Young Carer School Policy

Aims

The aims of the Young Carer School Policy are:

- To ensure that all Young Carers are identified, supported and provided with a safe and secure environment to thrive.
- To ensure all pupils, staff and parents/carers are aware of who a Young Carer is.
- To work in partnership with Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Young Carers team and the Carers Service team.

Introduction

In South Ayrshire, we celebrate our Young Carers and provide a wide range of support and opportunities to them.

We work collaboratively across the authority to deliver training for staff and offer inputs for pupils and parents/carers to raise awareness of identification (including self-identification). In doing so, we seek to tackle associated stigma and take a holistic approach in supporting and identifying all aspects of support for Young Carers to benefit from.

Defining a Young Carer

A Young Carer is anyone under the age of eighteen who supports, or helps to support a relative, friend or neighbour. They do not have to live in the same home and can be older or younger that the Young Carer. They may need extra support due to an illness, disability, mental health condition, because they are elderly, neurodivergent, have issues relating to drugs or alcohol or because they need help to communicate. No diagnosis is required for the cared for person.

A Young Carer does not have to be the primary carer. Someone else can be responsible for providing the majority of the support. There is no minimum caring requirement and Young Carers can look after more than one person.

Young Carers may have health issues of their own and can also be cared for.

Young Carers can help support the care for person in many ways. This may include:

- Practical tasks such as shopping, cooking and cleaning.
- Physical care such as pushing a wheelchair or helping someone get in and out of bed.
- Emotional support, for example, talking to someone when they are struggling, looking out for changes in behaviour, or keeping someone company.
- Personal care, such as supporting someone to get washed or dressed.
- Managing budgets, household finances and paying bills.
- Helping someone communicate such as translating for someone due to a language barrier, helping someone read or write due to a literacy barrier or signing for someone.
- Looking after siblings, such as taking brothers or sisters to school or nursery, helping them dress, or taking care of them while the cared for person rests.
- Collecting prescriptions, measuring and dispensing medications.

Identifying a Young Carer

Unless the school is advised about a pupil's circumstances, Young Carers may first be identified as a result of negative aspects of their behaviour or work, although this is not always the case. Often, Young Carers do not display any signs and can worry about bullying or interference in their family life leading to them concealing their role from peers and teachers.

Some of the signs that may indicate that a pupil has unrecognised caring responsibilities are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing.
- Tiredness in school.
- Erratic response to homework with incomplete or late set tasks.
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry.
- Behavioural problems.
- Victim of bullying.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school/residentials.

The above may be indicators of a range of problems, some not associated with a child having a caring role at home. However, in dealing with any child or young person exhibiting any of the above signs, staff should consider asking the child or young person if they are helping to look after someone.

South Ayrshire's enrolment process will ask if a young person is supporting or helping to support a loved one.

Roles & Responsibilities

Head Teacher

A Head Teacher should:

- Ensure that Young Carer information and procedures are known to all new and visiting staff.
- Conduct Young Carer training at the August in-service day using the most up to date South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Young Carers (SAHSCP) resources.
- Ensure that all new staff receive the same training and that the Young Carer Management Guidelines is shared with staff via staff shared area/e-mail and with parents/carers via the school website/handbook.
- Ensure that Young Carer procedures are followed within the school and that any records are kept in a confidential file and contained within a locked cabinet in the Head Teacher's office.

Young Carer Champion

A Young Carer Champion is a member of the school staff who acts as a point of contact for all Young Carers in each school. Some of the supports a Champion may offer are:

- To be the main point of contact in the school for HSCP and carers service.
- Liaise with HSCP/carers service to receive support, policy updates and any other relevant information.
- Understand the role of the Young Carer Statement and know how to complete this, when appropriate.
- Work alongside HSCP and carers service to raise awareness of Young Carers.
- Support carer service drop-ins in schools (if required).

Teachers/school staff

All teachers and school staff will:

- Complete Young Carer awareness training and be aware of the school Young processes and procedures.

Pupils

Pupils should be:

- Encouraged to have open and honest discussions about their own, or peer's caring responsibilities.
- Aware of the school's Young Carer Policy and where to seek help, if required.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should:

- Feel comfortable approaching school staff to discuss their child's caring responsibilities or ask questions about the support available.
- Be aware of the school's Young Carer Policy and where to seek help, if required.

Referrals

Our commissioned carers service provides a range of support for Young Carers, including, group sessions, one-to-one sessions, advocacy, activities, residentials and funding. Young Carers can be referred using the online referral form. The referral form can be completed by anyone, including school staff, pupil or parent/carer.

All Young Carers should be recorded on SEEMiS.

If a child or young person is deemed to have inappropriate caring responsibilities, please refer to the Child Protection Policy in addition to recognising the child or young person as a young carer and arranging any support.

Legislation

Further legislation:

- Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 – Young Carers must be identified, supported and offered a Young Carers Statement.
- Child and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.
- Additional Support for Learning (2017).
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989).