Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust

# BELLE VUE GIRLS' ACADEMY YOUNG CARERS POLICY

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## 1. Trust Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) is committed to supporting children who undertake additional caring responsibilities and we recognise that they may need extra support and reasonable adjustments to ensure they have equal access to their education.

As a Trust whose core values are Inclusion, Compassion, Aspiration, Resilience and Excellence, supporting the most vulnerable children is at the very heart of everything that we do.

As part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will seek to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and pupils. Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as our school, union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anybody.

For the purpose of this policy, the term Trust refers to BDAT. The term school and the term academy are interchangeable. The terms pupil and student are interchangeable.

## 2. Introduction

According to the Carers Trust, the 2021 census indicated that there are around 127000 young carers across England and Wales, but several recent studies have suggested that the actual number is more than 1 million (between 8 and 12% of all young people).

Statistically, without additional support and intervention, children who are young carers are at increased risk of experiencing:

- Significantly higher rates of absence (12.3%) than peers who are not recorded as young carers (7.3%)
- Significantly higher rates of persistent absenteeism (39%) than peers who are not recorded as young carers (21.1%)
- More than double the average rate of suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Lower attainment at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in comparison with their peers
- Significantly lower likelihood of getting a University degree (38% less likely than non-carer peers, increasing to 86% less likely for those caring over 35 hours per week)
- A lower level of involvement in extracurricular and social activities than their peers
- Increased chance of psychological distress, self-harm and suicide attempts

Pupil voice undertaken by the Carers Trust indicates that in the past year, as a result of their caring responsibilities, 73% of young carers could not perform their best at school either sometimes or frequently, 54% were sometimes or frequently late and 77% were sometimes or frequently unable to complete homework and struggled to prepare for exams.

For the first time, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 specifically states that all schools should be alert to the needs of young carers to ensure they receive the right support at the right time to enable them to thrive.

Our aim at Belle Vue Girls' Academy is to create a school environment where excellent teaching is underpinned by strong routines and relationships that enable all pupils to flourish, whilst also being

proactive to recognise and support the needs of pupils experiencing vulnerability, including those who undertake additional caring responsibilities.

**3. Scope and Aims of the Policy**

This policy is designed to promote the educational achievement, welfare and successful progression of Belle Vue Girls' Academy pupils who are young carers.

It complements the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and outlines our commitment to:

- Fully and holistically support children who are young carers to help them reach their educational potential.
- Identify a member of staff to be our Young Carers Champion in order to promote the educational outcomes of students who are young carers. At Belle Vue Girls' Academy, our Young Carers Champion is Mrs Shirley Oldale Assistant Headteacher for Attendance and Inclusion.
- Raise awareness so that all staff clearly understand their role and responsibilities in relation to pupils who are young carers and can identify them as early as possible.
- Recognise the importance of staff training on the barriers a child who is a young carer may face and how to support these children to overcome any such barriers in line with best practice approaches.
- Provide young carers and their families with information on any services and external agencies that could be a source of support.
- Address any underlying inequalities between young carers and their peers.
- Ensure that young carers feel included within our school community, experience a sense of belonging and can take a full part in school activities.

- Ensure that young carers have appropriate access to careers guidance and opportunities.
- Ensure that the voice of young carers is heard in discussions about provision that affects their education.

## 4. Definition

The Carers Trust defines a young carer as someone under the age of 18 who cares for a friend or family member who, due illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support.

Examples of what a young carer may do are:

- Practical tasks like cooking, housework or shopping
- Physical care such as helping someone in and out of bed
- Emotional support including talking to someone who is distressed
- Personal care such as helping someone dress or wash
- Managing the family budget
- Collecting prescriptions or giving medication
- Helping someone to communicate

Some people can undertake caring responsibilities from a very young age and not realise that they are carers, whereas others can become young carers overnight.

Young carers can do an amazing job of helping and supporting their family, but as a general principle, this should not come at the expense of them thriving at school or having the same opportunities as other children or young people.

Local authorities must organise a young carer's assessment if a child or family request it. The assessment should help to determine the kind of help that a young carer and their family needs. It should also consider the child's education, leisure opportunities and their views and wishes about their caring responsibilities.

