



Notre Dame High School

Sharing the love and goodness of God with everyone

Young Carer Policy 2026-2027

Policy Name	Young Carer Policy
Status	Live
Policy Author	Dr M. Williams
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Approved by	Local Academy Committee

Principles of the Young Carer Policy

We recognise that many students will have caring responsibilities at some point during their time at Notre Dame, and that these responsibilities can impact a student's performance in any area of the curriculum; a whole school commitment is therefore necessary.

Our Mission: 'Sharing the love and goodness of God with everyone'

The Hallmarks of Notre Dame:

1. We proclaim by our lives even more than by our words that God is good
2. We honour the dignity and sacredness of each person
3. We educate for and on behalf of justice and peace in the world
4. We commit ourselves to community service
5. We embrace the gift of diversity
6. We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve
7. We develop holistic learning communities which educate for life

Our mission statement and hallmarks remind us that all pupils should be equally valued and strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. At Notre Dame 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 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.

Notre Dame 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.

Definition of a Young Carer

Sheffield Young Carers' (SYC) definition of a young carer is somebody under the age of 25 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

Notre Dame's definition of a young carer is any student at our school that is either the main carer, shares a caring responsibility for, or whose day-to-day life is impacted by a person in their home. This person extends to a sibling, parent or a grandparent who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, misuses or is addicted to substances, or is unable to fully care for themselves.

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.

Equality and Discrimination

Notre Dame 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. Notre Dame 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 behaviour and relationship policy which can be viewed separately on the Notre Dame website.

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 maintain the dignity of young carers at all times.
- 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.
- To ensure that staff recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

Whole School Commitment to Young Carers

A multitude of strategies can be implemented at various levels within a school to ensure that young carers are 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 (currently Dr M. Williams)

The Young Carer Lead will:

- Understand the issues surrounding being a young carer.
- Lead on identifying and supporting young carers in school.
- Be an identified point of contact for other pupils, families, staff and external agencies.

In order to do this successfully, the Young Carer Lead will:

- Undertake training about young carers.
- Make referrals to Sheffield Young Carers / other external agencies where necessary.
- Stay up to date on young carers issues through Sheffield Young Carers' network briefings and newsletters.

Raise awareness among staff:

- Ensure all new pastoral and other relevant staff undertake training about young carers.
- Ensure that all school staff receive training on young carer awareness, identification and support through CPD.
- Include young carers as part of our school + cohort, available to all staff, so that staff are aware of who the young carers are and any reasonable adjustments, and so that young carers don't need to repeat themselves.

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.
- Raise awareness about young carers through assembly and lesson content, as well as disability, physical health, mental health, substance and alcohol misuse.

Raise awareness among families:

- Annual communication 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.
- 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.

Identification:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the potential signs that someone might be a young carer and have conversations with the young carer lead should staff believe a student is an unidentified young carer.
- Have a system for identifying and regularly reviewing who our young carers are and their circumstances.

Recording and Monitoring:

- Record all young carers on the school management information system (Bromcom) accessible to all members of staff, and transfer this data onto the annual school census return.
- Add young carers to the school + cohort and monitor the attendance and attainment of young carers and respond accordingly with appropriate intervention.
- After discussion and with parental consent, refer any young carers, who require additional support, to Sheffield Young Carers.

In-School Support for Young Carers:

- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- Ensure young carers who may not otherwise have the opportunity, are supported to access any extra-curricular opportunities for relaxation, respite, leisure, and social connection, including trips out of school.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school, including homework/coursework support, mental and physical health support where necessary.
- Make young carers clearly identifiable to class teachers.
- Offer a priority programme of careers advice and guidance and, where possible, work experience placements.
- To support young carers in getting to and from the school, and where necessary, provide advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.
- 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 poor attendance. These include, but are not limited to:
 - access to a telephone, during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home with pastoral support.
 - negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework.
 - access to homework clubs during the school day (where these are available).
 - identifying support for young carers and their family to enable them to attend school trips and educational activities.
 - arrangements for school work to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis).
 - access for parents with impaired mobility.
 - alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound.

Support from External Agencies:

- The Young Carer Lead will consult with relevant colleagues, and other relevant agencies, regarding their caring responsibilities, with the consent of the young carer.
- The school will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- Where appropriate, the school will refer a young carer to Sheffield Young Carers or other external agencies via a young carer's assessment (requested through Early Help).

Notre Dame High School is part of the St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust