

Thornwell Primary School



Young Carers Policy

Date Adopted: September 2022

Date to be reviewed: September 2024

Aim of Policy

Thornwell Primary School is committed to supporting young carers to access and maintain their education. This Young Carers Policy outlines how we will support any child or young person who helps look after someone at home. The policy aims to ensure young carers at our School are identified, understood, listened to and supported to access the education to which they are entitled and achieve their potential.

Who are Young Carers?

A Carer is "A person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child. (Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014). This care is unpaid.

The Carers Trust defines a Young Carer as someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled, has a mental health condition or misuses drugs or alcohol. A Young Adult Carer is someone aged 18 to 25.

Most Young Carers look after one of their parents but some young carers help a brother or sister who is disabled or ill. A Young Carer may also care for a grandparent or another family member.

We acknowledge that helping around the house is a normal part of growing up, but we are aware young carers may be required to regularly carry out significant caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which is often inappropriate for their age.

A child becomes a young carer when the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes inappropriate for that child and may impact on his or her emotional or physical well-being, educational achievement and life chances.

A Young Carer may undertake some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks - such as cooking, cleaning and shopping;
- Physical care – such as lifting, helping to mobilise, physiotherapy;

- Personal care – such as dressing, washing, toileting needs;
- Emotional support – such as listening, calming, being present;
- Look after siblings – such as walking to school, putting to bed, parenting;
- Household management – such as paying bills, managing the family budget, collecting benefits;
- Administration of medication – such as insulin needles, preparing daily tablets, collection of prescriptions from pharmacy.

The amount and type of care they provide can vary enormously from one carer to another.

Number of Young Carers

We have no definite figure on how many young carers there are in Wales, however a study carried out in England in 2018 saw 800,000 secondary school pupils identifying themselves as young carers. (<https://www.banescarerscentre.org.uk/news/new-research-estimates-800,000-y/>) This equates to 6 young carers in every secondary school classroom in England. These are the most recent figures and we expect Wales to reflect similar figures. We can presume every school will have a significant number of young carers, many unknown to the school who remain unidentified, and unsupported.

Estimations provided from the 2011 census show that **Wales has the highest proportion of carers under 18 in the UK**. At that time, it was estimated that there were approximately 30,000 carers under the age of 25 in Wales.

Some carers struggle through the education system without being recognised as a young carer. This can result in the life of a carer becoming increasingly hidden. Early identification is key, and a secure environment should be created where young carers can self-identify. This can be achieved by publicising how pupils can access support, offering comfortable methods of communication such as emailing school leads or using a post box. Self-identification can also be improved by raising awareness throughout the school year during assemblies and form time. Three key times of the year are:

Young Carers Action Day	March
Carers Week	June
Carers Rights Day	November

Indicators and possible effect on education

Young Carers are not easy to identify and may actively try to conceal their caring role for fear of bullying or outside interference in their family life. The ‘warning signs’ below could be indicators of another problem, but staff noticing these signs should sensitively ask the child or young person if they are helping to look after someone at home:

- Regular or increased lateness
- Regular or increased absence
- Concentration problems
- Anxiety or worry in school
- They are tired in class
- Lack of time for homework, incomplete, late or to a different standard produced in class
- Under-achievement – there may be a sudden drop in attainment
- Few or no peer friendships (the child/young person may get on well with adults and present mature for their age)
- Emotional distress
- Victim of bullying
- Behaviour problems (taking out anger or frustration)
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities / detention / school trips
- Secrecy about home life / embarrassed to take friends home
- Difficulties in engaging parents/parents not attending parents’ evening
- Regularly supporting drop off and pick up of younger siblings
- Physical ailments such as back pain
- A sibling of a pupil at your school who is registered with disabilities or ongoing health problems, including mental ill health? (Refer to your SEN Disability Register and School Census data).

Current Situation at Our School

Number of young carers at Thornwell Primary School	9
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Young carers' attendance and attainment can be tracked via the School Information Management System (SIMs) using the welfare section 10 on the student's information page. They can be set up as a vulnerable group to monitor this.

Support Offered at Our School

The designated link member of staff for young carers in our school is Miss Sarah Perrott, who will liaise with relevant colleagues and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer and their parent/guardian. The name and contact details of the designated link member of staff will be made available across the school and via the school website.

The designated link member will lead on support work for young carers and their families and will liaise with the young carer services in the area.

Our commitment to Young Carers

Our school will: -

- Proactively seek ways to identify young carers in school;
- Ensure that young carers have access to the school nurse;
- Acknowledge that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education;
- Treat young carers in a sensitive, child-centered way, upholding confidentiality. If we believe that someone is a young carer we will be sensitive when we approach them about this, as we appreciate, they may not want their peers to know;
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone they trust or feel comfortable with in private and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers. Young carers may not wish to discuss their family situation unless they feel

comfortable and this will be acknowledged and respected while following safeguarding guidance;

- Promote discussion and learning in all appropriate areas of the curriculum to facilitate a fuller acceptance of and respect for the issues around illness, disability and caring;
- Aim to ensure that young carers are informed of available support services in and outside of school. The school will refer a prospective young carer to the local Young Carer Service with the consent of the young carer and their parent/guardian;
- Gather and maintain relevant statistics on the number of young carers identified and supported using various mechanisms such as pupil enrolment processes and self-identification;
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate caring role and with parental consent refer the young carer for a Carers Assessment by the local authority;
- Recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.
 - Access to a telephone during break and lunchtimes to phone home
 - Negotiable deadlines for homework/course work (when needed)
 - Access to homework clubs (where available)
 - Detentions during school hours (where possible)
 - Access for parents with impaired mobility (Equality Act 2010)
 - Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
 - Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting young carers to school

Key Contacts

To find out more about support available for young carers in your area:

- Torfaen Young Carers 01495
762200
- Newport Young Carers (Barnardos) 01633 251192
- Caerphilly Young Carers 01495 233218 or 07808779367

- Monmouthshire Young Carers 07970166975 (10am-3pm Mon-Fri)
- Blaenau Gwent Young Carers 01495 315700

Useful websites and reading

- www.carers.org National charity that works with network partners supporting young carers
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/> - National charity that offers information and advice for young carers on mental health
- www.carersuk.org National carers site
- <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/866/page/72344> Aneurin Bevan Partnership Board Young Carers Website
- www.ctsew.org.uk – Carers information across Gwent
- <https://carers.org/resources/all-resources/88-supporting-young-carers-in-schools-a-step-by-step-guide-for-leaders-teachers-and-non-teaching-staff-wales-edition> - Young Carers in Schools Programme, resources and information to enable schools to better, understand, inform, identify, support and listen to young carers.

Carers service information links below

- Blaenau Gwent - <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/getting-the-help-you-need/help-for-adults/carers/>
- Caerphilly - <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Services-for-adults-and-older-people/Caring-for-someone>
- Monmouthshire - <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/social-care/carers-project/>
- Newport - <https://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Care-Support/Carers/Carers.aspx>
- Torfaen - <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/HealthSocialCare/Caring-for-Someone/Carerssupportservice/Carers-support-services.aspx>

References

Estyns thematic review, provision for young carers in secondary schools, further education colleges and pupil referral units across Wales

<https://carers.org/downloads/general-pdfs/young-carers-thematic-report--en.pdf>

