



JUNIOR SCHOOL

Together we make a difference

School's Young Carer's Policy

Reviewed: April 2026

Review date: April 2029

When creating this policy, the governing board and head teacher have considered the impact of the scope of the policy on the whole school community. Specifically, they have taken account of the categories used by Sheffield City Council as a public authority to assess impact, as set out below.

Protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

Plus, additional equality groups and interests also recognised by the Council:

- armed forces, *care experience, health & wellbeing, poverty & financial inclusion, social cohesion, unpaid caring responsibilities and voluntary, community & faith sector

(*note – care experience was added in December 2023 and recognises those who are, or who have been, looked-after children. It includes Children Looked After (CLA) who are under the care of the local authority; children and young people who are post-CLA adopted; and those who are leaving, or have previously left, care or adoption arrangements).

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1. Principles of this Young Carer Policy

We recognise that many pupils will have caring responsibilities at some point during their time at Dobcroft Junior School and that these responsibilities can impact a pupil's performance in any area of the curriculum; a whole school commitment is therefore necessary.

Dobcroft Junior School believes that all pupils should be equally valued and strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. We aim to create an environment whereby all students will flourish and feel safe and that seeks to remove barriers to learning and participation. The importance of enhancing positive self-esteem is also recognised, which allows opportunities for increased engagement, social development, and achievement.

Our young carer policy takes account of findings and recommendations given by Barnardo's Still Hidden, Still Ignored; Who Cares for Young Carers? report (2017), the Children's Commissioner's Voices of England's Missing Children report (2022), and the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance (2025), which all emphasise the role and accountability of school/ college staff and procedures regarding provision for, and progress of, young carers.

Our Governing Body will ensure that we fulfil this responsibility to provide holistic and effective support to young carers through monitoring our provision during link governor activities; including but not limited to termly safeguarding meetings, termly SEND meetings, two yearly accessibility and equality audit, annual safeguarding audit and termly head teacher reporting.

Dobcroft Junior School acknowledges the need to keep up to date with advice, publications and research regarding provision for young carers, and therefore this document is subject to review at regular intervals.

This policy has been produced in collaboration with local charity, Sheffield Young Carers.

The template of this policy has been endorsed by Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership. It has been adapted to meet the needs of our school.

2. Definition of a Young Carer

SYC's definition of a young carer is somebody under the age of 18 who helps to care for somebody (a parent, grandparent, sibling or other family member) who is unable to fully care for themselves due to a physical or learning disability, long-term physical illness or condition, mental health condition, or substance misuse issues. This can include personal, practical, emotional, or financial care. For example:

- Jobs around the house
- Shopping
- Helping with personal care (bathing, getting dressed, lifting)
- Giving medication, making medical appointments, accompanying them to hospital
- Providing emotional support, listening, helping calm them down
- Helping with finances, help paying bills, working to earn money for the family
- Looking after themselves or their siblings because nobody else is able to

Dobcroft Junior School has adopted the above definition for our school and pupils. Our school recognises that anyone can become a young carer at any time. An inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers (2024) suggested that 10% of all pupils will provide high or very high levels of care – equating to at least two young carers in every class, thus we know there will be pupils in our school who are young carers.

3. Impacts of Caring

Young carers can often find life tiring, stressful and lonely. Being a carer can affect a young person in many ways – including social isolation, bullying, difficulties with school attendance and achievement, and physical and mental ill health themselves, sometimes leading to unhealthy coping strategies.

However, there are also many positive impacts of caring, such as feelings of self-worth, the development of practical and transferable skills, and other personal qualities like empathy and compassion.

When young carers are identified early and supported well in their education setting, they can go on to achieve just as well as their peers.

Unfortunately, many young carers will remain hidden from view due to the potentially negative impacts they feel speaking up or self-identifying may have on their family.

