

Mercia Primary Academy Trust

Young Carers Policy

Background

The definition of a Young Carer is as defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 ... a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work). This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

We recognise that helping around the home is a normal part of growing up for many children, however, we are aware that young carers regularly carry out tasks and assume a level of responsibility, which is often inappropriate to their age.

Young Carers are a vulnerable and disadvantaged group, who often experience difficulties in their education. They can struggle to attend school and struggle to make good progress in school. They can experience bullying because of their caring role, may struggle building relationships, and they may have few friendships. They may experience punctuality issues, concentration problems, emotional outbursts, tiredness, behavioural problems, anxiety, stress, problems with health and wellbeing, isolation, low self-esteem, and low mood. Their caring role can impact upon their emotional or physical wellbeing or their prospects in education and life. Identifying and supporting young carers is an effective way of improving the attainment and attendance of this pupil group; who are specifically mentioned in Ofsted's evaluation inspection schedule. We believe that by supporting young carers and their families, we can strengthen families and support parenting.

From April 2015, the Care Act and Children and Families Act will re-define the way the Local Authority works to support young carers and their families. Responsibilities for identifying and supporting young carers are placed on the Local Authority as a whole and are set out in the Children's act 1989 (including insertions made by the Children and Families Act 2014) and under the Care Act 2014. Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced new rights for young carers to improve how young carers and their families are identified and supported. From April 2015, all young carers will be entitled to an assessment of their needs from the Local Authority and a transition assessment as they approach adulthood. This new provision works alongside measures in the Care Act 2014 for assessing adults to enable a 'whole family approach' to providing assessment and support.

A Carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends (illness, disabled, has mental health or substance misuse problems etc) who could not manage without this help.

The Carers Hub was commissioned in October 2015 to deliver services to adults and children who have an identified caring role. The Hub offers direct information, advice and guidance, signposting, emotional support and a triage assessment. They also offer adult drop in support groups, a befriending service, training, counselling, young carer groups, day trips and financial support.

At The Carers Hub, they ensure the voice of the young people is heard, but also they work closely with Stoke and Staffordshire MASH and ensure First Response are alerted to any concerns. They also work alongside local Safeguarding Team to ensure the needs of the young person are being met.

Honeypot is a partnership forged with The Carers Hub and they offer respite breaks to Young Carers and vulnerable children, where they can make friends, build self-esteem, and just have a chance to play freely in a safe and nurturing environment.

Eligibility / Referral Criteria

To meet eligibility for a service in Staffordshire from the Local Authority, children and young people must:-

Meet this definition of a young carer:

- Be undertaking age inappropriate care (in terms of what they do or the degree to which they do it)
- Be negatively impacted as a result of their role, i.e. their physical/mental health, education, employment, training, emotional and behavioural development, identity, and family and social/peer relationships

A young carer may do some of the following:

- Practical tasks; such as preparing meals and drinks
- Physical care; such as lifting, helping a parent/carer on stairs and with physiotherapy
- Personal care; such as washing, dressing, administering medication, changing dressings, and/or helping with toileting needs
- Domestic tasks; such as cleaning, managing the family budget, paying bills, collecting benefits and prescriptions
- Looking after or 'parenting' younger siblings
- Emotional support; such as staying at home to keep someone or the person they care for company
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impairment, or because English is not the family's first language.

Statement:

Mercia Primary Academy Trust are aware that pupils in our schools may have caring roles at home. We believe that children and young people should have equal access to education, regardless of what is happening at home, and that **no** child should have to take on inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities. We recognise that a young carer may need a little extra support, to help them get the most out of school.

We aim to understand the issues faced by young carers and to have a separate policy for young carers, stating how much we will support them. We aim to support young carers through a whole school approach, and by working with other agencies and professionals, with the understanding that support for the whole family is in the best interests of the young carer. We will continue to keep up to date with both local and national developments, legislation and guidance effecting young carers and their families.

