

Young Carers Policy

TYPE: Policy

PURPOSE: To inform staff and students of how Solihull College & University Centre ensure Young Carers at college are identified at an early stage and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

SCOPE: This policy applies to staff and students.

RESPONSIBILITY: The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy. The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

LEGAL CONTEXT: The Care Act (2014), The National Carers Strategy (1999), The Children and Families Act (2014)

PUBLICATION:

1. Introduction

Solihull College & University Centre is committed to supporting Young Carers to access education. This policy aims to ensure Young Carers at college are identified at an early stage and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

Most Young Carers are not known to be caring by college staff, so being a Young Carer can be a hidden cause of poor attendance, under achievement and bullying, with many Young Carers dropping out of education or achieving no qualification.

A Young Carer is a young person who is helping to look after someone who could not cope without their support. Most are caring for a parent, but some may be taking responsibility for a sibling, grandparent or other relative. In some instances a young carer may care for more than one family member.

The person they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse

2. Implications for Young Carers

A Young Carer will take on responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A Young Carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a Young Carer has to deal with can range from:

- Nursing care
- Personal intimate care
- Emotional care
- Domestic care
- Financial care
- Child care

Solihull College & University Centre acknowledges that there are likely to be Young Carers among its learners, and that being a Young Carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a Young Carer might experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home
- Concentration problems, anxiety or worry in college
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in college
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, as a result of assuming adult roles
- Behavioural problems (taking out their anger or frustration)
- Lack of time for extra-curricular activities
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Limited social skills
- Bullying
- Feeling that no one understands and that no support is available
- Low self esteem

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about the young person being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

3. Policy Statement/Scope

At Solihull College & University Centre, we believe that all young people have the right to an education, regardless of what is happening at home.

When a young person looks after someone who has a serious illness, disability, a mental health issue, or substance misuse problem and is caring for them, they may need extra support to help them get the most out of college. Our Young Carers Policy states how we will support any learner who has a caring commitment.

4. Policy Objectives

Solihull College & University Centre is committed to:

- Promoting the education, and welfare of 'Young Carers'
- Ensuring that 'Young Carers' have a voice in issues relating to their education
- Challenging negative stereotyping and promoting inclusion
- Targeting support appropriately
- Ensuring appropriate level of support for parents/carers

5. Policy Implementation

On disclosure, relevant staff will ensure that Student Services are aware in order that the learner receives the appropriate information, advice and guidance.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Governors

Governors are responsible for ensuring a Young Carer's policy is in place and procedures relating to that policy are adhered to.

A named Governor has a link/oversight responsibility for ensuring that the policies are reviewed and in place. This position is currently held by Barbara Hughes.

6.2. Senior Member of Staff Responsible for Young Carers

The Director of Student Services is responsible for the implementation and conduct of this policy and will:

- ensure Governors and the senior management team are aware of and support the policy and its effective implementation,
- act as a contact point for all relevant agencies, the Local Authority, Social Care, Health and other voluntary agencies involved in supporting the young person,
- promote understanding and development of policies and resources to support and include young carers,
- promote awareness amongst staff of the difficulties and educational disadvantages of young people who are carers,
- ensure the Welfare Team act as an advocate for Young Carers and refer for further support to the local Young Carers Service, who can also put families in touch with other support services,
- ensure that educational information required for the care planning process/court proceedings and Statutory Reviews is available as required and that if asked, the education perspective can be given at such meetings by the designated member of staff or an appropriate college representative,
- ensure the college through the designated member of staff, puts in place arrangements to promote effective communication between all those involved with Young Carers
- ensure through the designated member of staff that all staff have access to training and information to enable them to recognise the indications that a young person has a caring responsibility, as well as increasing their understanding of such responsibilities,
- invite the Carers Support Centre YAC support workers to attend events held at the college

- ensure that any who are Young Adult Carers in need are identified or feel able to ask for help, are listened to and offered direct services and protection, if needed.

6.3. Staff

There are designated members of staff for who is the named contact for Young Carers. This is the relevant Students Support Officer (Blossomfield/Woodlands) or Learning Coach (SUAC).

It is important that all staff who are in contact with a young person are aware that he/she is a Young Carer. However, it is important that information concerning the reasons for the young person being a carer is shared on a need to know basis and in accordance with the wishes of the young person and will:

recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of the young carer. Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- automatic referral to Student Support Officer or Learning Coach for assessment for financial support
- access to telephone during breaks and lunchtime, in order to phone home, Mobile Phone on silent during lessons
- negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed),
- arrangements for college 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
- ensure that attendance of Young Carers is regularly monitored. Any issues with regards to absence from college or particular lessons are addressed through working in partnership with Tutors and Student Support Officers.
- will give consideration to alternatives if a Young Carer is unable to attend college due to their caring commitments,
- ensure the college is accessible to parents who have mobility and communication difficulties and involves them in parents' evenings,
- will follow child protection procedures regarding any Young Carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

6.4. The Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. It should be explained that the college, the Social Worker, designated member of staff and the young person's parent/carer are working together to promote his/her education.

It is important to establish the young person's view of their circumstances and identify what they want others to know.

2 Related Policies and Procedures, Statements, Guidelines and Legislation

- 2.1 The Care Act 2014
- 2.2 The National Carers Strategy (1999)
- 2.3 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 28 and 29

- 2.4 The Children and Families Act 2014
- 2.5 DfE Advice and Guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance
- 2.6 Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
- 2.7 Single Equality Policy