

**Jesus is the centre of our lives,
Our learning and friendships.
In a safe, happy and caring community
Where all are welcome.**

**HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY
YOUNG CARERS POLICY
MAY 2024**

TO BE REVIEWED October 2027

Introduction

Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy is committed to enabling young carers equal access to education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at our school are identified, respected, listened to and fully supported to access the education and other services to which they are entitled.

Number of young carers in school:

There are lots of different estimates of how many young carers there are. The 2021 ONS census reported that there are around 120,000 young carers aged 5-18 in England, while the school census in 2023 suggested that there were 39,000 'known' young carers in the country. Meanwhile, a 2018 BBC survey found that there were as many as 820,000 young carers aged 11-15. One thing is for certain: There are clearly a significant number of young people across the country with caring responsibilities, and it's important that every one of them is getting the support they need.

Statistic taken from childrenssociety.org.uk

At Holy Cross we keep a confidential Young Carers register as part of our SEND profile and ensure that the needs of the child and family are identified and met using this register. Children are identified by parents either on the school registration form or in person through discussions. Staff, also being aware of the possible signs of a young carer or identifying a need within a family, may also have a face to face discussion with a parent/carer to assist identification.

Definition~ who are young carers?

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who provide care to another family member e.g a parent, sibling, grandparent or other relative close to the family. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

A young carer may be a primary carer or supporting another person with caring tasks. When identifying a young carer the main focus should be the impact on the child, rather than the hours spent, type, or level of caring tasks.

The person they care for may have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental Health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem
- Language need e.g hearing impairment or English as an additional language

Caring tasks

Caring can involve physical and/or emotional care, or taking responsibility to someone's safety or well-being. A young carers responsibilities may include:

- Personal care: bathing, dressing, feeding, changing dressings, helping with toileting needs
- Nursing care: administering or prompting medication/injections or assisting with mobility
- Domestic tasks: preparing meals and drinks, shopping, managing the family budget, paying bills, collecting benefits and prescriptions, housework, cleaning and laundry
- Physical care: lifting, helping a parent on the stairs, physiotherapy
- Looking after or 'parenting' younger siblings or keeping the person with needs safe.
- Emotional support: staying at home to provide company, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, supporting a parent through depression, being a shoulder to cry on and cheering them up.
- Interpreting: due to hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family's first language

Identifying young carers

Factors which may indicate that a young person is caring include:

- Illness or disability in the family
- Being late or absent (due to caring responsibilities at home)
- Assuming a parental role to other siblings
- Poor concentration and/or often tired, hungry or lacking motivation
- Academic performance is below potential
- Homework is often not completed
- Isolation from peers or difficulties interacting with peers, limited social skills or not age appropriate, isolation or embarrassed to take friends home, low self-esteem, feeling no one understands and that no support is available
- Not making use of out of school activities
- Financial difficulties
- Mature and responsible but can 'let go' and behave immaturely when in a safe environment
- Behavioural problems, showing anxiety, emotional distress, depression, anger, self-harming behaviours
- Have back problems, aches and pains, patterns of being unwell
- Limited contact with school by parent/s. It may be difficult to engage with parents due to fears about the child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question.

Designated school lead and champion for young carers.

Miss J Wheater: Young Carers Lead and SENCO

Mrs K Gallagher: Young Carers Champion and SEMH Coordinator

Gifty De Souza and Sheila Underdown: Governor leads

These members of staff are responsible for ensuring that the key principles of practice, The Children's Society, recommended is placed. 'Schools and colleges take responsibility to identify young carers at an early stage and . . . ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers; and to be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating the support they need in school and liaising with other agencies as appropriate.'

Staff awareness is vital and as such training is made available and awareness of young carers is given a high profile within our school community. This supports identification and provision for the children and young people, in addition to any support available to the family.

Provisions for young carers

Holy Cross acknowledges that young carers may need additional support to access and maintain the education to which they are entitled and we ensure the children can make the most of their educational opportunities, enjoying the same experiences as their peers; along with additional tailor-made provisions.

At Holy Cross we will:

