

Toll Bar Primary School Young Carers Policy

Aim

Toll Bar Primary School is committed to supporting young carers to access and maintain their education, to which they are entitled to. This policy supports our commitment to ensure young carers at Toll Bar Primary School are identified, respected, listened to and fully supported.

Toll Bar Primary School will implement an agreed support package using Doncaster Young Carers Card scheme; allowing support to be offered discretely and sensitively and at all times ensuring confidentiality.

Definition

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who help look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Young carers may be caring for a parent, a sibling, grandparent or other relative or person close to the family. In some cases a young carer may be caring for more than one family member. Many young carers also help care for younger siblings. A young carer may be a primary carer or supporting another person with caring tasks. When identifying a young carer the main focus should be the **impact on the child**, rather than the hours spent, type, or level of caring tasks.

Caring Tasks

Caring can involve physical and/or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well being. Many young carers spend a lot of time doing household chores or looking after younger siblings in addition to helping a sick or disabled parent with tasks such as administering medication, helping someone get up and get dressed or helping someone to use the bathroom. Some young carers help parents to look after a disabled sibling.

Number of young carers in school/Possible impact on education

We have no definite figure on how many young carers there are in the UK although 2001 census figure states that 139,000 under 18s were providing care for a family member. The real figure is believed to be many more than that, for example a survey conducted by the BBC in 2010 suggested that the figure is more likely to be closer to 700, 000. Home office figures from 2003 suggest that there are between 250,000 -350,000 children with parents who are problem drug users. Alcohol Concern suggests that there are 1.3 million children affected by a parental alcohol problem. On this basis we can presume every school will have a significant number of young carers, many unknown to the school.

Currently young carers spend an average of 4 years in their caring role prior to being identified.

Toll Bar Primary School acknowledges that there are likely to be a significant number of young carers in school and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.

Due to responsibilities at home, a young carer might experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home
- Poor concentration, anxiety or worry in school
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in school
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment or drop in attainment expected
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting or pushing a wheelchair
- False signs of maturity, due to assuming an adult role
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration)
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Limited social skills or not age appropriate
- Bullying
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem

It might also be difficult to engage with parents (due to fears about a child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

In addition young carers may be reluctant to share their own experiences.

Toll Bar Primary School will train and support school staffs to make them aware and sensitive to the issues faced by young carers and their families. The school will develop a culture where the school and pupils celebrate the positive contribution young carers make to their families and communities and the schools success in supporting young carers in school allowing them to fully participate in all aspects of their learning, personal development and school experience.

Support Offered

Toll Bar Primary School acknowledges that young carers may need additional support to access and maintain the education to which they are entitled. Through this policy, Toll Bar Primary School is giving the message that young carers' education is important and Toll Bar Primary School will support young carers' in making the most of their educational opportunity and to enjoy the same experiences as their peers without caring responsibilities. The school will encourage, support and monitor young carers progress as agreed in their personal education plan.

Young Carers Card

Doncaster has a young carers card developed in partnership with young carers, their families, Barnardo's Doncaster Young Carers Service and other appropriate agencies.

Use of this card will indicate agreed allowances to support a pupil in school who also has a caring role that impacts on his or her education. Use of this card will negate constant explanations of why concessions or support are required and maintain confidentiality. Toll Bar Primary School recognises the benefit of a Young Carers Card and will agree in partnership with pupil (young carer) and parent/s an agreed support package in school.

The designated link teacher for young carers is Toll Bar Primary, who will liaise with relevant colleagues, Doncaster Young Carers Service and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer and their family.

Toll Bar Primary School will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.

Toll Bar Primary School appreciates that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.

Toll Bar Primary School will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.

Toll Bar Primary School will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and will inform young carers of the specialist support available to them from Doncaster Young Carers Service. The school will refer a prospective young carer to Doncaster Young Carers Service with the consent of the young person and parent/s.

Toll Bar Primary School will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate caring role.

Toll Bar Primary School will promote discussion and learning in all areas of curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance and respect for the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.

Toll Bar Primary School recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers. Available provision includes (but is not restricted to):

- Access to a telephone during school break times; allowing young carers to call home to reduce unnecessary concern or anxiety and increase their concentration in class. Any calls in from home, especially in cases of emergency, are to come through school

switchboard so pupils can be accounted for and supported to get home if required.

