

Young Carers Policy

For the attention of: All Staff

Produced by: Director of Safeguarding

Approved by: SLT

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Vision, Purpose & Values

Our Vision

Our students will be recognised locally & nationally for their positive impact on the communities and industries in which they choose to work.

Our Purpose

To inspire our students to gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be resilient and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Our Values

Excellence: A culture of creativity, high expectations, ambition and aspiration

Respect: Showing fairness, courtesy and mutual respect to each other and our environment

Integrity: Honesty, openness and trust at the heart of College life

Diversity: Celebrating diversity and inclusivity as a key to our success

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1. Introduction and Purpose

This policy outlines the The Windsor Forest Colleges Group's (WFCG) commitment to identifying, supporting, and safeguarding young carers. We recognise that all young people should have equal access to education, regardless of their home circumstances. Young carers often face unique challenges that may impact their emotional wellbeing, academic progress, and overall life chances.

A young carer is a person under the age of 18 who provides care for a family member with a physical or mental illness, disability, or addiction. When the level of caregiving becomes excessive or inappropriate, the young carer becomes vulnerable. This can significantly affect their health, education, and wellbeing

2. Legal & Policy Framework

This policy supports compliance with:

- The Children and Families Act 2014 – Requires local authorities to assess and address young carers' support needs.
- The Care Act 2014 – Places duties on local authorities to support young carers transitioning into adulthood.
- The Equality Act 2010 – Promotes non-discriminatory access to education.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025
- The Windsor Forest Colleges Group's Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policies

3. Definition of a Young Carer

A Young Carer is defined in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 as:

"A young person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person" who is suffering from a physical or mental illness, physical or learning disability or addiction".

The Children and Families Act 2014 and Care Act 2014 strengthen the rights of young carers and give greater protection of their welfare. The Acts place a duty on local authorities to carry out an assessment to establish the support needs of a young carer, which considers the needs of the whole family. A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and care responsibility becomes excessive or inappropriate for the young person, risking negative

impact on his or her emotional, physical well-being, educational achievement and life chances.

The local council must involve the child with caring responsibilities, their parents and any other person the young carer requests in the assessment process. The assessment itself must look at whether or not the young carer wishes to continue caring, and whether it is appropriate for them to continue caring. When doing this they have to take into account any education, training, work or recreational activities the young carer is or wishes to participate in.

Young Carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.

These can include:

- Practical tasks – cooking, housework and shopping
- Physical care – lifting or helping someone use the stairs.
- Personal care – dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Emotional support – listening, calming, being present.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Medication management.
- Looking after younger siblings.
- Helping someone communicate

4. Why Young Carers May be Hidden

Many young carers remain unidentified due to:

- Lack of awareness of their own role
- Fear of stigma or being treated differently
- Worry about bullying or social isolation
- Concern that disclosure might lead to family separation
- Lack of opportunity or encouragement to share their story

5. The Impact of Caring Responsibilities

Young carers are at increased risk of:

- Physical health issues due to exhaustion, lifting, and lack of sleep
- Mental health difficulties including stress and anxiety

- Educational disruption due to absence, late submission of work, and reduced focus
- Social isolation and reduced opportunities for enrichment or extracurricular engagement

Research highlights:

- 27% of secondary-aged young carers experience educational difficulties (Dearden and Becker, 2004).
- They achieve significantly lower GCSE results than peers (The Children's Society, 2013).
- They are at higher risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Young carers may be identified through:

- Self-disclosure
- Staff observation
- Enrolment procedures
- Referrals from external agencies

During enrolment and induction, WFCG will:

- Ensure procedures are in place to identify students with caring responsibilities
- Explore individual support needs in partnership with the student and family
- Establish support plans
- Monitor progress, wellbeing, attendance, and engagement
- Use data effectively to track and evaluate support outcomes

All personal information is handled sensitively and confidentially in line with safeguarding and data protection laws.

7. Support for Young Carers

WFCG offers a wide range of support mechanisms, including:

- Designated staff to monitor Young Carers
- Flexible coursework deadlines and attendance where possible
- Access to counselling and mental health services
- Bursary or financial assistance (if they qualify)

- Access to quiet spaces for rest or study
- Pastoral drop-in sessions or peer support groups
- Signposting to external agencies (e.g., the student's Local Authority Young Carers Service, The Carers Trust, Barnardo's)
- Respecting rights by sharing information only on a need-to-know basis

WFCG views young carers as students first and foremost, but acknowledges their additional responsibilities and adapts support accordingly.

8. Staff Roles & Training

All staff have a responsibility to support young carers. Key staff include:

- Designated Young Carers Lead
- Safeguarding and Pastoral Team
- Teaching Staff

Regular training will be provided to raise awareness, promote understanding, and equip staff to respond sensitively and effectively.

9. Academic and Attendance Considerations

WFCG recognises that caring duties may affect attendance and performance. The College will:

- Record and monitor attendance with flexibility where appropriate
- Make reasonable adjustments to timetables or deadlines where possible and agreed with CLT
- Provide academic mentoring or catch-up support

10. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Young carers may face safeguarding risks due to the nature or extent of their responsibilities. Safeguarding remains paramount, and TWFCG will:

- Ensure staff understand safeguarding implications for young carers
- Share information appropriately and lawfully
- Work closely with local authorities and external agencies

11. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team in consultation with staff and young carers.

Monitoring will include:

- Attendance, attainment and wellbeing data
- Feedback from young carers and families
- Impact of interventions and support plans

Evaluation will inform continuous improvement and ensure that young carers are not disadvantaged in any way.

12. Local and National Support/ Resources

[About Us – Caring as a Young Carer](#)

[Being a young carer: your rights – Social care and support guide – NHS](#)

[Young Carers | Mental Health Advice | YoungMinds](#)

[Young carers: who are they and why do they need support? | Action For Children](#)

[Young carers | Barnardo's](#)

Surrey:

[Young carers \(under 18\)](#)

Slough:

[Slough Young Carers](#)

[Slough Information and Services Guide | Young carers \(young people – SEND\)](#)

Bucks:

[Young Carers](#)

RBWM:

[Windsor and Maidenhead Young Carers Service – Family Action](#)