

High Tunstall College of Science



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Young Carers Policy

Revised	-	March 2023
Stakeholder Consulted	-	Admissions and Safeguarding Committee
Review Date	-	March 2025
Responsibility for Review	-	Headteacher/Inclusivity Learning Coach

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Statement of intent

At High Tunstall College of Science, we aim to provide a community for students which keeps them safe, supports their creativity and enables them to meet their full potential.

The college is committed to supporting young carers' access to a full education. This policy will be implemented by all staff members in order to ensure young carers at our college are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

The aim of this policy is to raise awareness among college staff about the needs of young carers and to support them in establishing a whole-college approach to address the issues that may arise within a college setting.

1. **[Updated]** Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015
- DfE (2011) 'Improving support for young carers – family focused approaches'
- DfE (2016) 'The lives of young carers in England'
- **[Updated]** DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- **[Updated]** NHS (N.D.) 'Help for young carers'

2. **[New]** Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Making provision for inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and promote good communication with their families.
- Ensuring clear information is published regarding how young carers and their families can access support.
- Overseeing the implementation and review of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing a young carer lead: The Inclusivity Learning Coach).
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of and adhere to this policy.
- Ensuring that the school environment is inclusive and accommodating for young carers.
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with the Inclusivity Learning Coach.

The Inclusivity Learning Coach is responsible for:

- Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.
- Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need.
- Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services.
- Ensuring that any existing individual pupil plans recognise pupils' specific needs as a young carer
- Meeting regularly with young carers and liaising with teaching staff regarding their educational development.
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with the headteacher.

The DSL is responsible for

- Managing any safeguarding-related concerns in relation to young carers and ensuring they are supported.
- Being alert to the specific needs of young carers.

3. Definition

- 3.1. A young carer is someone who is under 18 years of age who provides regular and ongoing care to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, has a disability, or misuses substances.
- 3.2. A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development.
- 3.3. Young carers may be primary carers, such as caring for a parent, or a secondary carer, such as helping to care for a sibling.
- 3.4. A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child and risks jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and life chances.
- 3.5. A young carer may undertake some or all of the following:
 - Practical tasks
 - Physical care
 - Personal and intimate care
 - Emotional support
 - Household management
 - Looking after siblings
 - Interpretation
 - Administering medication

4. Issues faced by young carers

- 4.1. Caring responsibilities can impact on young people's education in a number of different ways including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Lateness
 - Tiredness
 - Non-attendance
 - Late or no submission of homework and assignments
 - Not participating in extra-curricular activities and college events
 - Experiencing bullying or isolation
 - Underachieving academically
 - Poor education or career choices
- 4.2. Young carers may exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from home in order to offset the fact that they have to take on adult responsibilities and behave in an adult fashion within the home.
- 4.3. Many young carers may be unable to develop friendships outside of college, due to reasons such as being unable to invite friends to their home, restricting the development of a student's social skills.
- 4.4. Some young carers carry out tasks for which they are physically ill equipped, which can impact on their overall health. Long-term caring responsibilities can also impact significantly on the mental health of young people, which like their physical health, can lead to poor attendance.
- 4.5. Some families will be dependent solely on state benefits, affecting their ability to afford proper college clothing and/or extra-curricular activities, such as college trips.
- 4.6. Families involving a young carer may be unwilling or unable to attend college functions, leading to them becoming more isolated from the college environment and unaware of issues that the young carer may be experiencing.

5. Identifying young carers

- 5.1. During the college enrolment process for new students, the college will:
 - Identify parents or family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health conditions.
 - Clarify whether the student has caring responsibilities.

- Identify whether the young carer has any additional needs that need to be supported, e.g. any SEND or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
 - Establish individual student plans to recognise the child's specific needs as a young carer.
- 5.2. Where appropriate, a young carer may be referred to the LA or other support agencies for a needs assessment.
- 5.3. The school will create a welcoming and friendly environment for all pupils, in which young carers feel comfortable to discuss their situation.
- 5.4. The college will continuously bear in mind that where a parent has a disability, mental health or substance abuse issue, the student might be the carer whilst showing none of the indicative signs of a young carer.

6. Young carers and the college

- 6.1. The Inclusivity Learning Coach, **[Updated]** Niamh Barker, and **[Updated]** Sarra Peek, Senior Teacher for Inclusivity, are the main points of contact for young carers in the college. These appointed people are responsible for:
- Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.
 - Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need.
 - Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services.
- 6.2. It is important that staff members can effectively identify young carers and that young carers feel that they can ask for help; therefore, raising awareness among staff and students about the issues relating to young carers and what support is available is vital.
- 6.3. In order to ensure that staff members understand the issues faced by young carers, training and ongoing professional development about the matter is provided for staff and the governing body.
- 6.4. Staff members will keep up-to-date with national and local developments, legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.
- 6.5. The college aims to create a welcoming and friendly environment for all students, in which young carers feel comfortable to discuss their situation.