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. A young carer may show one, or many, of these identifiers:

- Attendance issues, including persistent lateness or absences, leaving school/ college in the middle of the day, arriving late for lessons.
- A lower attainment or progress score than anticipated or predicted, underperforming or not fulfilling their potential.
- Poor homework record or quality.
- Poor engagement both within lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- Low emotional wellbeing including signs of: Tiredness, worry, anxiety and low self-esteem which could lead to social isolation and trouble maintaining healthy friendships.
- Displaying behavioural problems or showing sudden changes in behaviour and mood.
- Understanding or showing interest in adult matters such as finances or medical conditions which are not appropriate to their age.
- Being very keen to offer help and support to adults, even at the detriment of their own social time, and appearing to find interacting with adults easier than with their peers.
- Reference to supporting people at home or commenting on the behaviours of people in their home.
- Sibling at the school with SEND.
- Reporting of bullying.
- Parental lack of engagement in school/ college.

4. Equality and Discrimination

Dobcroft Junior School aims to make reasonable steps to ensure that young carers are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students, and to ensure equal educational and social opportunity for all.

Dobcroft Junior School strives to maintain a climate of tolerance, understanding, respect and trust that allows all students and staff irrespective of background or personal circumstances to feel safe and be safe from any form of discrimination or emotional harm. This young carer policy is supported by other school policies including our equality policy and anti-bullying policy which can be viewed separately on the school website.

5. Aims of Young Carer Provision

- To raise awareness of young carers among staff and to ensure the identification of all young carers as early as possible on entry to the school and make referrals when necessary.
- To foster respect and understanding towards young carers among all students
- To address any underlying inequalities between young carers and other students 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 are made to promote this.
- 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 ensure that they are involved in decisions affecting young carer provision.
- To ensure that staff recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

6. Dobcroft Junior School's commitment to Young Carers

We aim for our young carers to be identified, supported and enabled to succeed academically, emotionally and socially. This requires a collaborative approach where every adult is held accountable for young carers.

To do this, our school will:

Appoint a designated Young Carer Lead (at Dobcroft Junior School this is our family pastoral liaison lead)

Role of The Young Carer Lead:

- Understand the issues surrounding being a young carer.
- Lead on identifying and supporting young carers in school and stay up to date on every young carer's circumstance and needs.
- Understand each young carer's situation and be someone that they can talk to.
- Be an identified point of contact for other pupils, families, staff and external agencies
- Keep regular contact with families of young carers, in order to keep up-to-date with their circumstances, find out what support the family might need, maintain engagement and positive relationships
- Undertake training about young carers, via Sheffield Young Carers' free e-learning module or multi-agency training.
- Become a member of Sheffield Young Carers Schools
- Make referrals to Sheffield Young Carers/ other external agencies where necessary.
- Stay up to date on young carers issues through Sheffield Young Carers' regular young carer network briefings and newsletters.

Appoint a Young Carer Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Lead (at Dobcroft Junior School this is the deputy head teacher)

Role of The Young Carer SLT Lead:

1. Raise awareness among staff and Governors
 - Ensure all new pastoral and other relevant staff undertake training about young carers in their induction, via Sheffield Young Carers' free e-learning module or multi-agency training.
 - Ensure that all school staff receive training on young carer awareness, identification and support through regular CPD. e.g. yearly.
 - Ensure staff understand who our young carers are and how to support them.
 - Include young carer progress as a regular item in inclusion meetings, pupil progress meetings, staff briefings and governor meetings.
 - Review the Young Carer's Policy with the head teacher
 - Report to the governing board regarding Young Carers in our school
2. Raise awareness among students
 - Develop a culture of openness and respect for young carers among the student community, and to encourage young carers to come forwards.
 - Promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
 - Regularly inform pupils of the name of the Young Carer Lead and how to find them
 - Run at least annual assemblies to raise awareness about young carers, as well as disability, physical and mental health, substance and alcohol misuse.
 - Look for other opportunities to raise awareness and celebrate young carers, e.g. on carer awareness days
3. Raise awareness among families
 - Regularly communicate with all our families about the support we offer young carers and who the Young Carer Lead is, to encourage young carer's families to come forwards and to keep a culture of transparency and support. We will do this via:
 - Communication with families e.g. ClassDojo, newsletter

