

Step 5

Tool 2: Young carers school policy checklist

All schools should have a policy in place that recognises the needs of young carers and recommends how the school will identify and address these needs.

This checklist contains recommended points to include in a discrete school policy for young carers and/or to inform the revision of an existing policy to include young carers, such as the school inclusion policy.

The specific information that schools will need to capture in their policy will depend on the extent of the school's wider provision for young carers and whether they are:

- Just beginning to develop provision for young carers and focusing on the basics.
- Building on the basics to better meet young carers' needs.
- Striving to achieve best practice.

To effectively identify and support young carers, all schools should review progress regularly (see **Step 4: Reviewing your school's provision for young carers**) with a view to increasing the number of points covered in their policy and ultimately achieving best practice.

Any discrete policies for young carers will also need to reflect the whole school commitment to young carers (see **Step 5, Tool 1: Recommended Points to Include in a Whole School Commitment**).

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The Basics

The whole school understands the issues faced by young carers and their families, what to look and listen for and how to respond, by:

In place?

Keeping up to date with national and local developments affecting young carers and their families.	
Displaying information about young carer issues on staff noticeboards and the school intranet.	

The school respects the privacy of young carers and their families:

In place?

A young carer's privacy is respected and information about their caring role is not communicated in front of their peers.	
The school views young carers as any other pupil but understands that they have the additional pressure of caring responsibilities, which may require additional support or flexible arrangements.	

The school ensures young carers and their families know how to access support by:

In place?

Displaying information about available support on the school noticeboards, webpage and prospectus, and by including information in the school newsletter and communication to families on a regular basis.	
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The school reduces barriers to education and learning and supports the wellbeing of young carers by:

In place?

Providing targeted interventions to pupils, including young carers, for example homework/coursework support; emotional support; health support; peer mentoring or peer support groups. The school takes the needs of young carers into account when planning and delivering this support, for example running homework support at lunch-time.	
Being flexible, where appropriate, for example allowing young carers to use a telephone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes so as to reduce any worry they may have about a family member; and negotiating deadlines for homework and coursework.	

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Beyond the Basics

The whole school understands the issues faced by young carers and their families, what to look and listen for and how to respond, by:

In place?

Embedding training on young carer issues in induction training and continuous professional development for all staff.	
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The school ensures young carers and their families know how to access support by:

In place?

Including information signposting young carers and their families to other resources, for example, the local young carers' service, school nurse and emotional support on its noticeboards and/or school website.	
Providing families with information about young carer issues, available support and how to contact the Young Carers' School Operational Lead by including the whole school commitment to young carers in the school prospectus, and incorporating articles in the school newsletter.	
Using the curriculum to promote a full understanding, acceptance of and respect for, issues such as caring, disability and impairment, for example, embedding the challenges faced by young carers into PSHE lessons and delivering regular assemblies raising awareness of young carer issues.	

The school takes a proactive approach to identifying young carers by:

In place?

Using school enrolment and annual processes to check pupil information, to ask families whether the pupil has relatives who have an illness or disability, or who are affected by a mental health problem or an addiction and whether they would like more information about the types of support available to young carers.	
Flagging identified young carers on its internal management system so that attainment and attendance of young carers is understood.	

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The school reduces barriers to education and learning and supports the wellbeing of young carers by:

In place?

Establishing a working group of school staff to support the needs of young carers, including links with external agencies, such as the school nurse, the local young carers' service and emotional wellbeing support.	
Referring/signposting young carers to other resources such as the school nurse and local young carers' service.	

The school ensures young carers are listened to, consulted with and given time and space to talk if they need to by:

In place?

Gathering and using the views of young carers and their families to inform policy development.	
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Best Practice

The whole school understands the issues faced by young carers and their families, what to look and listen for and how to respond, by:

In place?

Ensuring the delivering to staff of specific training about how to identify young carers affected by stigmatised conditions (such as parental mental ill health, HIV and substance misuse).	
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The school takes a proactive approach to identifying young carers by:

In place?

Referring to lists of children on child protection and looked-after children plans, to identify pupils who are living with adults experiencing a mental health problem or an addiction.	
Checking School Census data on pupils with disabilities, to identify sibling carers on the roll.	
Asking feeder schools/early-years providers to inform the school if a pupil has already been identified as a young carer.	
Checking whether any young carer status has been recorded on the Common Transfer File (sent to the new school via the Department for Education) when a pupil transfers to your school from another, and checking and including this information when transferring a pupil.	
Asking other schools attended by siblings to tell you when the sibling has been identified as a young carer.	
Establishing information sharing protocols with the school nurse, young carer services and health and social care services to ensure that, with appropriate consent, the school is informed when they identify young carers attending, or about to start your school.	

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The school reduces barriers to education and learning and supports the wellbeing of young carers by:

In place?

Using pupil progress meetings and the internal management system to identify changes in attendance and attainment and consider whether these may be due to a potential caring role.	
Offering support to the pupil and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school/college/university lead for young carers and their families.	
Identifying young carers at risk of falling into the not in education, employment or training category and taking appropriate actions to address this.	
Signposting and/or undertaking whole family work that aims to support parents/siblings in order to prevent or reduce a caring role.	

The school understands the needs of families of young carers by:

In place?

Ensuring the school is accessible and welcoming to parents with disabilities and/or illness, offering additional support to enable them to attend parent's evenings or other school events. Home visits will be considered where appropriate.	
Offering additional support to remove any communication barriers with parents, so that parents are able to be fully engaged with the education of their child.	
Considering how best to support those parents who find it difficult to escort younger children to school.	

The school monitors and reviews policy and practice, taking into account the views of young carers and their families by:

In place?

Implementing and reviewing individual pupil support plans and/or provision maps, which recognise the pupil's specific needs as a young carer.	
Using tracking of young carers on internal management systems and actively engaging with young carers and their families, for example drop-in sessions and questionnaires, to shape and improve provision for young carers.	

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