What we will do as a school:

- 1) We will have a named staff member with lead responsibility for young carers (Young Carers Champion). This staff member is Angela Doxford, who is the school's Senior Family Support Worker, Designated Early Help Assessment Lead, and Designated Deputy Safeguarding Officer. We recognise this role within continuing professional development. The Young Carers Champion will be the main point of contact for all issues pertaining to young carers and will support colleagues to understand the challenges that young carers face.

They will have their contact details included on a database of centrally held information, containing details of other Young Carer Champions in schools throughout the country.

They will ensure that young carers will have access to staff they can talk to, who they feel will understand their circumstances, and will **not** discuss their situation in front of their peers.

They will be committed to raising awareness of young carers, ensuring that the whole school is committed to meet their needs.

- 2) We will endeavour to identify young carers and to ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career opportunities as their peers. We will make a bespoke offer of support including an action plan with a whole family approach. This support may also include:
 - A referral to First Response if we are concerned that the young carer may be a victim of neglect, abuse, cruelty, or at risk of immediate or significant harm, or to request an assessment.
 - A referral to the Local Authority's commissioned support service to request that a detailed assessment is.
- 3) We have in place a policy to encourage practice that identifies and supports young carers such as adapting school arrangements if needed, provision for personal tutors and private discussions and access to local young carers' support. We will monitor and evaluate data on the young carers that we have identified, to examine the progress that they have made and to review and amend the offer of support as appropriate. We will maintain a database of young carers that we have identified and the support that we have offered them, and we may share this data with the Local Authority.
- 4) We promote open communication with families that supports parenting capacity and encourages the sharing of information. We will endeavour to engage the parents of young carers. It is known that they may be difficult to engage and that this may be for a variety of reasons (fear of statutory agency involvement, fears that their parenting may be called into question, fears of losing control of a situation).
- 5) We ensure school policies such as those for enrolment, attendance, bullying, behaviour and keeping safe, afford recognition to young carers. We will communicate messages relating to young carers, effectively, for both staff and pupils.

- 6) We will advertise local young carers services. We will ensure that our staff/Young Carers Champion are trained to recognise the warning signs of a young carer and for staff to inform the Young Carers Champion if they see them.
- 7) We incorporate into individual pupil plans recognition and support the positive aspects of the young carers' role, as well as providing the personalised support necessary to enable young carers to attend and enjoy school.
- 8) We will consider scope for school staff to adopt lead professional roles within locally agreed arrangements or Early Help Assessments.
- 9) We will consider the role of School Nurses in supporting improved health outcomes and reduce inequalities of family/child experience.
- 10) Successful local partnerships depend of the building of constructive relationships and shared vision. We will use the opportunities for working together to identify key priorities for commissioning and the best use of available resources designed to secure the outcomes for young carers that have been identified.
- 11) We will use feedback from young carers and their families to inform our policies and practice.
- 12) We will encourage effective use of the curriculum, such as PSHE to explore the roles and responsibilities of young carers. We will use PHSE lessons as a vehicle to promote positive images of disability and mental ill health, challenging stereotypes and discrimination. We recognise that there are children and young people who are affected by family disability, health problems or substance misuse, who do not become young carers and so we are wary of making assumptions about people, and labelling children, young people and their parents. We will promote discussion regarding caring and issues surrounding illness and disability, to promote a fuller understanding, acceptance and respect.
- 13) We will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality, whilst considering a whole family approach. We will follow child protection and safeguarding procedures, regarding the young carer that is at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate caring responsibilities or an inappropriate level of care giving.

We recognise that every young carer's situation is different and that flexibility is required when responding to their needs. We can also consider access to a telephone during breaks and at lunchtime, negotiable homework deadlines, access to homework clubs, access for parents with mobility issues, and alternative communication for parents with sensory impairment or are housebound.

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Directorate HR Unit.

Approved by:

Director, Mercia Primary Academy Trust

A signed copy of this document is available from the school office.

March 2021

Review every two years - March 2023

Date

| Version | Date reviewed | Changes | Reasons for alterations and Signature |
|---------|---------------|---|--|
| 2 | November 2020 | Added Stoke to Staffordshire MASH Changed PSGE to PSHE Added version control | Organisational name change Typing error Uniformity |
| 3 | March 2021 | Added range of formats | Accessibility |