

# **Moss Hey Primary School**

## **Young Carers Policy**



**Agreed: Autumn 2019**

**Review: Autumn 2022**

Moss Hey Primary School is committed to enabling young carers to access education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at this school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education and other services to which they are entitled.

### **Definition**

Young carers are children and young people who provide care to another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

The person they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

### **Caring Tasks**

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

Nursing care: giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.

Personal intimate care: washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements.

Emotional care: being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up. In cases where a young carer is supporting an adult with drug/alcohol misuse problem, they will often take a leading role in trying to keep that person safe.

Domestic care: doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc.

Financial care: running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc.

Child care: taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities.

Communication: communicating on behalf of the adult or family with & interpreting agencies/services and interpreting for a language or sensory impairment.

### **Identifying a Young Carer in school**

Signs which may indicate that a child is caring for someone at home may include:

- Arriving late at school
- Missing days at school
- Tiredness
- Hunger
- Clothing or appearance may not be clean or tidy
- Underachievement
- Unable to complete home work on time
- Withdrawn, over sensitive, low self esteem
- Behavioural problems
- Difficulties with peer group, limited social skills
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Not attending after school activities or activities in local area
- Non attendance on school trips, particularly residential
- Being bullied
- Financial difficulties
- Physical problems, such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, from assuming adult roles

Parents may have little or no contact with school, be unable to attend parents evenings, review days, or social activities.

### **Possible effect on education**

Moss Hey Primary School acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its pupils, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's access to education and attainment.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might:

- Have erratic or poor school attendance
- Arrive late at school
- Decline in academic achievement
- Not complete homework
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips
- Lack motivation
- Have back problems, aches and pains patterns of being generally unwell
- Appear withdrawn, isolated from peers, have difficulties socialising
- Show, anxiety, depression, anger, self harming behaviour
- Have poor concentration (due to worrying about the person who is cared for)
- Have poor home/ school relationship
- Have parents who do not attend parents evening or lack of overall contact with school
- Have false signs of maturity, assuming an adult role in social situations or have difficulty enjoying childhood activities

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their

parenting skills being called into question). School may need to make alternative arrangements for communication about attainment.

### **Support Offered**

Moss Hey Primary School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered through the life of a school. Through this policy, school is giving the message that young carers' education and school experience is important.

The designated school lead for young carers is Elise Messham, who will liaise with relevant colleagues, Stockport Young Carers and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated link.

Moss Hey Primary School will ensure that appropriate information is shared with school staff in order that there is an awareness of the young carer's situation.

Moss Hey 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.

Moss Hey 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.

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

Moss Hey Primary School will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and other appropriate services/agencies.

Moss Hey Primary School will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

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

Moss Hey Primary School recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

#### Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
- Access to homework clubs (where these are available)
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (where there is a genuine crisis).
- 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

We will also:

- Use a child centred approach – listen to young carers, respect and be open to believing what they say.
- Respond to young carers' needs sympathetically and sensitively and be sensitive to the needs of all family members – do not discuss young carers' situations in front of other pupils or parents.
- Communicate information about young carers and their families only on a 'need to know basis' and inform young carers of your intentions regarding the information provided.
- Make information regarding health issues and local community services available and accessible to all young people, including who and what is available locally to meet young carers' needs.
- Provide flexible and sensitive support for young carers when their caring role is particularly stressful and may be affecting attendance, punctuality, engagement or completion of work.

However a balance does need to be struck that ensures these young carers do receive a full education and are not distinguished as being different from the rest of their class.

- Challenge bullying or isolation of young carers and where necessary help them to integrate into existing school groups.
- Establish a confidentiality statement in case of the need to share information with others (particularly in relation to safeguarding issues), and explain this clearly to young carers.
- Offer young carers the use of a telephone, in private. (This allows them to 'phone the person they care for during the day to check on their welfare, thus reducing anxiety and improving attendance and concentration.)
- Allow young carers the opportunity to talk to someone they trust – again this may reduce anxiety and relieve tension.
- Be aware that frequent absences may indicate difficulties with levels of support from community care/adult services and family may be willing for advocacy on their behalf, if not, this must be respected. The school should still address the pupil's welfare using their assessment procedures.
- Support parents with mobility problems in visiting the school and attending school events, for example by ensuring that the premises are wheelchair accessible. Maintain regular contact with parents who are unable to come into school.

