

YOUNG CARERS POLICY

BRAMHALL HIGH SCHOOL

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REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026
APPROVED DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026
NEXT REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2027

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bramhall High School recognises its responsibilities towards young carers under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Care Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The school recognises that young carers are a potentially vulnerable group and may require additional support to ensure they can access education, achieve positive outcomes and enjoy opportunities available to their peers.

We are 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, extra-curricular and other services to which they are entitled.

2. DEFINITION

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who helps to care, unpaid, for a family member or friend who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, substance misuse issue or additional support need.

The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and, 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 or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health difficulties
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse/addiction

The school recognises that some young carers may not identify themselves as carers and may be hidden from services. Staff will be alert to indicators that a pupil may have caring responsibilities and will respond sensitively.

3. 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 compliant, 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 & Interpreting - communicating on behalf of the adult or family with agencies/services and interpreting for a language or sensory impairment.

4. POSSIBLE IMPACT ON EDUCATION

We recognise that young carers may also experience additional challenges relating to attendance, punctuality, emotional wellbeing, mental health, participation in enrichment activities, relationships with peers and post-16 progression. The school recognises that attendance difficulties may sometimes arise as a consequence of caring responsibilities. Attendance concerns will be explored sensitively and considered alongside the wider needs of the child and family.

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

- Have erratic or poor school attendance.
- Arrive late at school.
- Decline in academic achievement.
- Not complete homework.
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips.

- Lack motivation.
- Have back problems, aches and 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). School may need to make alternative arrangements for communication about attainment.

5. SUPPORT OFFERED

Bramhall High School acknowledges young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered in school. The school will work with Stockport Family Help services, Signpost for Carers and other relevant agencies where additional support may be beneficial for the young person and their family. We will also support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young carers by facilitating access to pastoral support, wellbeing services and external agencies where appropriate.

Our designated school lead for young carers is Ms Janet Kennedy. All pupils are made aware of the designated link.

To ensure Young Carers are fully supported, Bramhall High School will:

- Share appropriate information with staff in order that there is an awareness of the young carer's situation.

- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- Appreciate that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, respecting privacy and confidentiality while recognising that safeguarding concerns must always be shared with appropriate professionals.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and other appropriate services/agencies.
- Follow Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures where concerns arise regarding a child's welfare, including situations where caring responsibilities may be excessive, inappropriate or place the child at risk of harm.
- 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.

The views, wishes and feelings of the young carer will be central to decisions regarding support and adjustments.

We recognise 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 break/lunchtime to phone home.
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed).
- Access to homework clubs.
- Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible).
- Any support relating to attendance or absence will be considered on an individual basis and in accordance with current attendance legislation, guidance and school procedures.
- Access for parents with impaired mobility.
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound.

- Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.
- Support with transition planning and progression to post-16 education, employment or training where caring responsibilities may impact future choices.

All staff receive safeguarding training that includes awareness of the needs of vulnerable pupils. Staff will be encouraged to identify and refer potential young carers to the designated Young Carers Lead.

USEFUL LINKS:

- Signpost for Carers
- Stockport Family Help Services
- Stockport Local Offer
- NHS Young Carers Resources

Signpost Young Carers - 0161 947 4690