7. Identification

At Dobcroft Junior School (pupils aged 7-11 years) we identify if a pupil is a young carer in two ways.

a) Through Formal Screening

- Typically, in the summer term of year 3 (when most pupils are 8 years old) pupils are screened using the Sheffield Young Carer Identification Questionnaire (by the class teacher)
- This screening is then analysed by our Young Carer Lead and other key members of staff e.g. pastoral team
- This leads to identification of potential young carers who we follow up with for face to face conversations
- When school believes that we have identified a potential young carer we then contact parents over the phone and follow up with written information accordingly
- The Young Carer tab on CPOMs is used to categorise Young Carers

b) Through Monitoring/Observation or other Information Sharing

- We recognise that any pupil can become a young carer at any time in their childhood and we therefore review our list of young carers at all inclusion meetings (half termly).
- We ensure that all staff are aware of the potential signs that someone might be a young carer and have conversations with those who flag up.
- We regularly review new information presented to school either observational or reported to decide if a pupil could be a young carer- recorded on CPOMs.
- In this scenario (eg a pupil could be in year 5, but in year 3 was not identified as a young carer) we would repeat the screening process and follow the steps described above in number 1.

c) Reviewing Transition Information

- We include on our school enrolment and transition forms for parents to declare whether there is someone with a disability or mental health condition at home

8. Strategies and Implementation

The following are part of the role of the Young Carer Lead and the Young Carer SLT lead:

- All young carers are reported on the school management information systems accessible to all members of staff, and school transfers this data onto the annual school census return (NB parental consent is not needed).
- After discussion and with parental consent, we add all identified young carers to Sheffield City Council's Young Carers Register.
- Regardless of consent, all young carers are added to our inclusion register and their attendance and attainment is closely monitored and school responds accordingly with appropriate intervention.
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- All Young Carers have an individual support plan, which is written by the child's class teacher and the Young Carer lead. This plan is based upon the initial discussions/meeting with the child and the Young Carer Lead.

The following is part of the role of the Young Carer's Class Teacher:

- All Young Carers have an individual support plan, which is written by the child's class teacher and the Young Carer lead.
- The above plan is reviewed around 6 monthly / twice yearly
- The above plan is part of the transition documentation and Young Carers are discussed with the new class teacher and the outgoing class teacher.
- The above plan is placed on CPOMs.
- Ensure that Young carers are able to access the learning; including achieving their full potential.
- Ensuring that Young carers are able to access and complete home learning; including putting in place any reasonable adjustments to support.
- Ensure that Young carers are fully accessing all personal development opportunities in school, for example residential visits, educational visits and seek advice from the Young carer lead if there is a barrier to overcome

In-School Support for Young Carers

- Carry out Young Carer Assessments and develop individual support plans with the identified young carers to find out what they need.
- Provide a young carer group.
- Through external signposting with Sheffield Young Carers, offer extra-curricular opportunities for relaxation, respite, leisure, and social connection, including trips out of school, specifically for young carers who may not otherwise have the opportunity - where possible, during the school-day.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school, including academic support, mental and physical health support where necessary
- Identify young carers on the inclusion register
- To make reasonable adjustments to usual school policies and show flexibility on a case-by-case basis regarding issues such as lateness to school, late homework, and poorer attendance. These include, but are not limited to:
 - access to a telephone, to phone home, with pastoral support or independently
 - negotiable deadlines for homework
 - identifying support for young carers and their family to enable them to attend trips and activities
 - exploring and encouraging families to apply for free school meals where relevant
 - alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound

9. Monitoring, Assessment & Impact

- The class teacher and the Young Carer lead will regularly seek the views of young carers regarding their experience in school and the provision and support they receive. This will be captured when updating their support plan
- The regularity of this provision will be identified on the school's inclusion register and CPOMs
- All updates and discussions will be shared with the relevant staff and/or parents and carers as appropriate
- The views of young carers in our school will help drive the additional provision and support they receive, thus the support will vary according to the individuals identified
- Young Carers will be discussed at each half termly inclusion meeting

