**Young Carer Policy**

**1 Page Guidance notes**

All schools/ colleges should have a policy in place that recognises the needs of young carers and outlines how the setting will identify and address these needs.

The template policy on the following pages has been created by Sheffield Young Carers for schools and colleges in Sheffield, and endorsed by Sheffield Children’s Safeguarding Team (and can be found on their website [here).](https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/p/sheffield-early-years-and-education-settings/assessment-tools-forms-and-templates)

The points on the template can be adapted in accordance with what works well for your environment and can be used in a discrete policy for young carers and/or to inform the revision of an existing policy to include young carers, such as the school/college inclusion policy.

The specific information that schools will need to capture in their policy will depend on the extent of the school’s wider provision for young carers and whether they are:

* Just beginning to develop provision for young carers and focusing on the basics.
* Building on the basics to better meet young carers’ needs.
* Striving to achieve best practice

**Recommendations**

* Ideally a Young Carer Policy would be co-produced with any carers that have been identified. If you currently do not have any carers identified, you can start off with ideas from this template and then build on the policy with them, once you do.
* The policy should be signed off by a member of SLT and the governing body.
* The policy can be adapted as a Multi-Academy-Trust-wide policy.
* We urge you to ensure that **all** members of staff read and implement the points on the policy.
* All settings should review progress regularly (see [here](https://youngcarersinschools.com/ycis-guide/step-2/) for guidance: Step 2 of [Young Carers in Schools)](https://youngcarersinschools.com/) with young carers, with a view to increasing the number of points covered in your policy and ultimately achieving best practice.

[School/ college logo here]



Endorsed by:

 

[Name of school/ college]

**Young Carer Policy**

**2025-2026**

Policy date:

Senior Leadership:

Governor:

Young Carer Lead:

Review date:

**Principles of the Young Carer Policy**

We recognise that many students will have caring responsibilities at some point during their time at [SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME], and that these responsibilities can impact a student’s performance in any area of the curriculum; a whole school/ college commitment is therefore necessary.

[SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME] believes that all pupils should be equally valued and strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. We aim to create an environment whereby all students will flourish and feel safe and that seeks to remove barriers to learning and participation. The importance of enhancing positive self-esteem is also recognised, which allows opportunities for increased engagement, social development, and achievement.

Our young carer policy takes account of findings and recommendations given by Barnardo’s Still Hidden, Still Ignored; Who Cares for Young Carers? report (2017), the Children’s Commissioner’s Voices of England’s Missing Children report (2022), and the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance (2024), which all emphasise the role and accountability of school/ college staff and procedures regarding provision for, and progress of, young carers.

Our Governing Body will ensure that we fulfil this responsibility to provide holistic and effective support to young carers.

[SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME] acknowledges the need to keep up to date with advice, publications and research regarding provision for young carers, and therefore this document is subject to review at regular intervals.

This policy has been produced in collaboration with local charity, Sheffield Young Carers.

The template of this policy has been endorsed by Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership. It is understood that the policy will be adapted to meet the needs and acknowledge the context of each education setting.

**Definition of a Young Carer**

**SYC’s definition of a young carer** is somebody under the age of 25 who helps to care for somebody (a parent, grandparent, sibling or other family member) who is unable to fully care for themselves due to a physical or learning disability, long-term physical illness or condition, mental health condition, or substance misuse issues. This can include personal, practical, emotional, or financial care. For example:

* Jobs around the house
* Shopping
* Helping with personal care (bathing, getting dressed, lifting)
* Giving medication, making medical appointments, accompanying them to hospital
* Providing emotional support, listening, helping calm them down
* Helping with finances, help paying bills, working to earn money for the family
* Looking after themselves or their siblings because nobody else is able to

**[SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME]’s** definition of a young carer is *[e.g. a child, under the age of 18 who is either the main carer, shares a caring responsibility for, or whose day-to-day life is impacted by someone in their home, which extends to a sibling or siblings, parent, both parents or a grandparent, who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, misuses or is addicted to substances, or is unable to fully care for themselves.]*

Our school/ college recognises that anyone can become a young carer at any time. An [inquiry](https://carers.org/all-party-parliamentary-group-appg-for-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers/appg-on-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-inquiry-into-life-opportunities) by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers (2024) suggested that **10% of all pupils will provide high or very high levels of care** – equating to at least two young carers in every class.

