



Young Carers Policy

Within The St Lawrence Academy we strive to create a learning environment, at the heart of our community with a curriculum, experiences and relationships in which all individuals can find expression, be nourished and developed. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of Academy life.

The academy commits itself to creating an environment for everyone that is characterised by our core values of Truth, Justice, Forgiveness, Generosity and Respect. These values have been used to determine this policy.

Definition of a Young Carer

A Young Carer is a young person, up to the age of 18, whose educational, health, social or emotional development may be affected by their caring responsibilities in the family. They may help to look after a relative who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. This may be physical or emotional care or taking responsibility for someone's safety or wellbeing. It will normally be on a long-term basis and will be significant in comparison to what any young person of comparable age could reasonably be expected to experience or achieve.

As it states in the National Strategy For Carers:

“There may be a narrow dividing line between ‘helping around the house’ which many children do, and providing personal care for a relative. But in the worst cases, Young Carers can be harmed by the responsibilities and expectations placed upon them.”

Caring responsibilities can have varied effects on the life of a young person. These can in fact be very positive; caring should not in itself be viewed as a negative thing, but the difficulties it can create need to be recognised and addressed.

There may be problems in school, with attendance, attainment, completing homework and feeling isolated from peers. There may be lack of time for socialising, extra-curricular activities and sport and leisure activities. The young person may experience feelings of guilt or resentment when their own needs conflict with those of the other person they are helping.

At The St Lawrence Academy we believe that all young people have a right to their childhood and full access to opportunities for educational, health and social and emotional development, regardless of what is happening at home. The Academy has a named member of staff with responsibility for Young Carers, the Child Protection Officer. The Academy will raise the awareness of Young Carers with staff and students and will attempt to identify young people who may be taking on a caring role. Staff and students will be encouraged to discuss concerns with the Child Protection Officer who will organise an Early Help Assessment for identified Young Carers and make a referral to The Young Carers Support Team. In some cases the Young Carer may meet the definition of a “Child In Need” under the

Children Act 1989 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children and Young People Services.

Within the Academy the Inclusion team are able to offer individual work or group work when required to support the Young Person. This may be to support them academically, emotionally or socially. We recognise that one size will not fit all and the support will be flexible ensuring individual carers' needs are recognised and met. We will provide Young People with the opportunity to discuss their family circumstances/caring role at home but respect their right to confidentiality and privacy unless there is a Child Protection conflict.

When a Young Person is identified as being a Young Carer this information will be shared with all staff. Staff will be flexible where appropriate about homework deadlines, lateness and will offer extra support if appropriate. If a Young Carer is issued with a detention this should be a lunch or break time detention rather than after school.

A Young Carer will be offered access to a telephone, in privacy, to check on an ill or disabled relative. If this is required the Young Person will be given a card to identify themselves to staff. This card will also enable them to go in to lunch first so that they have sufficient time to make the call.

The St Lawrence Academy website has information about Young Carers and signposts support that is available.

Young Carers are difficult to identify as they may actively try to conceal their caring role for fear of outside interference in their families. Some indicators to help recognise signs of a Young Carer include:

- Regular or increased lateness or absence
- Concentration problems, anxiety and tiredness
- Under-achievement and late or incomplete homework
- Few or no peer friendships; may prefer the company of adults and present as mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, sometime explicitly linked to a family member's disability, health or substance misuse
- Behavioural problems, sometimes the result of anger or frustration
- Unable to attend extra-curricular activities
- Difficulties in engaging parents

The St Lawrence Academy will keep up to date with national and local developments and with legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.

All staff at the Academy are committed to meeting the needs of Young Carers so that they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy the Academy and have equal access to their education as their peers.

The Academy will use and evaluate data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by Young Carers.

The Academy will identify those Young Carers at risk of falling in to the Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) category and take appropriate actions to address this.