- 6.6. The college will publish clear information regarding how students and their families can access support, ensuring that all students are aware of this information.
- 6.7. The governing body will make provision for inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and promote good communication with their families.
- 6.8. The curriculum, primarily PSHE lessons, will be used to promote a full understanding, acceptance of, and respect for, issues such as the work of young carers.
- 6.9. The college premises are accessible to people with disabilities and/or illnesses, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings and other college events.
- 6.10. Staff members will not discuss a young carer's personal situation and related arrangements in front of their peers.
- 6.11. The college will follow child protection procedures regarding any student who they believe to be at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

7. Providing support

- 7.1. The Inclusivity Learning Coach will meet with young carers on a regular basis and will liaise with teachers regarding difficulties, attendance and deadlines.
- 7.2. The Inclusivity Learning Coach will ensure that existing individual student plans recognise the student's specific needs as a young carer.
- 7.3. The college offers support to the student and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school, college or university where appropriate.
- 7.4. Additional support is offered in order to remove any communication barriers with parents, allowing them to be fully engaged with the education of their child.
- 7.5. Targeted early interventions are used in order to provide support to young carers, ensuring that they are able to reach their full potential.
- 7.6. The college uses and evaluates data effectively in order to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers, and reviews plans accordingly.

- 7.7. Young carers are provided with access to a telephone during breaks and lunches, allowing them to call home with the intention of reducing any worry they may have about a family member.
- 7.8. Where appropriate, homework and assignment deadlines for young carers will be negotiated.
- 7.9. Where appropriate, the college will schedule around young carers' duties.
- 7.10. Where parents are unable to physically attend parents' evening due to their disability, medical condition or substance abuse, home visits will be considered where necessary.
- 7.11. Young carers are provided with opportunities to speak to someone in private regarding their role as a young carer.
- 7.12. Staff members treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.
- 7.13. The college will continuously promote additional links with adult care agencies which may be able to support families and relieve care responsibilities.
- 7.14. The college will discuss and provide advice to parents regarding transport arrangements, where necessary, for those who find it difficult to escort their young children to college.

8. [New] Behaviour

The College will be aware that young carers may exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from home, including angry or violent behaviour and behaviour which is considered 'immature' or otherwise inappropriate for their age or stage of development.

Instances of poor behaviour by young carers will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy; however, the school will consider on a case-by-case basis where ongoing pastoral support is more appropriate than sanctions. The Inclusivity Learning Coach will work with young carers displaying persistent poor behaviour to discuss additional support that can be offered to help improve their conduct.

Where appropriate, the College will schedule any sanctions implemented for a young carer's behaviour around their duties, e.g. setting lunchtime detentions instead of after-school detentions.

The College understands that students who are young carers may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion, as the school may be the only escape from caring responsibilities for many young carers. The headteacher will only issue fixed-

term exclusions young carers as a last resort, and will avoid, as far as possible, permanent exclusions, in line with the Exclusion Policy.

9. **[New] Safeguarding**

Young carers may also be more vulnerable to safeguarding concerns than other students. Many young carers may experience a degree of neglect of their basic needs, including:

- Physical needs, e.g. food, shelter and clothing.
- Emotional needs, e.g. nurture and stimulation.
- Medical needs, e.g. not securing appropriate health care.

Young carers may also be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be inside the home, e.g. a dependant struggling with an addiction that leads to outbursts of aggression or violence; however, some students who are young carers may also be vulnerable to extra-familial harm as a result of the loneliness, lack of emotional support or lack of supervision that can sometimes come with being a young carer. These dangers include, though are by no means limited to:

- Being drawn into abusive or exploitative relationships.
- Being susceptible to radicalisation or grooming.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Substance misuse and addiction.
- Mental ill health.
- Physical ill health or impaired development.

Where a member of staff thinks a student may be caring for a family member without this being officially disclosed to the College, they will be expected to bring this to the attention of the Inclusivity Learning Coach, or the DSL where they suspect the child may be experiencing harm. The College, supported by the DSL, will identify young carers who may be in need of early help, and will follow the processes outlined within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. **Monitoring and review**

- 10.1. The Headteacher and the Inclusivity Learning Coach will continually monitor and review practice to ensure this policy is implemented correctly.
- 10.2. Staff will all be aware of other relevant college policies which will be implemented alongside this policy.
- 10.3. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing body on a biennial basis.
- 10.4. The next scheduled review date of this policy is March 2025.