**Impacts of Caring**

Young carers can often find life tiring, stressful and lonely. Being a carer can affect a young person in many ways – including social isolation, bullying, difficulties with school/ college attendance and achievement, and physical and mental ill health themselves, sometimes leading to unhealthy coping strategies.

However, there are also many positive impacts of caring, such as feelings of self-worth, the development of practical and transferable skills, and other personal qualities like empathy and compassion.

When young carers are identified early and supported well in their education setting, they can go on to achieve just as well as their peers.

Unfortunately, many young carers will remain hidden from view due to the potentially negative impacts they feel speaking up or self-identifying may have on their family.

To help identify and support those hidden young carers, it is vital that professionals are equipped with the understanding and knowledge to detect potential signs that a young person may have a caring responsibility. There are many potential identifiers but listed below are some of the more common signs. A young carer may show one, or many, of these identifiers:

* Attendance issues, including persistent lateness or absences, leaving school/ college in the middle of the day, arriving late for lessons.
* A lower attainment or progress score than anticipated or predicted, underperforming or not fulfilling their potential.
* Poor homework record or quality.
* Poor engagement both within lessons and extra-curricular activities.
* Low emotional wellbeing including signs of: Tiredness, worry, anxiety and low self-esteem which could lead to social isolation and trouble maintaining healthy friendships.
* Displaying behavioural problems or showing sudden changes in behaviour and mood.
* Understanding or showing interest in adult matters such as finances or medical conditions which are not appropriate to their age.
* Being very keen to offer help and support to adults, even at the detriment of their own social time, and appearing to find interacting with adults easier than with their peers.
* Reference to supporting people at home or commenting on the behaviours of people in their home.
* Sibling at the school with SEND.
* Reporting of bullying.
* Parental lack of engagement in school/ college.

**Equality and Discrimination**

[SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME] aims to make reasonable steps to ensure that young carers are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students, and to ensure equal educational and social opportunity for all.

[SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME] strives to maintain a climate of tolerance, understanding, respect and trust that allows all students and staff irrespective of background or personal circumstances to feel safe and be safe from any form of discrimination or emotional harm. This young carer policy is supported by other school/ college policies including our equality policy and anti-bullying policy which can be viewed separately on the [SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME] website.

**Aims of Young Carer Provision**

* To raise awareness of young carers among staff and to ensure the identification of all young carers as early as possible on entry to the school/ college and make referrals when necessary.
* To foster respect and understanding towards young carers among all students
* To address any underlying inequalities between young carers and other students in a graduated and timely manner.
* To improve the progress and raise the standard of achievement for young carers.
* To support young carers in improving their attendance.
* To ensure that young carers feel included and supported within their school/ college community, and that reasonable adjustments are made to promote this.
* To protect young carers from unjust treatment due to their caring role and improve co-ordination with other agencies and support services.
* To give young carers a voice in the school/ college community and ensure that they are involved in decisions affecting young carer provision.
* To ensure that staff recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

**Whole school/college commitment to Young Carers**

A multitude of strategies can be implemented at various levels within a school/ college to ensure that young carers are identified, supported, and enabled to succeed academically, emotionally and socially. This requires a collaborative approach where every adult is held accountable for young carers.

To do this, our school/college will:

**Appoint a designated Young Carer Lead**

* \* Appoint a Young Carer (operational) Lead, written into their Job Description, supported by a Young Carer SLT Lead and an appointed Governor.
* The Young Carer Lead will:
* Understand the issues surrounding being a young carer.
* Lead on identifying and supporting young carers in school and stay up to date on every young carer’s circumstance and needs.
* \* Understand each young carer’s situation and be someone that they can talk to.
* Be an identified point of contact for other pupils, families, staff and external agencies.
* In order to do this successfully, the Young Carer Lead will:
* Undertake training about young carers, via Sheffield Young Carers’ free e-learning module or multi-agency training.
* Become a member of Sheffield Young Carers Schools or Post-16 Network, with access to other free training, resources, information, termly meetings, and support.
* Make referrals to Sheffield Young Carers/ other external agencies where necessary.
* Stay up to date on young carers issues through Sheffield Young Carers’ regular young carer network briefings and newsletters.

