

Possible Indicators of a Young Carer

Is the pupil:

- Often late or missing days or weeks off school
- Often tired, anxious or withdrawn
- Having problems socially or with making friends? Conversely do they get on well with adults and present as mature for their age?
- A victim of bullying – this is sometimes explicitly linked to a family member's disability, health or substance abuse problem
- Suffering from low moods or lacking motivation
- Finding it difficult to concentrate on their work – often worrying about the family member or what they have to do when they get home
- Having difficulty in joining in extracurricular activities or is unable to attend school trips due to family circumstances
- Isolated because of their family situation or because they lack social skills with their peers
- Not handing in homework/coursework on time, or completing it late and to a low standard
- Anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative
- Having emotional outbursts
- Having physical problems such as back pain (perhaps from heavy lifting?)
- Secretive about home life
- Showing signs of a chaotic home life i.e. unkempt clothing, poor diet or hygiene
- Suffering from low self-esteem or confidence

Young Carers Top Ten Tips for Schools

1. Recognise that our responsibility as carers can affect our education and schoolwork.
2. Find out about us, what we need and how we are not like other students.
3. Take time to find out about individual problems at home. Sometimes we're too embarrassed to tell you ourselves.
4. Don't automatically punish us if we're late. Sometimes we can't help being late because we're helping out at home.
5. Provide more support such as lunchtime drop-ins or homework clubs.
6. Be flexible – give us more time and help to do homework or coursework.
7. Include information about young carers and disability issues in PHSE lessons.
8. Let us phone parents if we need to find out if they are OK.
9. Make sure there is a clear and up to date community notice board which has support information for us and where else we can get help in the community.
10. Ensure teachers are offered training on young carers and disability issues both at university and on inset days.

Source: Young Carers Festival

Practical Steps to Support Young Carers in School

- Ensure the school is “Young Carer Friendly”:
 - Have a specific, prominent young carer notice board
 - Raise funds for young carer projects on Young Carer Action Day
 - Deal with bullying or isolation of young carers
 - Discuss caring positively in PHSE
 - Ensure pupils know the staff member who is Young Carer Champion
 - Ask about caring responsibilities on admission paperwork

- Allow young carers to use mobile phones to stay in touch with family if necessary

- ‘Time out’ cards so a young carer can communicate to the teacher that they need a private space when upset or stressed, or to explain late work etc

- Support parents of Young Carers to access and attend in school activities such as parents’ evenings and provide appropriate assistance – do not rely on the young carer to provide that assistance

- Be flexible in relation to punctuality, attendance and completion of work

- Punishing the young carer for non-completion of homework or lack of attendance will only aggravate their difficulties. However, a balance needs to be struck between this flexibility and ensuring the pupil receives a full education. Options to satisfy this include providing a quiet room to do homework or to catch up on any missed work.

- Consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities due to their caring role - for example; detention, sports, concerts

- Give young carers the chance to talk to someone they can trust and provide a private place where they can go to reduce anxiety

- Access to a quiet area to do homework during the school day