

# Young Carer Policy

2023-2024

Approved by the Full Governing Body of William Barnes Primary School:

25<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Review date: Spring 2026

At William Barnes Primary School we acknowledge, recognise and value the caring responsibilities that pupils in our community have. As a school, we strive to raise the awareness of these young carers amongst staff and pupils, to provide effective support for our young carers and remove any barriers which could potentially inhibit their academic, social and personal development.

***“People don’t realise that we don’t have a choice.” – BCP young carer, March 2023.***

We want young carers in our school to feel seen, feel heard and feel supported. By engaging with the Level Up Programme, we hope to improve the support in place for young carers which in the long-term, will have a positive impact on young carer’s academic performance, attendance, and aspirations. This policy outlines the whole school approaches and strategies that will enable young carers at William Barnes Primary School to flourish.

***“The session was the most living CPD I’ve ever experienced - I feel totally moved, inspired and determined to be part of the solution.” – Dorset secondary school pastoral worker, November 2022.***

At William Barnes Primary School, we have high expectations of all pupils, and we believe all pupils should have equal opportunities. However, every child needs to feel safe, supported and understood to achieve self-actualisation. National statistics suggest that young carers do not always feel this way in school. A survey conducted by the Carer’s Trust (2023) highlighted that over 42% of young carers ‘always’ or ‘usually’ feel stressed and 52% said they do ‘not often’ or ‘never’ get help from school or college to balance their work. We recognise that such caring responsibilities can, and will, have an impact on a child’s social and emotional wellbeing and their academic performance. Therefore, we are committed to improving provision and support at William Barnes Primary School to enable young carers fulfil their potential.

MYTIME Young Carer's data collected in March 2023 shows that after engagement with the Level Up Programme, over 85% of young carers had someone trusted to speak to, over 80% of young carers had a regular opportunity to meet other young carers and that they felt more positively about how their peers and school staff thought about and recognised young carers.

***"I like going to young carers group as I listen to other people's stories, and it makes me realise I'm not the only one going through it. It makes me feel less lonely." – Dorset primary young carer, March 2023.***

By working closely with MYTIME Young Carers, William Barnes Primary School will ensure that all stakeholders have a greater understanding of who young carers are, the challenges they face and how they will be supported. The whole school and classroom strategies are outlined in this policy, staff and pupils will be exposed to training and sessions to raise awareness. We will use the voices of the young carers in our school to shape the support available.

<sup>(1)</sup>*Carers Trust (2023) Being a young carer is not a choice. It's just what we do.*

## Aims of the Policy

- To raise awareness of young carers among staff
- To ensure identification of all young carers as early as possible on entry to the school
- To refer young carers to the council where appropriate
- To foster respect and understanding towards young carers among all pupils
- To address any underlying inequalities between young carers and other pupils in a graduated and timely manner
- To improve the progress and raise the standard of achievement for young carers
- To support young carers in improving their attendance

- To ensure that young carers feel included and supported within their school community and that reasonable adjustments made to promote this
- To improve the wellbeing and self-worth of young carers in the school community
- To protect young carers from unjust treatment due to their caring role and improve co-ordination with other agencies and support services
- To give young carers a voice in the school community and involve them in decisions affecting young carer provision
- To ensure that staff recognise flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers

## Definition of a Young Carer

**Young carers are children under the age of 18 who help to look after someone in their home or another family member. This could be a sibling, parent, both parents or a grandparent who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, special educational need or who misuses substances.**

**William Barnes Primary School's definition of a young carer is a child, under the age of 18, who is either the main carer, shares a caring responsibility for, or whose day-to-day life is impacted by someone in their home.**

Having a clear definition of the role of a young carer is important, but unfortunately, many will remain hidden from view due to stigma they may feel. To help identify and support those hidden young carers, it is vital that professionals are equipped with the understanding and knowledge to detect potential signs that a young person may have a caring responsibility. There are many potential identifiers but listed below are some of the more common signs:

- Attendance issues
- A lower attainment or progress score than anticipated or predicted

- Poor home learning record or quality
- Poor engagement both within lessons and extra-curricular activities
- Low emotional wellbeing
- Displaying dysregulation with sudden changes in behaviour and mood
- Understanding or showing interest in adult matters such as finances or medical conditions
- Being very keen to offer help and support to adults
- Reference to supporting people at home
- Reporting of bullying
- Difficulty in engaging parents

In addition to these identifiers, the MYTIME identification toolkit can be used to identify the level of caring responsibilities a child has. This identification tool is valuable in identifying if a child is completing inappropriate levels of caring. Inappropriate levels of caring will trigger safeguarding and the school's safeguarding policy will be followed.

