Worth Valley Primary School

Young Carers Policy

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Statement of intent

At Worth Valley Primary School, we aim to provide a community for children that keeps them safe; supports their creativity; and enables them to meet their full potential. Worth Valley Primary School is committed to supporting young carers' access to a full education. This policy should be implemented by all staff members in order to ensure that young carers at our school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled. The aim of this policy document is to raise awareness amongst school staff about the needs of young carers and to support them in establishing a whole school approach to address the issues that may arise within a school setting.

Aims:

- To improve the progress and raise the standard of achievement for young carers
- To address any underlying inequalities between young carers and other students
- To raise awareness of young carers amongst staff and to ensure the identification of all young carers as early as possible on entry to the school
- To ensure that young carers feel as included and supported within their school community as possible
- To foster respect and understanding towards young carers among all students
- To ensure that young carers take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- To ensure that young carers are involved in discussions and decisions affecting young carer provision
- To ensure that young carers have access to appropriate careers guidance and opportunities
- The school recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- Carers Recognition Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015
- DfE (2011) 'Improving support for young carers – family focused approaches'
- DfE (2016) 'The lives of young carers in England

Definition

A young carer is someone who is under 18 years of age who provides regular and ongoing care to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled, or misuses substances.
A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development.
Young carers may be primary carers, such as caring for a parent, or a secondary carer, such as helping to care for a sibling.
A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child and risks jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and life chances.
A young carer may undertake some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks
- Physical care
- Personal and intimate care
- Emotional support
- Household management
- Looking after siblings
- Interpretation
- Administering medication

Issues faced by young carers

Caring responsibilities can impact on young people's education in a number of different ways including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lateness
- Tiredness
- Non-attendance
- Late or no submission of homework and assignments
- Not participating in extracurricular activities and school events
- Experiencing bullying or isolation
- Underachieving academically
- Poor education/career choices

Young carers may exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from home in order to offset the fact that they have to take on adult responsibilities and behave in an adult fashion within the home.

Many young carers may be unable to develop friendships outside of school, due to reasons such as being unable to invite friends to their home, restricting the development of a pupil's social skills.

Some young carers carry out tasks for which they are physically ill-equipped, which can impact on their overall health. Long term caring responsibilities can also impact significantly on the mental health of young people, which like their physical health, can lead to poor attendance.

Some families will be dependent solely on state benefits, affecting their ability to afford proper school clothing and/or extracurricular activities, such as school trips. Families involving a young carer may be unwilling or unable to attend school functions, leading to them becoming more isolated from the school environment and unaware of issues that the young carer may be experiencing.

Identifying young carers

During the school enrolment process for new pupils, the school will:

- Identify parents or family members who have disabilities or other long- term physical/mental health conditions.
- Clarify whether the pupil has caring responsibilities.
- Identify whether the young carer has any additional needs that need to be supported.
- Establish individual pupil plans to recognise the child's specific needs as a young carer.

Where appropriate, a young carer may be referred to the Local Authority or other support agencies for a needs assessment.
Worth Valley Primary School will continuously bear in mind that where a parent has a disability, mental health or substance abuse issue, the pupil might be the carer whilst showing none of the indicative signs of a young carer.

Young carers and the school

The young carer lead is the main point of contact for young carers in the school. This appointed person is responsible for:

- Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.
- Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need.
- Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services

It is important that staff members can effectively identify young carers and that young carers feel that they can ask for help; therefore, raising awareness among staff and pupils about the issues relating to young carers and what support is available is vital.
In order to ensure that staff members understand the issues faced by young carers, training and ongoing professional development about the matter is provided for staff and the governing body.

Staff members will keep up-to-date with national and local developments, legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.
Worth Valley Primary School aims to create a welcoming and friendly environment for all pupils, in which young carers feel comfortable to discuss their situation.
The school will publish clear information regarding how pupils and their families can access support, ensuring that all pupils are aware of this information.
The governing body will make provision for inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and promote good communication with their families.
The curriculum, primarily PSHE lessons, will be used to promote a full understanding, acceptance of, and respect for, issues such as the work of young carers.
The school premises are accessible to people with disabilities and/or illnesses, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings and other school events.
Staff members will not discuss a young carer's personal situation and related arrangements in front of their peers.
The school will follow child protection procedures regarding any pupil who they believe to be at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

Providing support

- The young carer lead is Mrs Rachael Page, Deputy Headteacher. She will meet with young carers on a regular basis and will liaise with teachers regarding difficulties, attendance and deadlines
- The young carer lead will ensure that existing individual pupil plans recognise the pupil's specific needs as a young carer
- Worth Valley Primary School offers support to the pupil and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school, college or university where appropriate
- Additional support is offered in order to remove any communication barriers with parents, allowing them to be fully engaged with the education of their child
- Targeted early interventions are used in order to provide support to young carers, ensuring that they are able to reach their full potential
- The school uses and evaluates data effectively in order to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers, and reviews plans accordingly
- Young carers are provided with access to a telephone during breaks and lunches, allowing them to call home with the intention of reducing any worry they may have about a family member
- Where appropriate, homework and assignment deadlines for young carers will be negotiated
- Where parents are unable to physically attend parents' evening due to their disability, medical condition or substance abuse, home visits will be considered where necessary
- Young carers are provided with opportunities to speak to someone in private regarding their role as a young carer
- Staff members treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality
- The school will continuously promote additional links with adult care agencies which may be able to support families and relieve care responsibilities
- Worth Valley Primary School will discuss and provide advice to parents regarding transport arrangements for those who find it difficult to escort their young children to school

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and the young carer lead will continually monitor and review practice to ensure this policy is implemented correctly.
Staff will all be aware of other relevant school policies which will be implemented alongside this policy.

Signed by Chair of Governors…….

Signed Headteacher……

Date……

To be reviewed November 2024