Families should receive a written outcome of any assessment that states whether the person meets the criteria to be a young carer and, if so, the support that the local authority is able to provide either directly or through other services.

We recognise that, for various reasons, some pupils whose life experience meets the definition above may not identify as young carers and may not wish to undertake an assessment. This could be because they don't know that such terminology exists or they don't recognise themselves as a young carer, to them actively wishing not to be labelled as such due to stigma around the term or a desire to keep a family member's illness private.

On the school census, DFE Guidance instructs schools to record whether each of its pupils are either:

- Not declared as a young carer
- Identified as a young carer by their parent or guardian
- Identified as a young carer by school, another service or themselves

At Belle Vue Girls' Academy we will always respect the wishes of our pupils and their families as to how they wish to be supported by school, whilst noting that we are legally obliged to complete the school census accurately.

We will not make assumptions or judgements about family members with disabilities, mental or physical health conditions, or addictions. We will treat all young carers in a sensitive, child-centred and respectful way, upholding confidentiality and only sharing information with those where we are legally obliged or have consent to do so.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 The Local Governing Body will:

- Encourage their school to designate a member of staff as the Young Carers Champion to oversee the education and support for children who are young carers.
- Ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to promote the educational outcomes and holistic development of children who are young carers.
- Monitor the educational experience and outcomes of children who are young carers, providing challenge and support to the Headteacher as required.

### 5.2 The Headteacher will:

- Work closely with the Local Governing Body, their senior leadership team and the Young Carers Champion to ensure that strategic development and whole school improvement mechanisms lead to the best educational outcomes for children who are young carers.
- Support the Young Carers Champion to raise awareness of young carers and their rights.
- Take overall responsibility for the educational experience of children who are young carers.

### 5.3 The Young Carers Champion will:

- Raise awareness of young carers with all stakeholders through staff training, the Personal Development curriculum, assemblies, briefings and wider communications to parents.
- Promote the educational outcomes of children who are young carers, recognising that they may require support and guidance both academically and pastorally.
- Coordinate input from key staff members such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Behaviour Lead and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator to develop plans of support for children with overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Work other external agencies as required to ensure that young carers are supported appropriately and the school adopts best practice approaches.
- Ensure that school staff understand the impact life experiences of children who are young carers can have on the way in which they learn and develop, including strategies that can overcome any difficulties.
- Promote a culture in which children who are young carers can discuss their progress, be involved in their own target-setting, have their voice heard, and be supported to take responsibility for their own education.
- Promote a culture in which children who are young carers are encouraged to participate in enrichment, extra-curricular and student leadership opportunities.
- Liaise with teaching staff to ensure that children who are young carers are prioritised for interventions and targeted support as required.
- Ensure that there are positive and productive relationships with the families of pupils who are young carers, so that school and home can work in partnership to foster their academic and personal development.

- Ensure that any transitions of children who are young carers (e.g. moving to Secondary School or Further Education) are supported by robust plans to minimise any anxiety that could arise.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns relating to young carers are responded to quickly and effectively.

**5.4 All Staff will:**

- Ensure that all children who are young carers reach their educational potential by having equally high aspirations and expectations of them as their peers, but also providing any scaffolding or support required to help achieve and thrive.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social impact of caring responsibilities.
- Prioritise students who are young carers when planning support and intervention in the classroom, but also with other opportunities that arise in school such as student leadership, field trips and extra-curricular activities.
- Understand the importance of seeing children who are young carers as individuals rather than a homogenous group, not publicly treat them different from their peers, and show sensitivity to their background.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns relating to young carers are responded to quickly and effectively.

## 6. Signs and Indicators

Many young carers and their families will be forthcoming about their circumstances and actively seek to work in partnership with school to access additional support or reasonable adjustments.

Equally, we recognise that some young carers and their families may be less forthcoming, for a variety of reasons. This will not preclude us from monitoring and supporting pupils who may be

undertaking caring responsibilities and providing additional support or reasonable adjustments for them.