10. Support from External Agencies

As with other vulnerable pupils other agencies beyond the school may be informed or involved in supporting the Young Carers. This includes but is not limited to:

- Where appropriate, the school will refer a young carer to Sheffield Young Carers or other external agency
- The Young Carer Lead will consult with relevant colleagues, and other relevant agencies, regarding their caring responsibilities, with the consent of the young carer and parents/carers.
- The school will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring
- Signposting colleagues, parents/carers to local support
 - *Sheffield Young Carers*
 - *Sheffield Carers Centre*
 - *Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership*
 - *Sheffield Parent Carer Forum*
 - *Sheffield SENDIAS*

11. Guidance and Resources

Resources for identifying and supporting young carers are available for Sheffield Young Carers Network members on SYC's website. These include:

- Young Carer Lead Pack
- Awareness-raising pack
- Parental engagement resource
- Transitions pack
- Staff training template
- Identification tools (including assembly templates, lesson plans, letter templates home, identification questionnaires with guidance)
- Support resources

Further support links and resources to support young people on a wide range of issues can be found on the professional's page of SYC's website. <https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/>

- Young Carers in Schools
- Carers Trust
- MYTIME Young Carers Management Information System Guidance for young carers

Further Reading

- Barnardo's Still Hidden, Still Ignored; Who Cares for Young Carers? (2017)
- Children's Commissioner for England, Voices of England's Missing Children (2022)
- APPG for young carers and young adult carers: Inquiry into life opportunities (2023)
- Carers Trust report: Caring and classes: the education gap for young carers (2024)
- MYTIME Young Carers report: Overlooked and Overburdened: Addressing the Educational Challenges Faced by Young Carers (2024)
- MYTIME Young Carers report: Persistent educational disadvantages faced by young carers.

Young Carer Support Plan (Key Stage 2)

Name:	
Date created:	
Date reviewed:	
Year Group:	
Age:	

1. About the Young Carer

Caring responsibilities (select all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Looking after family members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Household tasks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please detail):
Duration of caring role:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 6 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months to 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 1 year

Do they identify as a young carer?

	Yes
	No

2. Strengths and Interests

Hobbies or activities:

Personal Strengths (select all that apply):

	Caring
	Kindness
	Resilience
	Other (please detail):

3. Challenges and Barriers

School -related challenges (select all that apply):

	Attendance issues
	Lateness
	Homework deadlines
	Concentration or focus
	Other (please detail):

Home -related challenges (select all that apply):

	Emotional wellbeing
	Physical health
	Family commitments
	Other (please detail):

4. Assessment and Support Needs

Specific needs (select all that apply):

	Emotional support
	Academic support
	Mental health support
	Physical health support
	Other (please detail):

5. Support Strategies

In-school support (select all that apply):

	Access to a designated staff member for regular check-ins
	Flexibility with homework deadlines
	Flexibility with attendance or lateness
	Use of a quiet space for breaks or emotional support
	Access to all relevant support services in school (academic, health, mental health)
	Access to a telephone for contacting home/support staff
	Inclusion on the school's Young Carers register

External and extracurricular opportunities (select all that apply):

	Signposting to Sheffield Young Carers
	Participation in young carers' groups or activities during school hours
	Support to attend trips or activities, including help with free school meals
	Other (please detail):

Family and communication support:

	Explore and encourage family applications for free school meals
	Alternative communication options for families who require this

Social and emotional wellbeing:

	Join a Young Carer group for social connection
	Access to counselling or mental health support if needed

6. Goals

Short term goals:

Long-term goals:

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5. Child/ Parent/ Guardian Voice

<p>Child views:</p>

<p>Parent/ Guardian view:</p>

6. Review

Review Date:	
Additional notes:	

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