

# **Southwick Primary School – Young Carer Policy**

## **1. Introduction**

Southwick Primary School recognizes and values the role that young carers play in supporting their families. A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who helps care for a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health condition, or addiction. We are committed to identifying and supporting young carers within our school community and ensuring they have equal access to education, wellbeing, and opportunities for personal development.

This policy outlines the steps we will take to identify, support, and safeguard young carers at Southwick Primary School.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Raise awareness of young carers within the school community.
- Ensure that young carers are recognized and supported effectively.
- Provide guidance on how to identify young carers and refer them for further support if necessary.
- Ensure that young carers have equal access to all aspects of school life.
- Support the mental and emotional wellbeing of young carers, recognizing the unique challenges they face.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

- To ensure young carers are identified and their needs are understood by school staff.
- To work in partnership with parents, carers, and local services to ensure that young carers receive the appropriate support.
- To enable young carers to access their full potential in their education and personal development.
- To reduce any barriers to learning for young carers, including missing school or difficulties with homework.
- To ensure that young carers' emotional wellbeing is supported, and they are not socially isolated or disadvantaged.

## **4. Identifying Young Carers**

At Southwick Primary School, we will make every effort to identify young carers by:

- Regularly asking pupils about their home life during conversations, parent-teacher meetings, and surveys.
- Being alert to signs that a child may be a young carer, such as:
  - Regularly arriving late or leaving early from school.
  - Frequently missing school or struggling to complete homework due to responsibilities at home.
  - Taking on adult responsibilities beyond their years.
  - Displaying signs of stress or anxiety.

- Having limited opportunities to socialize with peers outside of school.
- Encouraging pupils to talk to staff members, such as a trusted teacher, headteacher, or school counselor, about their home life if they feel comfortable.

## 5. Support for Young Carers

Once identified, young carers at Southwick Primary School will be offered a range of support, including:

- **Confidentiality:** All information relating to young carers will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. Any disclosure will be handled with care, ensuring that the young carer feels safe and supported.
- **Emotional Support:** Young carers may experience stress and anxiety due to their responsibilities at home. We will provide access to pastoral support, such as school counselors or designated staff members, who can offer one-to-one sessions or group support as needed.
- **Academic Support:** We understand that young carers may experience difficulties in completing schoolwork or maintaining attendance. Our school will:
  - Provide flexible homework arrangements when necessary.
  - Offer additional support in class where needed.
  - Support with catching up on missed work.
- **Time to Talk:** We will ensure that young carers have a designated staff member they can talk to about their concerns and any challenges they face at home or in school.
- **External Support:** Where necessary, we will refer young carers to local support agencies, such as carer's organizations, social services, and youth services, for additional help and advice.

## 6. Raising Awareness within the School

We will promote awareness of the needs and challenges faced by young carers throughout the school by:

- Incorporating the topic of young carers into staff training and professional development.
- Educating pupils about the role of young carers and the challenges they face.
- Creating opportunities for young carers to share their experiences and needs, where appropriate.
- Encouraging a culture of empathy and understanding among pupils and staff to reduce stigma and ensure that young carers feel supported.

## 7. Involvement of Parents and Carers

We will work closely with the families of young carers to ensure that they are supported both in school and at home. This will include:

- Communicating with parents or guardians to ensure that they are aware of the support available to young carers.
- Working with families to identify any additional support needed and ensure a coordinated approach.

- Respecting the wishes of the young carer and their family when making referrals to external services.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Our safeguarding policies are designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, including young carers. We will ensure that:

- Any young carer who is at risk of harm due to their caring role is supported and safeguarded in accordance with our school's safeguarding policy.
- Appropriate referrals are made to social services or other support agencies when necessary.
- Staff are trained to recognize the potential risks that young carers may face and take appropriate action.

## **9. Reviewing and Monitoring the Policy**

The implementation of this policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of young carers. We will:

- Collect feedback from young carers, their families, and staff to assess the effectiveness of the support provided.
- Continuously improve our approach based on feedback and emerging best practices.
- Monitor the academic performance and wellbeing of young carers to ensure they are supported throughout their time at Southwick Primary School.

## **10. Conclusion**

Southwick Primary School is committed to ensuring that young carers are recognized, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive in both their academic and personal lives. By working together with pupils, families, and external organizations, we aim to create a supportive environment where young carers feel safe, understood, and valued.

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**Date:** January 2025

**Next Review:** January 2027