All Saints Catholic Primary School

Young Carers Policy

Date policy last reviewed: _____

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

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Last updated: 25th March 2024

Statement of intent

At All Saints, we take our statutory duty to protect and promote the welfare of all pupils very seriously, and aim to provide a community for pupils which keeps them safe, supports their creativity and enables them to meet their full potential.

The school is committed to supporting young carers' access to a full education. This policy will be implemented by all staff members in order to ensure young carers at our school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

The aim of this policy is to raise awareness among school staff about the needs of young carers and to support them in establishing a whole-school approach to address the issues that may arise within a school setting, in line with the school's statutory duty of care to young carers who are pupils at the school.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015
- DfE (2011) 'Improving support for young carers – family focused approaches'
- DfE (2016) 'The lives of young carers in England'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- NHS (2021) 'Help for young carers'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Making provision for inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and promote good communication with their families.
- Ensuring clear information is published regarding how young carers and their families can access support.
- Overseeing the implementation and review of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing a young carer lead.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of and adhere to this policy.
- Ensuring that the school environment is inclusive and accommodating for young carers.
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with the young carer lead.

The young carer lead is responsible for:

- Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.
- Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need.
- Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services.
- Ensuring that any existing individual pupil plans recognise pupils' specific needs as a young carer

- Meeting regularly with young carers and liaising with teaching staff regarding their educational development.
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with the headteacher.

The DSL is responsible for

- Managing any safeguarding-related concerns in relation to young carers and ensuring they are supported.
- Being alert to the specific needs of young carers.

3. Definition

A young carer is someone under 18 years of age who provides regular and ongoing care to a family member who, due to a condition, illness, disability, serious injury, mental health condition or addiction, are reliant upon them for support.

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. Young carers may be primary carers, e.g. if caring for a parent, or a secondary carer, e.g. when helping to care for a sibling.

Young carers are recognised by the DfE and the school as children who are vulnerable. This is because the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care is often inappropriate for that child's age and stage of development, and risks jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and outcomes.

A young carer may undertake some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks
- Physical care
- Personal and intimate care
- Emotional support
- Household management
- Looking after multiple individuals as a result of the primary dependant's condition, e.g. a child taking care of their parent as well as their siblings due to their parent's impairment in doing so
- Interpretation
- Administering medication

4. Identifying young carers

During the school enrolment process for new pupils, the school will:

- Identify parents or family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health conditions.
- Clarify whether the pupil has caring responsibilities.
- Identify whether the young carer has any additional needs that need to be supported, e.g. any SEND or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Establish individual pupil plans to recognise the child's specific needs as a young carer.

Where appropriate, a young carer may be referred to the LA or other support agencies for a needs assessment.

The school will create a welcoming and friendly environment for all pupils, in which young carers feel comfortable to discuss their situation.

The school will continuously bear in mind that where a parent has a disability, mental health condition or addiction, the pupil might be the carer whilst showing none of the indicative signs of a young carer.

5. Educational issues faced by young carers

Caring responsibilities can impact on young people's education in a number of different ways including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lateness and non-attendance
- Late or no submission of homework and assignments
- Not participating in extracurricular activities and school events
- Experiencing bullying or isolation
- Underachieving academically
- Poor education or career choices

Where a pupil has been identified as, or is suspected to be, a young carer, teaching staff will liaise with the young carer lead to ensure that the difficulties the pupil's home situation presents are accounted for and accommodated, while still ensuring high expectations and aspirations are held for the pupil in relation to their abilities and circumstances.

Young carers' teachers will decide, on a case-by-case basis and with advice and support from the young carer lead, to offer accommodations to help the pupil get the most out of their education, which include:

- Allowing additional time to complete school work, e.g. extended deadlines.
- Weekly discussions at Safeguarding Meetings to discuss the progress and lived experiences of any young carers and any actions will be carried out by the young carer lead.
- Additional support to complete work, e.g. through deployment of TAs.
- Providing homework clubs to give them a space to complete homework separate from the demands of their home life.
- Access to tutoring or 'buddying' programmes.

The school will be aware that many young carers may be unable to develop friendships outside of school, due to reasons such as being unable to invite friends to their home, restricting the development of a pupil's social skills. Families involving a young carer may be unwilling or unable to attend school functions, leading to them becoming more isolated from the school environment and unaware of issues that the young carer may be experiencing. Some families will be dependent solely on state benefits, affecting their ability to afford proper school clothing and/or extra-curricular activities, such as school trips.