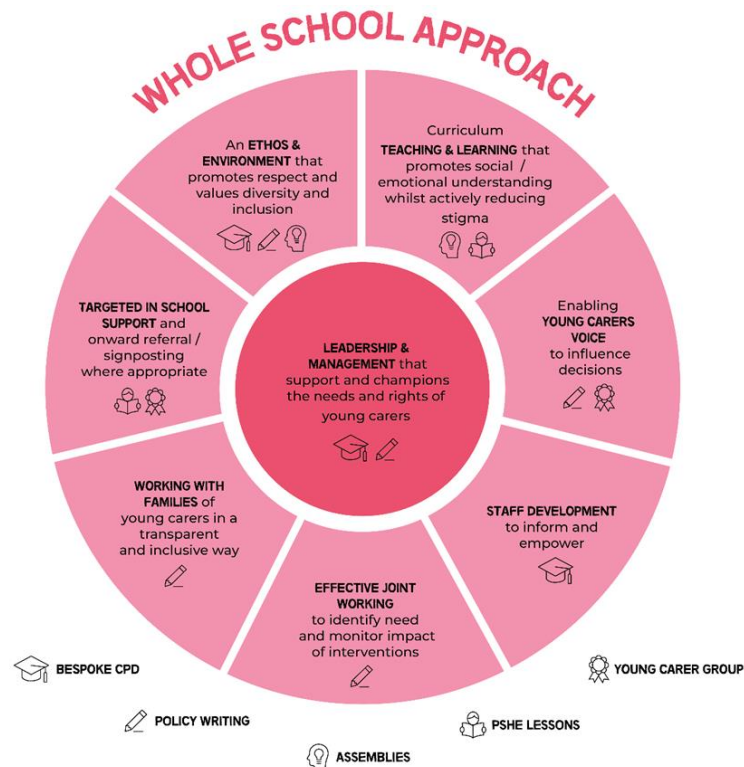
## The importance of early education settings

Primary, Infant and Junior schools all hold an important role in identifying and supporting young carers at the start of their educational journey. It requires the school to form positive relationships and communication with families to ensure they fully understand each individual situation, enabling them to effectively support the whole family.

When families feel heard and supported, they are more open to accepting support. This early and open communication is key to influencing a positive perception and attitude towards school by young carers.

Through close work with schools, MYTIME Young Carers recognise that when young carers feel supported in school, their emotional wellbeing and

self-awareness improves. In turn, this can lead to better attendance and attainment from young carers. In addition, reducing the stigma around caring can limit institutionalisation and lead to a more positive self-worth of young carers.



## William Barnes's whole school strategies for supporting young carers

We will work with families by:

- Providing opportunities for parents to declare their child is a young carer on application forms
- Having a Young Carer Champion that families can communicate with
- Signposting families to MYTIME and additional support available

We will create an ethos and environment that promotes respect and understanding around young carers by:

- Delivering assemblies on young carers
- Delivering PSHE lessons from MYTIME on young carers

- Promoting learning, acceptance and respect around illnesses, disability and substance misuse.
- Have a visual presence including posters

Enable young carers to influence decisions and provision by:

- Asking young carers what they would like to do in their YC group if the need for a group arises.

We will inform and empower our staff by

- Hosting staff training on young carers
- Having a staff member who is an appointed Young Carer Champion
- Include young carers on transition notes.

We will monitor young carers by:

- Considering them as a separate vulnerable group
- Ensuring they are on the school's My Concern system
- Tracking young carer attendance and attainment
- Discussing young carers with governors and at safeguarding meetings

Provision at William Barnes Primary School will be reviewed and held accountable by:

- Annual policy reviews
- A dedicated member of SLT and a dedicated governor

## **William Barnes Primary School's support and adjustments for young carers**

There is a dedicated Young Carer Champion who supports young carers. Young carers can speak to the champion at any time

If a young carer has incorrect or missing uniform, we will:

- Provide them with access to spare uniform discreetly

If the person a young carer cares for is unwell, we will:

- Inform staff working with that YC of the situation

- Provide opportunities for the young carer to communicate with that person through phone calls if and when needed

If a young carer is struggling to complete their home learning, we will:

- Provide opportunities for the young carer to complete home learning at school (during school times)
- Amend home learning expectations, as appropriate

To support young carers with their mental health, we will:

- Provide emotional support
- Provide a time out/ reflection card, as appropriate
- Include mindful activities in young carer groups

If a young carer is falling behind their peers academically, we will:

- Put reading and/ or maths interventions in place
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If a young carer is struggling with attendance, we will:

- Have open conversations with families around barriers to attendance/ punctuality
- Put in support to overcome the barriers discussed. *For example, access to the car park for drop off.*

To allow a young carer to connect with other young carers, we will:

- Explore setting up a young carer group
- Bring young carers on a MYTIME school event
- Share information about MYTIME Zoom Youth Group and Making Memories holiday events

## **Safeguarding**

William Barnes Primary School actively promotes the welfare and wellbeing of all pupils. Where appropriate, the school will refer a young carer to the local authority for a referral with permission of the parents/carers. The school will follow the school's safeguarding policy regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

The young carer champion will consult with relevant colleagues, and other agencies, regarding their caring responsibilities, with the consent of the young carer. When emailing MYTIME Young Carers about individual young carers, William Barnes Primary School will refrain from using names to prevent sensitive information being passed around via emails. When it is necessary to specify who the young carer is, William Barnes Primary School will use year group and initials to protect data (example, CB8), in line with the Data Protection Act, 2018.