



Young Carers Policy

Charity number: 297481



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**Avonwood Primary School**

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TO BE RATIFIED

YOUNG CARERS POLICY

PRINCIPLES OF THE YOUNG CARERS POLICY

Avonwood Primary School value the abilities and achievements of all children and are committed to providing the best possible environment for learning. We believe that all children should be equally valued and strive to provide an inclusive setting. We aim to create an environment whereby all children will flourish and feel safe. At Avonwood, we are committed to actively seeking to remove barriers to learning and participation.

Our young carers policy takes account of findings and recommendations given by Barnardo's 'Still Hidden, Still Ignored; Who Cares for Young Carers?' report published in 2017, which emphasises the role and accountability of school staff and procedures regarding provision for, and progress of, young carers. This guidance suggests that schools have a key part to play in the provision of holistic and effective support to young carers, and our Governing Body will ensure that we fulfil this responsibility.

This policy has been produced in collaboration with local experts, MYTIME Young Carers along with our school Young Carer Champions, Katie Sharpe and Jessica Short.

DEFINITION OF A YOUNG CARER

At Avonwood, our definition of a young carer is a child, under the age of 18, who is either the main carer, shares a caring responsibility for, or whose day-to-day life is impacted by someone in their home, which extends to a sibling or siblings, parent, both parents 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.

Our definition of a young carer extends to include any child who holds a significant caring responsibility for a sibling.

Aims for Young Carers at Avonwood Primary School

- To improve the progress and raise the standard of achievement for young carers
- To address any underlying inequalities between young carers and other children
- To raise awareness of young carers among staff and to ensure the identification of all young carers as early as possible
- To foster respect and understanding towards young carers

- To ensure that young carers have equal opportunities to be as involved as possible in school activities
- To ensure that young carers feel included and supported within their school community and that reasonable adjustments are made to promote this
- To ensure that young carers are involved in discussions and decisions affecting young carer provision
- To ensure that young carers have access to aspirational goals for the future
- To ensure that staff recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of carer

We recognise that many children will have caring responsibilities at some point during their lives, and that these responsibilities can impact a child's performance in any area of the curriculum. Therefore, a whole school commitment is necessary.

At Avonwood, we believe that high standards and expectations of all are vital to personal and academic progress for all children, including those with caring responsibilities. Therefore, additional provision for young carers is balanced with appropriate challenge to reach longer term outcomes. The importance of enhancing positive self-esteem is also recognised, which allows opportunities for increased engagement, social development and achievement.

We also understand the importance of keeping up to date with advice, publications and research regarding provision for young carers, and therefore this document is subject to review annually.

EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

At Avonwood, we aim to make reasonable steps to ensure that young carers are not placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared to other children, and to ensure equal educational and social opportunities for all.

We strive to maintain a climate of tolerance, understanding, respect and trust that allows all children 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 policies including our equality policy, PSHE, SMCH, safeguarding and anti-bullying policy which can be viewed separately on our school website.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOUNG CARERS

Systems and processes

- To include in our new arrivals pack, the letter to determine whether or not their child is a young carer.
- To create a young carer register accessible to all relevant members of the pastoral team
- To appoint a member of the Governing Body (Jane Wright) who will be responsible for ensuring that provision of a high standard is offered to young carers
- To appoint a young carer lead in the Senior Leadership Team (Jessica Short) who will be responsible for overseeing young carer provision
- To appoint a member of staff (Katie Sharpe) to lead on young carer provision who will be responsible for maintaining a young carer support group, and corresponding with external agencies such as Dorset and BCP council to stay up-to-date on a young carer's circumstances and needs.
- To monitor the progress of young carers and respond accordingly with appropriate intervention where necessary
- To monitor the attendance of young carers and respond accordingly with appropriate intervention where necessary
- The school to liaise with external agencies to provide additional support to young carers when needed

Engagement with the level-up programme

- To work with MYTIME Young Carers to ensure that all relevant school staff receive training around how to identify and support young carers
- To provide those young carers suffering with poor mental health and wellbeing with an exit card as and when appropriate
- To work with MYTIME Young Carers to raise awareness of young carers and develop a culture of respect for young carers, and also to encourage young carers to come forwards and make themselves known
- To work with MYTIME Young Carers to offer extra-curricular opportunities for relaxation, leisure and social connection for young carers

- To ensure that young carers have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion around the provision for young carers
- To correspond with MYTIME Young Carers to provide access to counselling for young carers if needed
- To host MYTIME young carer assemblies and PSHE lessons
- To maintain and regularly review our young carer's policy
- To create and organise a young carer group and display board visible to children and staff

In school support for young carers

- To ensure that young carers have access to the mental health support available where necessary (e.g. nurture group, ELSA and the young carers group)
- To support young carers in getting to and from school where necessary
- To build the career aspirations of young carers
- To be identified on registers
- To make reasonable adjustments and show flexibility on a case-by-case basis regarding issues such as lateness to school, late homework and poor attendance
- To offer extra-curricular opportunities for relaxation, leisure, and social connection for young carers
- The school will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers
- To ensure young carers can access all available support services in school
- The school will create young carer passports which all staff can access on Provision Maps, printed in their SENd file and supply folder
- To be identified on registers and be referred to the BCP carers list where necessary

GUIDANCE AND FURTHER READING

Barnardo's Still Hidden, Still Ignored; Who Cares for Young Carers?

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Still%20Hidden%20Still%20Ignored%20Barnardo%27s%20young%20carers%20report.pdf>