**Key tasks and responsibilities of the Lead Teacher**

- As a member of the school leadership team, ensure appropriate strategies, policies and procedures are in place to proactively identify young carers, ensuring that their needs are recognised and met.
- To ensure that those young people who have caring responsibilities are supported effectively and enabled to meet Every Child Matters outcomes and that they have the same access to educational and career choices as their peers.

- To lead on establishing staff induction, training and information to enable staff to:
  - recognise the signs that a child or young person has caring responsibilities
  - increase their understanding of the impact of such responsibilities,
  - ensuring that they are aware of the identified school lead with responsibility for young carers, and
  - help young carers and their families understand how this support can be accessed
- To ensure that the curriculum promotes a full understanding and acceptance of, and respect for, the issues and needs of young carers and their families, promoting positive images and challenging stereotypes around disability and impairment.
- Monitor relevance of existing school policies e.g. attendance, anti bullying, procedures and practice on the well being and specific needs of young carers. Report strengths, weaknesses and recommendations to school leadership team and governors for inclusion in school development plan.
- Use and evaluate existing data effectively to monitor the welfare and progress made by young carers. Highlight barriers to achievement such as poor attendance and punctuality, failure to complete homework, non engagement with extended school or extra curricular activities and work with appropriate colleagues to remove / reduce these barriers enabling young carer to achieve their full potential.
- To establish a first point of contact for young carers and their families within the school, encouraging young carers and their families to self identify and to discuss any barriers they face and additional help they may need. The designated lead may choose to have Key Contacts in each year group or key stage in larger schools.
- Ensure that young carers and their families receive coordinated support by communicating effectively and working in partnership with internal and external support agencies using Common Assessment Framework.

## **Checklist for school leadership team**

### **1. Policy and Planning**

Has a nominated school lead is in place and a team has been identified to support this role?

Is there a regular programme of training and awareness raising for all staff about the identification, needs and support of Young Carers is in place.

Is there is adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL etc?

Are the needs of young carers (and their families, where appropriate) are reflected in all policies and practice?

Are there are secured pastoral arrangements supporting the needs of young carers and these are linked with available support out of school?

Are there appropriate communication systems in place for the parents of young carers?

Is there reference to young carers in appropriate sections of the Self Evaluation Form (SEF)/school profile/school development plan?

## **2. Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Are there are opportunities to develop all pupils' awareness of the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils, such as young carers in, for example, PSHCE, SEAL and RRR work?

Have steps have been taken to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully included in school life and activities?

Are systems established to monitor the wellbeing and academic progress of young carers?

Is there a robust and regular programme of self-review to monitor and revise provision for young carers?

### **Checklist for school governors**

This checklist helps you evaluate where you feel your school is now in terms of supporting carers and demonstrates what needs to be achieved in order to provide further support. The following questions assume that evidence is available to support the responses.

Has your school established procedures to support young carers and, if so, how effective are they?

Has any budget allocation been made to support the particular needs of young carers?

What funding streams is the school accessing to support young carers in school?

Has school has begun to identify young carers.

Has a lead has been identified.

Has school made adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL, etc.

Is there a whole-school policy on young carers?

Is appropriate reference made to young carers in other school policies and is this effective?

Do school policies reference the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers?

Do relevant documents (Self Evaluation Form (SEF), Prospectus, School Profile, etc.) show reference to groups of vulnerable pupils, including young carers?

Is the school taking steps to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully involved in school life and activities?

How effectively does the school link with outside agencies and support young carers to access them? Does the school signpost children and young people to them?

How does the school communicate with the parents of the young carers and how effective is this?

Has there been a rigorous review of the curriculum and assessment that takes account of vulnerable pupils, including young carers?

Does the school is making provision for groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers, enabling them to make appropriate progress throughout the school?

Do young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers?

Is the school supporting the particular and identified needs of young carers with a whole-school approach?

Does the school uses appropriate curriculum opportunities, such as Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE), Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (RRR) and Health and Safety within the curriculum, to address the needs of all pupils including young carers?