- Toll Bar Primary School will support young carers to get home/hospital in cases of emergency
- Agreed late and/or early pass due to responsibility to take younger siblings to and from school or when caring tasks during the night cause lateness
- Someone to talk to who understands, will listen and not judge (Nominated staff member)
- Negotiated deadlines for coursework/homework (when needed)
- Access to homework clubs (where these are available and not after school)
- Access to a homework buddy who can be contacted out of school hours to support with homework
- Lunchtime detentions where possible (no after school detentions without prior written notice to parent)
- Arrangements for schoolwork 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
- Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school
- Agreed Personal Education Plan – to set targets and discuss aspirations and improve education outcomes for young carers
- School to collate statistics to measure success and identify areas needing improvement. Report to Senior Leadership Team and School Governors Board.

For further information please contact Jane Whaley, Barnardo's Doncaster Young Carers Service on 01302 366680.

Legislation and guidance

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 28 and 29. Children and young people have the right to the best available education and to opportunities to develop their personality, mental and physical ability to their fullest potential.

The Children Act 1989.

The Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, which gives guidance on S. 17 of the Act, has a section on young carers which states that effective support will require "good quality joint work between adult and children's social services as well as co-operation from schools and health workers . . . Young carers can receive help from both local and health authorities." See paragraphs 3.61-3.63.

DFES Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk (replaced Circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support):

- "Young carers should not be expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. However, there are children and young people who undertake caring roles. Young carers of a sick or disabled relative at home may be late or absent from school because of their responsibilities. A study in one authority suggested there may be up to 30 young carers in a secondary school."
- "In a genuine crisis, a school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made...."
- "Schools should consider designating a member of staff to have responsibility for young carers. They can also contribute to schemes that support them, working with local authorities and voluntary agencies."

Also, **Effective Attendance Practice in Schools: An Overview** of attendance guidance states that schools should have "support systems in place for vulnerable groups which provide" among other things, signposting and access to external support for parents and pupils" and "training for staff on specific needs of pupils e.g. young carers".

The National Carers Strategy (1999)

Chapter 8 of this Government strategy states that "schools need to be sensitive to the individual problems faced by young carers" and that "The Government will draw schools' attention to effective practice in meeting the needs of pupils who are young carers, for example, through link arrangements with young carers' services. . . . Schools might find it helpful to have one member of staff to act as a link between young carers, the education welfare service, social services and young carers' services." It suggests that there may be 30 young carers in every school.

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995; Carers and Disabled Children Act 2001; Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

Between them these Acts give young carers varying rights to an assessment of their needs, which must take into account their right to an education. See the SCIE practice guide to the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004: www.scie.org.uk, commissioned by the Department of Health.

The Children's Society Young Carer's Initiative aims to develop Key Principles of Practice in supporting young carers and their families. Key Principle 4 states: *Young carers will have the same access to education and career choices as their peers:*

Standard: Schools and colleges take responsibility to identify young carers at an early stage and ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.

Performance Indicators

4.1: Governing bodies in schools make provision for policy and practice that supports young carers and promotes good communication with their families.

4.2 Schools and colleges have inclusive policies that enable the identification of young carers and to deliver effective methods of supporting them to achieve their full potential whilst recognising the positives of any acquired skills and attributes.

4.3 Schools and colleges provide clear, accessible, up to date information regarding health issues and local community services to all pupils in school. And have procedures for referring to other agencies and sign posting the direction young carers can take in order to gain additional support for them and their family outside of school.

4.4 Schools and colleges are accessible to parents who are disabled or have a long-term illness. This includes ensuring that communication strategies include provision for any parent with a visual, hearing or communication impairment. (As covered in the Disability and Discrimination Act [now Equality Act] with regards to access to goods, services and facilities)

4.5 The curriculum promotes a fuller understanding and acceptance of, and respect for, the issues surrounding disabilities and caring as well as promoting positive images of disability and impairment.

4.6 Staff will have access to information and training to enable them to recognise the indications that a child has a caring responsibility as well as increasing their understanding of such responsibilities .and to ensure that any who are children in need are identified or feel able to ask for help, are listened to and offered direct services and protection, if needed.

4.7 There is a named member of staff to lead on young carers

4.8 Individual plans recognise the child/young person's specific needs as a young carer

4.9 Local authorities consider how best to support those parents who find it difficult to escort younger children to school.

4.10 Admission authorities consider the responsibilities of young carers and the impact of any family disability or illness on those young carers when setting admission criteria for their schools

Further information

- DfES 2006 guidance on young carers in *Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk* (<http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/advice-and-guidance-schools-and-local-authorities-managing-behaviour-and-attendance>)
 - Teachernet guidance at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/y/youngcarers/ and at www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/library/youngcarersandschools/ which includes case studies from teachers themselves.
 - The section for education professionals at www.youngcarers.net/professionals
 - The Children's Society's *Principles of Practice* for all services coming into contact with young carers and their families: www.youngcarer.com
- Young Carers Research Group Reports: *Young carers in the UK 2004* and *Young carers in schools*. www.carersuk.org/Policyandpractice/Research

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