help them get the most out of school. This policy aims to ensure that when a student is identified as a young carer they are offered support to participate, make progress and feel happy and safe at the school, by alleviating some of the issues and concerns that young carers may have.

A young carer is a young person who is helping to look after someone at home. Most are caring for a parent, 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 (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

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 medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility.
- **Personal intimate care** - washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements.
- **Emotional care** - being compliant, 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.
- **Financial care** - running the household, bill paying, benefit collection.
- **Child care** - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities.

We acknowledge that there are likely to be young carers among its students and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education. As a result of the additional responsibilities at home, a young carer might experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home.
- Concentration problems, anxiety or worry.
- Emotional distress.
- Tiredness.
- Lack of time for homework.
- Poor attainment.
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting.
- False signs of maturity, because of assuming adult roles.
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration).
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities.
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home.
- Limited social skills.
- Bullying.
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self-esteem.
- It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents’ evenings.

At The Priory Primary School, we recognise that young carers may need extra support to ensure they feel supported and have equal access to education. As part of our duty of care and commitment to young carers we will:

- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to a mentor.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive manner.
- Uphold confidentiality.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in the 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 to facilitate an understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.

We also 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.
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed).
- Access to homework clubs
- Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible).
- 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 the school.
- Home visits to discuss the progress of a young carer.
- Additional support from the family liaison team.

Concerns about a child or young person who may be considered as a yet unidentified Young Carer should be reported to the Safeguarding and Welfare Practitioner. New information about identified young carers should also be passed to the school’s Safeguarding and Welfare Practitioner, who is the key co-ordinator for dealing with matters relating to Young Carer support. Our enrolment process will seek sensitively to establish if:

- the child or young person has additional support needs which may include having parents/relatives with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health problems
- 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. Information gained as a result of this process will be held securely and made available in the first instance to the designated member of school staff with responsibilities for young carers’. 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.

School Support

- A member of the staff in each school 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. Their name and contact details will be made available via the school office. For ease of reference, this person will be termed the Young Carers' Co-ordinator.
- Awareness raising session will take place including assemblies, PSHE 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.