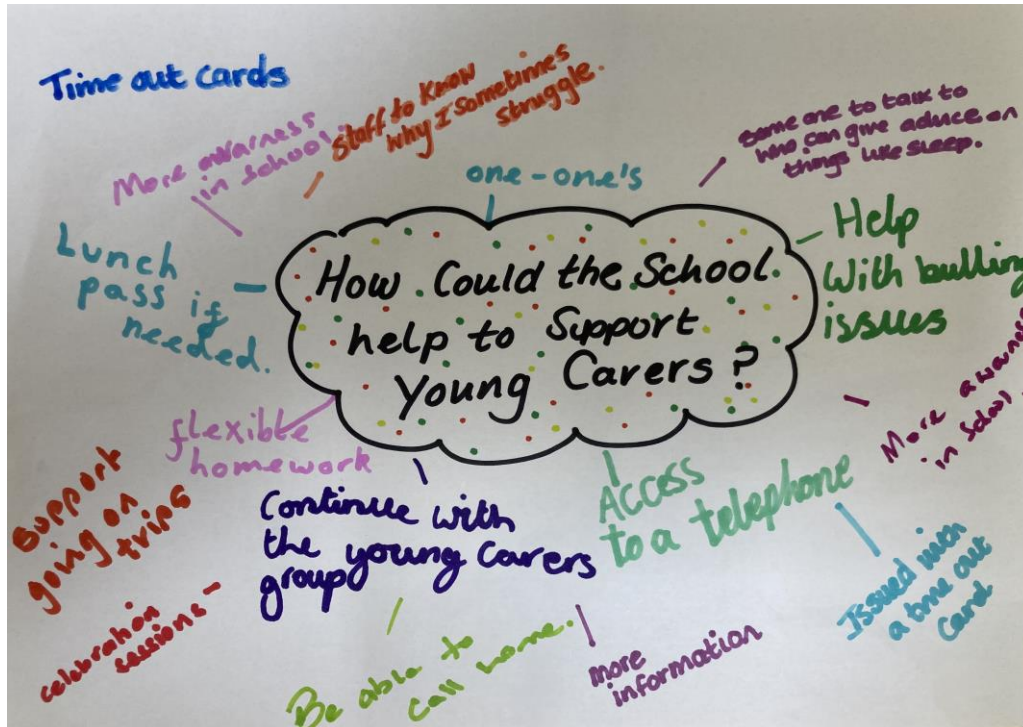
- Support colleagues and those within the school community to understand the challenges that young carers may face, through access to training, assemblies and face to face conversations.
- Ensure the whole school is committed to meeting the needs of Young Carers and that pupils have access to the appropriate information regarding the support that is available, through displays, raising awareness in assembly and in person meetings.
- Promote discussion and learning in all areas of curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance and respect for the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- Raise awareness within the curriculum and with targeted assemblies to explore the rights of children, the roles and responsibilities of young carers and the challenges they face. In addition to promoting positive images of disability, challenging stereotypes and discrimination. We will also promote discussion regarding caring and issues surrounding illness and disability to promote a fuller understanding of acceptance and respect.
- Adopt a healthy attitude to different illnesses to try and reduce stigmas attached.
- Discourage labelling of pupils who are carers and provide guidance on prevention of bullying.
- Ensure we comply with the Disability Discrimination Act by offering disabled parents support to get their children to school.
- Respect the family and young carer's right to privacy by only sharing information with people on a need to know basis. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected at all times.

- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality whilst considering the whole family approach.
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate caring role.
- Treat a disclosure with sensitivity and follow safeguarding protocols.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and inform young carers and their family of the support available to them within Essex.
- Provide parents with a letter with clear information regarding young carers, to raise awareness and welcome further information / support for families who could benefit from additional support / provisions within school and from Essex County Council.
- Referrals to the young carers service within Essex County Council, with parental agreement; to support access to services available within and outside of the school community. Further information can be found at: [Young Carers Service \(essex.gov.uk\)](http://www.essex.gov.uk/young-carers-service)
- Effectively and confidentially share information between staff and as part of the child's transition to another setting; to ensure ongoing recognition and provision continues.
- Offer consultations to parents and children to ensure they have a full understanding of current policies and delivery of support available.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and support.
- Agreed aspirational targets set between the class teacher and Head Teacher to ensure the best possible outcomes for the young carer with adapted provisions well placed.
- School data analysis identify areas needing improvement based on attainment and progress for identified young carers.
- Provide access to the Young Carers Champion who will be the main point of contact for all issues pertaining to young carers.
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to the Champion in private to share their concerns; which will lead to additional support and networking with the staff and family as needed to ensure thoughts, worries and wishes can be supported to the best of our ability.
- Access to the young carers club and other clubs during and after school hours with other young carers or friends to increase support and enjoyment linked to their interests as much as possible.
- Access to the parent and child get crafty club and gardening club; where family members can spend time on site with shared, fun interests.
- Consider the role of the school nurse in supporting improved health outcomes and reduce inequalities of family/child experience.
- Provide tailor made provisions based on personal needs to support school attendance and promote enjoyment of experiences.
- Be accessible to parents who have mobility and communication difficulties and involve them in parent meetings and other school activities.

Holy Cross recognizes that flexibility and adaptation of school arrangements may be needed when responding to each young carer. Available provision includes (but is not restricted to):

- Access to a telephone; allowing young carers to call home to reduce unnecessary concern or anxiety and increase concentration in class.
- Awareness of attendance and punctuality being effected by caring responsibilities.
- Someone to talk to who understands – will listen and not judge.
- Negotiated deadlines or homework adaptations as needed.
- Access to additional support during school hours for homework.
- Access to booster clubs in and after school hours if this is appropriate.
- Arrangements and agreements for work to be sent home; where an exceptional circumstance has occurred.
- Alternative arrangements where a child would experience restrictions or difficulties attending out of school activities, after-school clubs or residentials due to their caring capacity.
- Ensure parents access to school for meetings or provision of alternative meeting platforms.
- Accommodating disabled parents access to the school carpark and any on-site needs.

Thoughts from our young carers at Holy Cross . . .



This policy was created in May 2024

This policy has been consulted upon and was ratified by the Governors

This policy needs to be read in line with other relevant policies

This policy will be reviewed in October 2027 but will be viewed annually to ensure it is reflective of practice.