



## **Supporting Young Carers at our School**

### **Who are young carers?**

A young carer is a child or young person who is under 18 years old who provides ongoing care for a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

The tasks and level of caring can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level, frequency and type of care needed and the structure of the family as a whole.

### **What do young carers do?**

Practical tasks, physical care, personal care, emotional support, household management, looking after siblings, interpretation and administering medication.

### **Why do young carers need our support?**

A young carers personal and physical development and their physical and emotional health can be affected and access to social opportunities can be lessened. Due to them learning how to care for someone else at an early age they can be seen as 'copers'.

Young carers can suffer from a lack of sleep, the effects of lifting and poor diet, they may feel stressed or isolated, suffer from traumatic life changes and experiences or see the adverse effects of illness or addiction. According to statistics young carers are more likely to be bullied in school.

### **Young carers education and attainment**

- 27% of young carers in secondary schools experience educational difficulties or miss school
- Young adults between the ages of 16 and 18 are twice as likely to not be in education, employment or training
- 68% of young carers experience bullying in school and 39% said that no one in their school was aware of their caring role

(The Princess Royal Trust for Carers 2010)

- The number of 5-7 year olds providing care increased by 83% between 2001 and 2011
- Young carers are four times as likely to live in households where no adult is in work and money is tight

### **What effect can supporting young carers do for the school?**

Assisting young carers can improve their attendance, attainment, behaviour and so our school's overall school performance.

Young carers are a group of pupils across the school who we need to be aware of. Ofsted expect schools to be taking care of their needs as they are a vulnerable and disadvantaged group.

### **Why can young carers be hidden?**

It is important that staff are aware that it is likely, even in a primary school, that we have pupils who are carers but remain hidden.

This can happen for a number of reasons, including:-

The young carers parent/carer's condition is not obvious or the parent/carer does not come into school so people don't think they need help and/or:-

The young carer:-

- doesn't realise their life is any different to anyone else's
- doesn't want to be seen as different from their peers
- doesn't think anyone will, can or would want to help in school or anything would happen differently through them telling someone
- wants to keep their identity at school, separate from their caring role
- doesn't want to discuss their private life and/or they're embarrassed
- are worried about what other pupils will think or do
- are concerned their family will be split up and they'll be put into care
  
- There aren't the opportunities to share their feelings

### **Good practice in identifying young carers**

- ✓ Raise the profile and make everyone aware
- ✓ Have a secure and safe environment where children feel they can 'open up' or can easily find an adult they trust to talk to
- ✓ Promote issues related to young carers in the school environment and curriculum
- ✓ Ensure policies and procedures in place that raise self-esteem and expectations of positive behaviour and understanding of uniqueness and difference
- ✓ Provide opportunities for pupils to be able to communicate non-verbally as well as verbally and maintain and build on good communication with families
- ✓ Publicising young carers support e.g. on the school website, through display and through visitors
- ✓ Developing good partnership working with local young carers services

### **What do young carers say would help them?**

Obviously, every young carer, like all children are unique and are involved in circumstances specific to them, so it's important that as staff we are aware of the young carers who we work with and are open to the possibility of more who may need our support.

Some examples of their thoughts may include:-

"Ask me separately why I haven't completed my home learning - I want to explain but not in front of anyone else."

"If I'm late to school, please can I talk it through rather than automatically getting into trouble."

"I'd like to discuss my changing needs on a more regular basis as things change at home."

"I want to be treated like other pupils but with an understanding that I have extra problems outside of school that I sometimes need support with."

### **What have we in place at our school to support young carers?**

- We have identified young carers and their families who are supported by Lesley (our B CEP school lead for young carers in collaboration with Kate)
- We have a young carers display outside the OASIS and website links on our school website; information will also be included on a newsletter
- We can support pupils financially through Pupil Premium funding
- Young carers can be supported through outside agencies such as Early Help, the School Nursing Service or Young Carers support
- We remind all pupils about who they could talk to if they are worried or need help
- We are currently organising a regular young carers support group and a worker to come in and deliver a presentation about young carers to raise awareness and see if anymore come forward