**Raise awareness among staff**

* Ensure all new pastoral and other relevant staff undertake training about young carers in their induction, via Sheffield Young Carers’ free e-learning module or multi-agency training.
* \* Ensure that all school/ college staff receive training on young carer awareness, identification and support through regular CPD. e.g. yearly.
* Put information about young carers on staff noticeboards and staff intranet.
* \* Create an information-sharing system, such as a young carer staff booklet or young carer passport, available to all staff, so that they are aware of who the young carers are and any reasonable adjustments, and so that young carers don’t need to repeat themselves.
* Include young carer progress as a regular item in staff and governor meetings.

**Raise awareness among students**

* Develop a culture of openness and respect for young carers among the student community, and to encourage young carers to come forwards.
* Promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
* \* Have a display board visible to students and staff, with information about young carers, the name of the Young Carer Lead and how to find them, as well as details of in-school/ college and external support such as Sheffield Young Carers.
* \* Run regular [e.g. termly/annual] assemblies and lessons to raise awareness about young carers, as well as disability, physical and mental health, substance and alcohol misuse.
* Look for other opportunities to raise awareness and celebrate young carers, e.g. on carer awareness days, or by adding books about young carers to the school reading list, showing films and posters about young carers.

**Raise awareness among families**

* Regularly communicate with all our families about the support we offer young carers and who the Young Carer Lead is, to encourage young carer’s families to come forwards and to keep a culture of transparency and support. We will do this via:
* A letter home, social media, web page, newsletter, coffee mornings, [other], with access to this policy.
* Keep regular contact with families of young carers, in order to keep up-to-date with their circumstances, find out what support the family might need, maintain engagement and positive relationships

**Identification**

* Include space on school/ college enrolment and transition forms for parents to declare:

1. Whether or not their child is a young carer
2. Whether or not their child is registered as a young carer
3. Whether there is someone with a disability or mental health condition at home

* Ensure that all staff are aware of the potential signs that someone might be a young carer and have conversations with those who flag up.
* \* Have a system for identifying and regularly reviewing who our young carers are and their circumstances.

**Recording and Monitoring**

* Record all young carers on the school management information systems accessible to all members of staff, and transfer this data onto the annual school census return (NB parental consent is not needed).
* After discussion and with parental consent, add all identified young carers to Sheffield City Council’s Young Carers Register.
* Add young carers to the vulnerable pupils’ list and monitor the attendance and attainment of young carers and respond accordingly with appropriate intervention.

**In-School/ College Support for Young Carers**

* \* Carry out Young Carer Assessments and develop individual support plans with the identified young carers to find out what they need.
* Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
* \* Provide a young carer group or drop-in.
* \* Offer extra-curricular opportunities for relaxation, respite, leisure, and social connection, including trips out of school, specifically for young carers who may not otherwise have the opportunity - where possible, during the school-day.
* \* Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school/ college, including homework/coursework support, mental and physical health support where necessary, and additional training in e.g. manual handling, first aid and cooking.
* Identify young carers on registers and seating plans.
* Offer a programme of careers advice and guidance and, where possible, work experience placements. Furthermore, to build the career aspirations of young carers by taking them to open days and on tours of further education establishments
* To support young carers in getting to and from the school/ college, and where necessary, provide advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school/ college
* \* To make reasonable adjustments to usual school/ college policies and show flexibility on a case-by-case basis regarding issues such as lateness to school/ college, late homework, and poor attendance. These include, but are not limited to:
  + - access to a telephone, during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home, with pastoral support or independently
    - negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework by speaking to the Young Carer Lead (48 hours)
    - access to homework clubs during the school/ college day (where these are available)
    - identifying support for young carers and their family to enable them to attend school/ college trips and educational activities
    - With support from the Young Carer Lead, young carers will have access to a time-out if required
    - lunchtime detentions rather than after school/ college detentions (where possible)
    - arrangements for school/ college work to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis); any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited (DfES 2006)
    - access for parents with impaired mobility
    - alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound

