



St Iltyd's Catholic High School

Young Carer School Policy

Aim of Policy

St Iltyd's 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, respected, listened to and supported to access the education to which they are entitled and achieve their potential.

Who are Young Carers?

The Welsh Government defines a Young Carer as "children and young people who help look after a member of the family, who is sick, disabled, has mental health problems or is affected by substance misuse".

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 or 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, manage the family budget, collecting benefits
- Administration of medication – such as insulin needles, preparing daily tablets, picking up prescription 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 the 2011 census figures state that 11,555 of 5-17 year olds were providing care for a family member (ONS). The real figure is believed to be many more than that. For example, a survey conducted by the BBC in 2010 suggested that there are likely to be 700,000 in the UK. On this basis we can presume every school will have a significant number of young carers, many unknown to the school so remain unidentified, and unsupported.

Some carers struggle through the education system without being recognised as a young carer. 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, using a post box or by completing an intranet questionnaire. Self identification can also be improved by raising awareness at events e.g. annual Carers week and in school assemblies.

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
- Under-achievement – there may be a sudden drop in attainment
- Late or incomplete homework
- 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
- Secrecy about home life/isolation or embarrassed to take friends home
- Difficulties in engaging parents/parents not attending parents' evening

Support Offered at Our School

The designated link member of staff for young carers in our school is the Assistant Head of Year 10 who will liaise with relevant colleagues and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. The name and contact details of the designated link member of staff will be made available across the school.

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 school will ensure that young carers have access to the school nurse
- Our School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education.

- Our school will 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.
- Our school will 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.
- Our school will work with young carers to ensure they can access a package of support that will meet their needs without reducing their self esteem and confidence
- Our school will 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.
- Our school will 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/s
- Our school will 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
- Our school will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate caring role.
- Our school recognises 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)
 - Any approved absence will be time limited (DfES 2006)
 - 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:

- Cardiff Family Gateway 03000 133 133
- Cardiff YMCA Young Carers Project 02920 465250 ext 211
- All Wales Forum 02920811120

Useful websites and reading

- <http://www.youngcarer.com> National site for young carers
- <http://www.nch.org.uk> This website has information on young carers
- http://www.barnardos.org.uk/young_carers.html National charity that works with young carers
- <http://www.youngcarers.net> National site for and about young carers
- www.tacade.com Link to national Young Carers Education Resource Pack
- www.carersuk.org National carers site
- <http://www.youngcarerstoolkit.co.uk/index.php/engaging/young-carers-in-school>
Young Carers toolkit aimed at professionals in Health, education and Social Services

Carers Trust (2013) *Supporting Young Carers in School: An Introduction for Primary and Secondary School Staff*. Carers Trust

References

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/carers-week/index.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/education-11757907>

The Department of Education and Skills (2006) *Absence Codes Guidance for Schools and LEAs*. DFES

http://www.governorswales.org.uk/media/files/documents/2011-09-20/key_points_for_schools_-_English_final.pdf