



## Young Carers Policy 2021-22

*There can never be another you. You are more than special ... you are unique.*

### **Philosophy**

At TMA the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of all our children and being safe is paramount. We believe that the most important function of the school is to maintain an environment in which every member of the school is able to achieve success and self-fulfilment. There must be a total consistency of expectation that everyone (irrespective of gender, race or culture) should feel safe and secure, have empathy for all others, and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

### **TMA ethos in relation to Young Carers.**

At Two Mile Ash School, we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education, regardless of what is happening at home. When a young person looks after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or substance misuse problem, they may need a little extra support to help them get the most out of school. This Young Carers' Policy says how we will help any pupil who helps to look after someone at home.

### **Our school:**

- Has at least one member of staff with special responsibility for young carers and lets all new pupils know who they are and what they can do to help. The member of staff with this lead role is Hayley Donohue, Deputy Head.
- Runs a session on the challenges faced by young carers in assembly for each year group at least annually.
- Can put young carers in touch with the local Young Carers' Service. We can also put families in touch with other support services.
- Is accessible to parents who have mobility and communication problems.
- Respects the child and the family's right to privacy and will only share information about them with people who need to know to help them this will include a confidential system for recording young carers on school registers. (However, if there is a safeguarding concern we will follow the safeguarding procedures as we would for any child or family).
- Will support a whole school commitment and approach to young carers by ensuring that staff will receive regular training regarding the early identification of Young Carers and consider how best Young Carers can be supported.
- Will consider alternatives if a Young Carer is unable to attend out of school activities e.g. extra-curricular activities, sports or performing arts events, concerts, due to their caring role.
- Allows Young Carers to telephone home during breaks and lunchtimes if agreed by both parents/ carers and school that this helps to support the child.
- Can give parents advice about how to get their children into school where transport is a problem.

### **Defining a young carer**

A young carer is under 18 years of age and helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well-being. The level of responsibility assumed by a young carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up.

### **Identifying a young carer**

Unless the school is advised about a pupil's home circumstances, young carers risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some young carers worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers.

Some of the warning signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing
- Tiredness in school
- Erratic response to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Under-achievement for potential capability
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
- Few or no peer friendships but possibly with a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to young carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
- Lack of interest in extracurricular activities, especially after school
- Apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at parent's meetings.

The above may be indicators of a range of problems, some not associated with caring, however in dealing with any pupil exhibiting any of the signs, staff should consider asking the pupil if they are helping to look after someone at home. Staff should also enquire from colleagues with pastoral responsibilities for the pupil. Education Welfare Officers and Education Social Workers together with pastoral support staff investigating pupils causing concern should also countenance the possibility of caring roles, especially when working directly with family members. Any concerns about a pupil who may be considered an "as yet" unidentified young carer should be reported to the member of staff with responsibility for young carers as should new information about already identified young carers. The member of staff responsible for co-ordinating young carer support is the key person in school through which relevant matters need to be passed.

It is much better to start from a positive base so our enrolment process will seek to establish if:

- The pupil has parents/relatives with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health problems
- The pupil has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal inter-personal relationships within a caring family setting
- The family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the pupil.
- Some families will choose not to disclose this information. Any information gained as a result of this process will be held on the pupil's personal file, kept securely and made available in the first instance to the young carers' co-ordinator. We will respect the right to privacy and will only share information about young carers and their families with people who need to know in order to be able to help. Before sharing information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer or, if they are not able to understand, from a parent/carer.

#### **School support for identified young carers**

- Key members of the Pupil Support Team will lead on our young carers support work. They will be the point of contact for young carers and their families and will liaise with young carers' services. Their name and contact details can be found in the school prospectus or by telephone from reception.
- Wherever possible, staff will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends unless the carer asks for a friend to be present.
- Young carers will be given a card by the lead staff for Young Carers (Mrs Hayley Donohue) to identify themselves so that they may have access to a telephone to telephone home if they are worried about a relative without having to explain their need.
- Where possible, we will negotiate deadlines for homework, learning journal work etc in advance of these being set if current family circumstances are making it difficult for the Young Carer to hand the work in the specified time.
- We will liaise with support services to ensure that we can signpost families to additional help.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parent's sessions due to family circumstances, we will try to make alternative arrangements. The young carer or parent may request this.
- We will provide advice about how children can get into school where transport is a problem. We welcome any young person, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help their child in achieving their potential.

**Anti-Bullying:**

At Two Mile Ash School we consider bullying to be an anti-social behaviour, which is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Please view our Anti-Bullying Policy for more information.

**Safeguarding:**

At Two Mile Ash School, safeguarding and child protection is paramount and we are fully committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children. We believe that students have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse; where staff are vigilant for signs of any student in distress and are confident about applying the processes to avert and alleviate any such problems. If any behaviour is a concern in relation to safeguarding TMA procedures and processes will be followed at all times in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Any concerns will be referred to the Child Protection Safeguarding Officers; Hayley Donohue (Designated Safeguarding Lead), Lucy Eldridge, Heather Cormack, Sophie Haycock, and Sally Moisi as procedures state.

Our Safeguarding Governor is Mrs Nicola Williams.

**Children Act 1989**

Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989 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 will be followed.

Policy dated: July 2021

Review and renewal due: July 2022