Some of the possible signs and indicators that a child may be undertaking caring responsibilities are:

- Lateness to school or frequent absences
- Presenting as tired, anxious or withdrawn
- Social issues, lack of friendships or isolation
- Presenting as overly mature for their age
- Difficulties in concentrating on their schoolwork
- Emotional dysregulation
- Low self-esteem or confidence
- Secretive about home life
- Difficulty attending extra-curricular activities
- Handing in homework late or completing it to a lower standard than is typical for them
- Signs of a chaotic home life such as unkempt clothing, poor diet or hygiene

## 7. Support for Young Carers at Belle Vue Girls' Academy

We recognise that each young person is unique, with different lived experiences, different talents, and different hopes and dreams. This means that each young carer may require different types of support to help them achieve and thrive at school.

Our Young Carers Champion will work with the pupil, their family and other staff who are responsible for their education (e.g. their class teacher/Form Tutor/the SENDCO/the DSL) to put an individual plan of support in place. This will be shared with all staff who work with the pupil.

The support that is put in place will vary on a case-by-case basis, but some of the measures that may be considered include:

- Reasonable adjustments to normal school policies regarding issues such as punctuality, attendance and homework in recognition that caring responsibilities may impact in these areas.
- Access to the mental health support available in school from the Pastoral Team, EMOJI Intervention, Mind Space, Place2Talk, Youth in Mind and NHS Mental Health Practitioner.
- Access to additional extra-curricular opportunities focusing on relaxation, leisure and social connection.
- Assistance at times with transport to and from school where caring responsibilities impact on normal travel arrangements.
- Access to a designated key member of staff who can provide one-to-one pastoral and emotional wellbeing support.
- Queue jump privileges at lunchtime to maximise social time.
- Prioritisation for careers advice and guidance on a one-to-one basis.
- A timeout pass with access to a designated quiet space if needed authorised by Mrs Oldale.
- Access to a school phone supported by their Pastoral Manager at breaks and lunchtimes so they can contact home and check on the person they care for.
- Adaptations to the usual communication policy to ensure that parents are provided with information about their child's education in a way that is accessible to them.
- Signposting young carers to support groups so that children have an opportunity to discuss their experiences with others in similar circumstances.
- Liaison with, or signposting to, external agencies (see Working in Partnership section below) who can provide further support outside of school.

## 8. Working in Partnership

The support that we provide to our young carers to help dismantle barriers should not be viewed in isolation. We are wholly committed to working families, the local authority and any other relevant agencies to ensure a holistic and collaborative approach is taken to promote the achievement and development of children who are young carers.

We value the views of families, and we firmly believe that developing strong partnerships is vital to enable all children to reach their full potential.

Carers' Resource is an organisation that supports young carers in the Bradford district. They provide youth clubs, trips and activities, and one to one support, as well as a range of resources for parents and professionals. Referrals can be made either by parents or staff in school.

The following organisations are also sources of support for young carers, their families, and professionals working with young carers:

- Being a young carer: your rights - Social care and support guide - NHS
- Advice and support for young carers | The Children's Society
- UK | Carers UK

- Welcome to Youth Access | Youth Access
- About Us - Caring as a Young Carer
- Young Carers in Schools

If staff become concerned that a child's caring responsibilities are having a significant impact on their development, mental health or wellbeing, school will seek advice from Children's Social Care. In most cases, this will be done with the family's agreement to see what support can be put in place. This may lead to a referral to Children's Social Care.

Families should also be aware that they can request a young carer's needs assessment from the Local Authority if their child is a young carer.

## 9. Links with Other Policies and Guidance

This Young Carers Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and is underpinned by the below statutory guidance:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

## 10. Policy Review and Monitoring

This Young Carers Policy will be reviewed on a triennial basis or sooner if there are updates to guidance or legislation. We will monitor the application of this policy to ensure it is working effectively to achieve its core purpose of promoting the educational achievement, welfare and progression of all children who are young carers.

## Appendix One: Summary of Policy Changes

The below table provides a summary of changes to this policy over time:

| **September 2026** | |
|---|---|
| **Section** | **Summary of Change** |
| 3 | Added in reference that, for the first time, KCSIE 2026 has a specific section detailing that schools are required to be alert to the needs of young carers and provide appropriate support. |
| 8 | Changed the language in this section relating to making referrals to Children's Social Care to make it more family friendly whilst still retaining the message that schools will make such referrals if required. |