Highfield St. Matthew's Church of England Primary School

As Jesus tells us, 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:13).

Young Carers Policy

September 2026

Our Christian Vision

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:13). Our vision inspires and challenges the community we serve to achieve excellence in all they do, and to learn about life in all its fullness, within a welcoming Christian family.

School Aims – How we will Let Our Light Shine

- Every child feels valued, safe and cared for, and makes a positive contribution to their own development and the life of the school, with Christ at its centre
- Our bespoke SHINE curriculum, based on excellence and high expectations, provides rich experiences which motivates, challenges, develops resilience and meets the needs of all children
- Every child achieves their potential and develops their talents and creativity, preparing them for a role in a global society with a lifelong love for learning
- Children & families develop understanding of a faith and Christian values that can guide their lives; knowing Jesus, and putting into action what they are coming to believe and value
- The whole school family flourishes and serves the local Church and community

As a member of the LDST, Christian belief and practice underpin all aspects of school life, developing each child's spirituality and personal faith.

Introduction

At Highfield St Matthew's CE Primary School we believe that all children have the right to an education regardless of what is happening at home. When a child looks after someone in their family with a history of long term physical or mental health illness, a disability or someone with an addiction the young person may need some extra support to help them reach their full potential. The Young Carers policy sets out how we will help any child looking after someone at home.

Legislation and guidance

Children Act 2004

Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 2004 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services. In the event of any young carers being considered to be at risk of significant harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

Equality Act 2010

Young carers have protected characteristics as defined by the Act because they are associated with a family member who has a disability or illness and cannot be discriminated against because of this.

Children and Families Act 2014

The Act has a section on Young Carers and, in conjunction with the adults focused Care Act, seeks to make sure that Young Carers get the support they need. Local authorities are expected to try and identify Young Carers so they can be offered support.

Defining a young carer

A young carer is a child or young person (up to the age of 18) who helps to care for a relative who has a disability, chronic illness, mental illness, sensory impairment or who suffers from the problematic use of drugs or alcohol. The level of care they provide may vary from day to day but may be physical or practical assistance or most importantly emotional support. As a consequence, young carer's lives may become adversely affected by the responsibility of caring and they will benefit from early identification and recognition of their circumstances.

Identifying a young carer

Young carers are not easy to identify and many will actively try to conceal their caring role because

- They worry that the family will be split up and taken into care.
- They want to keep it a secret and/or are embarrassed about the person who is ill or has disabilities.
- They may not realise that they are carers or that life is different to that of their peers.
- They don't want to be any different from their peers.
- They believe that the school will show no interest in their family circumstances.
- School is different; they have a new or different identity.
- It's not the sort of thing that can be discussed with friends.
- There has been no opportunity to share their story.
- They are worried about bullying.
- They see no reason or positive actions occurring as a result of telling their story

The following is a list of possible indicators of a young carer. Many can be indicative of other issues too. Together, they may help you build a profile of a pupil. Further sensitive information and appropriate questions may then, in turn, lead to a pupil letting you know that they are a young carer.

Is the pupil…

… …often late or missing days or weeks off school for no reason?

…often tired, anxious or withdrawn?

…having problems socially or with making friends? Conversely, do they get on well with adults and present themselves as mature for their age?

…a victim of bullying? This is sometimes explicitly linked to a family member's disability, health or substance misuse problem

…depressed?

…finding it difficult to concentrate on their work?

…having difficulty in joining in extracurricular activities or is unable to attend school trips?

…isolated because of their family situation or because they lack social skills with their peers (and yet they are confident with adults?)

…not handing in homework/coursework on time, or completing it late and to a low standard?

…anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative?

…displaying behavioural problems?

…having physical problems such as back pain (perhaps from heavy lifting)?

…secretive about home life?

…showing signs of neglect or poor diet?

Are parents (or another relative)

… …sick, have a disability, illness or substance misuse problem? (Remember that not all children who have a family member who is ill or with disabilities is a young carer.)

…difficult to engage with?

…not attending parents' evenings?

…not communicating with school?

Support for identified Young Carers

There will be a named member of staff who will be a point of contact for young carers and their family and will liaise with relevant services. Awareness raising sessions will take place. These sessions may be held through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and staff training. School staff will respect the confidentiality of Young Carers and not talk about their role in front of others even if the other person knows. Drop in sessions to be held once a week, at a lunch time agreed with the headteacher. Lunch time home work support to be provided. Access to external agency support will also be provided as required