

# **Bede Academy**



# **Young Carers Policy**

**Last review:** May 2021  
**Approval:** May 2021  
**Next review:** June 2022

## **Aims of the Policy**

The aims of this policy are to ensure that all students including young carers feel safe, secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to, and that their views and opinions are valued. Each student is an individual who whilst being unique, is also precious and has huge potential to achieve. The development of each student's character is central to attaining their personal best. The Academy is committed to meeting the needs of young carers so they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy the Academy and have equal access to their education as do their peers.

## **Who are Young Carers?**

### **Definition**

A young carer is a child or young person, under the age of 18 who is helping to look after someone at home. Helping out around the house is a normal part of growing up, but young carers regularly carry out significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which is inappropriate to their age. Most are caring for a parent, commonly in a single parent family, 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 may have a:

- Physical disability (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem
- Be in a violent/aggressive relationship
- A combination of the above

## **Caring Tasks**

A young carer will take on additional 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** - giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.

**Personal intimate care** - washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements

**Physical care** - lifting, helping up the stairs, physiotherapy

**Emotional care** - being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, calming, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent/sibling/relative through depression or other emotional difficulties

**Domestic care** - doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc.

**Financial care** - running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc.

**Child care** - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities.

**Interpretation** – due to hearing/speech impairment or English as an additional language.

## **Possible effect on education**

Bede Academy acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its students, 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 including suffering from anxiety or worry in the Academy
- Emotional wellbeing, tiredness in the Academy
- Lack of time for homework

- Poor attainment
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, because 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
- Difficulty engaging their parents in their education

### **Identifying Young Carers**

Bede Academy is committed to early identification of young carers. They are identified in a number of ways such as:

- Raising awareness within the Academy by providing training to all relevant Academy staff
- Develop a secure and safe environment where students have the confidence to self-identify that they are a young carer to an appropriate member of staff
- Identify an Academy lead to promote both awareness and understanding of young carers needs
- Develop policies and practice to prevent bullying, stigma and to raise the self-esteem of students who are young carers
- Create an environment whereby families have the confidence to inform the Academy that their child has caring responsibilities.
- Develop good partnership working with the local young carers' service and use awareness-raising by the local service as an opportunity to identify young carers.
- Use an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and/or other assessment tools when a student appears to be a young carer or is in need of extra support
- Transition meetings/interviews for Nursery, Reception, Year 7, Academy Leavers and new students entering mid-year

### **Support Offered to Young Carers by Bede Academy**

- Ensure that its premises are accessible and welcoming to parents with disabilities and / or illness, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings or other Academy events. Home visits are considered where appropriate.
- Offer additional support to remove any communication barriers with parents, so that parents are able to be fully engaged with the education of their child.
- The Academy will consider how best to support those parents who find it difficult to escort younger children to the Academy.
- The Academy uses and evaluates data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers
- The Academy will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers
- Bede Academy appreciates that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected and confidentiality will be upheld at all times.
- Bede Academy will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- Governors will be made aware annually of the numbers of young carers in the Academy as part of the head teachers report.
- Class/subject teachers will be made aware of any young carer's in their class and the rest of the staff will be aware on a need to know basis

- With parental permission the Academy will offer opportunities for support agencies such as Barnados to work with young carers in the Academy

Bede Academy recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers. Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
- Access to homework clubs
- Lunchtime detentions as well as after the Academy day
- Arrangements for Academy work to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis). Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited. (DfES 2006)
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound.

At Bede North, an individual student support plan will outline the above provision.

**Support agencies:**

Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project provides a service that supports young carers and their families locally. For further information, contact the project: 01670 739009