The school will ensure that the pupil is offered appropriate pastoral care and emotional support, and teaching staff will aim to ensure that they facilitate, as far as possible,

opportunities for the pupil to bond with their classmates during lesson time, e.g. through group and pair work with pupils in the class considered to be kind and welcoming.

During any period of absence, e.g. due to illness, the school will ensure that there are processes in place to check up on the pupil's wellbeing for the duration of this period and will offer any additional support needed, where appropriate.

The school uses and evaluates data effectively in order to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers, and reviews plans accordingly. Young carers are provided with opportunities to speak to someone in private regarding their role as a young carer.

Young carers are provided with access to a telephone during breaks and lunches, allowing them to call home with the intention of reducing any worry they may have about a family member

The school will ensure that the attendance of young carers is monitored and non-attendance is followed up in line with the Attendance and Absence Policy; however, the school will take a flexible and case-by-case approach to issuing sanctions for non-attendance in line with the specific young carer's circumstances.

6. Behaviour

The school will be aware that young carers may exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from home, including angry or violent behaviour and behaviour which is considered 'immature' or otherwise inappropriate for their age or stage of development.

Instances of poor behaviour by young carers will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy; however, the school will consider on a case-by-case basis where ongoing pastoral support is more appropriate than sanctions. The young carer lead will work with young carers displaying persistent poor behaviour to discuss additional support that can be offered to help improve their conduct.

Where appropriate, the school will schedule any sanctions implemented for a young carer's behaviour around their duties, e.g. setting lunchtime detentions instead of after-school detentions.

The school understands that pupils who are young carers may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion, as the school may be the only escape from caring responsibilities for many young carers. The headteacher will only issue fixed-term exclusions young carers as a last resort, and will avoid, as far as possible, permanent exclusions, in line with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

7. Safeguarding

Young carers may also be more vulnerable to safeguarding concerns than other pupils. Many young carers will experience a degree of neglect of their basic needs, including:

- Physical needs, e.g. food, shelter and clothing.
- Emotional needs, e.g. nurture and stimulation.
- Medical needs, e.g. not securing appropriate health care.

Young carers may also be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be inside the home, e.g. a dependant struggling with an addiction that leads to outbursts of aggression or violence; however, some pupils who are young carers may also be vulnerable to extra-familial harm as a result of the loneliness, lack of emotional support or lack of supervision that can sometimes come with being a young carer. These dangers include, though are by no means limited to:

- Being drawn into abusive or exploitative relationships.
- Being susceptible to radicalisation or grooming.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Substance misuse and addiction.
- Mental ill health.
- Physical ill health or impaired development.

Where a member of staff thinks a pupil may be caring for a family member without this being officially disclosed to the school, they will bring this to the attention of the young carer lead, or the DSL where they suspect the child may be experiencing harm. The school, supported by the DSL, will identify young carers who may be in need of early help, and will follow the early help processes outlined within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8. Staff awareness

It is important that staff members can effectively identify young carers and that young carers feel that they can ask for help; therefore, raising awareness among staff and pupils about the issues relating to young carers and what support is available is vital.

In order to ensure that staff members understand the issues faced by young carers, training and ongoing professional development about the matter is provided for staff and the governing board.

Staff members will keep up-to-date with national and local developments, legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.

The curriculum, primarily PSHE lessons, will be used to promote a full understanding, acceptance of, and respect for, issues such as the work of young carers.

Staff members will not discuss a young carer's personal situation and related arrangements in front of their peers. Staff members will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way that upholds confidentiality.

9. Providing support to families

The school offers support to the pupil and their family during the transition process between phases, sharing agreed information with their new school, college or university where appropriate.

Additional support will be offered to parents in order to remove any communication barriers with them, allowing them to be fully engaged with the education of their child. The school premises are accessible to people with disabilities and/or illnesses, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings and other school events. Where parents

are unable to physically attend parents' evening due to their disability, medical condition or substance abuse, home visits will be considered.

The school will continuously promote additional links with adult care agencies which may be able to support families and relieve care responsibilities.

The school will discuss and provide advice to parents regarding transport arrangements, where necessary, for those who find it difficult to escort their young children to school.

10. Monitoring and review

The headteacher and the young carer lead will continually monitor and review practice to ensure this policy is implemented correctly.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing board on a bi annual basis.

The next scheduled review date of this policy is March 2026.