**Support from External Agencies**

* The Young Carer Lead will consult with relevant colleagues, and other relevant agencies, regarding their caring responsibilities, with the consent of the young carer
* The school/ college will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring
* Where appropriate, the school/ college will refer a young carer to Sheffield Young Carers or other external agency

**Links to local support**

* [Sheffield Young Carers](https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/education)
* [Sheffield Carers Centre](https://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/)
* [Sheffield Children’s Safeguarding Partnership](https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/p/sheffield-early-years-and-education-settings/safeguarding-in-education-the-transition-toolkit)
* [Sheffield Parent Carer Forum](https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)
* Sheffield SENDIAS

**Young Carer Voice and Participation**

* \* Regularly seek the views of young carers regarding the school/college’s young carer provision, and the young carer policy. E.g. yearly.
* Following a recent student voice session, the young carers of SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME have identified the following points to be considered best practice when supporting young carers in school/ college:
* TO BE COMPLETED ONCE A YOUNG CARER GROUP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED
* To supplement the school/ college policy, the young carers have created an agreement/young carers guidance document to demonstrate how they are taking ownership of their school/ college work, in line with their caring role. The teachers at SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME have pledged to support young carers on a case-by-case basis, and the young carers at SCHOOL/ COLLEGE NAME have pledged to:
* TO BE COMPLETED ONCE A YOUNG CARER GROUP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

**Systems and processes**

* Maintain and regularly review our young carer policy, signed off by SLT and governor leads e.g. yearly.
* This policy will be reviewed annually on [DATE]

**Guidance and Resources**

* Resources for identifying and supporting young carers are available for Sheffield Young Carers Network members on SYC’s website. These include:
  + Young Carer Lead Pack
  + Awareness-raising pack
  + Parental engagement resource
  + Transitions pack
  + Staff training template
  + Identification tools (including assembly templates, lesson plans, letter templates home, identification questionnaires with guidance)
  + Support resources.
* Further support links and resources to support young people on a wide range of issues can be found on the professionals page of SYC’s website [here.](https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/support-for-young-people)
* [Young Carers in Schools](https://youngcarersinschools.com/what-is-the-award/)
* [Carers Trust](https://carers.org)
* **MYTIME Young Carers** [Management Information System Guidance for young carers](https://www.mytimeyoungcarers.org/res/MYTIME%20Young%20Carers%20-%20MIS%20Guide-hi.pdf)

**Further Reading**

* [Barnardo’s Still Hidden, Still Ignored; Who Cares for Young Carers?](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/research/still-hidden-still-ignored-who-cares-young-carers) (2017)
* [Children’s Commissioner for England, Voices of England’s Missing Children](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/voices-of-englands-missing-children/) (2022)
* [APPG for young carers and young adult carers: Inquiry into life opportunities](file:///C:\Users\NG203167\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\MGLXH5JW\all-party-parliamentary-group-appg-for-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers\appg-on-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-inquiry-into-life-opportunities) (2023)
* [Carers Trust report: Caring and classes: the education gap for young carers](https://www.carers.org/yceducation) (2024)
* MYTIME Young Carers report: [**Overlooked and Overburdened: Addressing the Educational Challenges Faced by Young Carers**](https://www.mytimeyoungcarers.org/res/Overlooked%20and%20Overburdended%20-%20Educational%20Challenges%20Faced%20by%20Young%20Carers%20-%20Report.pdf) (2024)
* MYTIME Young Carers report: [Persistent educational disadvantages faced by young carers.](https://www.mytimeyoungcarers.org/mytime-young-carers-report-highlights-persistent-educational-disadvantages-faced-by-young-carers-copy)