



## Hanwell Fields Community School

### Young Carers Guidance

Hanwell Fields Community School is committed to enabling young carers to access education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at this school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education and other services to which they are entitled, in partnership with parents.

#### Definition

Young carers are children and young people who provide care for another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

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

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

#### 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.
- Emotional care: being complaint, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up.
- In cases where a young carer is supporting an adult with drug/alcohol misuse problem, they will often take a leading role in trying to keep that person safe.

- Domestic care: doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc
- Financial care: running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc
- Childcare: taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities
- Communication: communicating on behalf of the adult or family with difficulties including interpreting for agencies/ services

### **Possible effect on education**

Hanwell Fields acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its pupils and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's access to education and attainment.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might:

- Have erratic or poor school attendance
- Arrive late to school
- Decline in academic achievement
- Not complete homework
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips
- Lack motivation
- Have back problems, aches, pains / patterns of being generally unwell
- Appear withdrawn, isolated from peers, have difficulties socialising
- Show anxiety, depression, anger, self-harming behaviour
- Have poor concentration (due to worrying about the person who is cared for)
- Have poor home / school relationship
- Have parents who do not attend parents evening or lack of overall contact with school
- Have false signs of maturity, assuming an adult role in social situations or have difficulty enjoying childhood activities

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question).

### **Support Offered**

Hanwell Fields acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered through the life of a school.

Through this guidance, school is giving the message that a young carer's education and school experience is important.

The designated school lead for young carers is Carly Mitchell, who will liaise with relevant colleagues, young carers services and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer and their parent/ legal guardian.

### **Hanwell Fields School**

- Will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- 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.
- Will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way.
- Will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and other appropriate services/ agencies if necessary.
- Will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- Will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.

Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Negotiable deadlines for homework / coursework (when needed)
- Access to homework clubs (where available)
- Arrangements for school work to be sent home (where there is a genuine crisis)
- Access for parents with impaired mobility
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
- Advice for parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school
- Access to Young Carers Support and additional enrichment support activities