



Young Carers Policy

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees with reference to the academy's Equality Policy. The aims of the Equality Policy are to ensure that Plume Academy meets the needs of all, taking account of gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this academy we meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all and that all students are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

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1. Purpose

Plume Academy is committed to supporting Young Carers in order to access all potential opportunities in education as reflected in the National Inclusion strategies. The policy aims to ensure that Young Carers within the academy given the appropriate support to enable them to access the education to which they are entitled.

2. Aims of the Young Carer Policy:

- To identify all young carers in the academy.
- To support young carers in making progress and achieving to the best of their ability.
- To monitor the effectiveness of intervention strategies put in place to support young carers in maximising progress, attainment and attendance.
- To create links and work with outside supporting agencies to remove barriers to learning and attainment for students who are young carers.
- To ensure awareness is raised about young carers amongst staff, students and the whole academy community.
- To track the attendance, progress and achievement of young carers (micro-population) so that effective intervention is put in place.

3. Definition

A **Young Carer** is someone under 18 years of age who is helping to look after someone at home. They may be looking after a parent, grandparent, sibling or other relative and the person they look after may have one or more of the following:

- A physical or mental disability (including sensory disability).
- A learning disability.
- Mental health issues.
- Chronic or terminal illness.
- A substance misuse problem.

A young carer typically takes on further responsibilities, that are extra to those appropriate for their age and ability.

4. A Young Carer's Responsibilities may include:

Physical help such as washing, toileting, dressing, feeding, help with mobility, administering medication and ensuring safety

- Domestic help such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, paying bills and childcare.
- Emotional support.
- Supporting other members of their family.

We acknowledge that there will be young carers amongst our student population; their welfare is of paramount importance and they must be cared for and supported in the academy community.

It is important to remember that there are certain responsibilities that may be deemed as inappropriate for young carers to undertake.

These include:

- Personal care such as bathing and toileting.
- Strenuous physical activity such as lifting.
- Administering medication.
- Maintaining the family budget.
- Emotional support to the adult.

5. Educational Effects

Due to the responsibilities a young carer can be required to fulfil at home, they may experience issues as a student related to:

- Punctuality and absence.
- Difficulties with concentration, anxiety or worry.
- Tiredness.
- A lack of time or environment for homework and revision.
- Poor attainment and progress.
- Bullying.
- Poor behaviour.
- A lack of time for extra-curricular activities.
- A lack of financial support for academy trips and other events.
- Feeling alone, unwanted or cared for.

In addition, it may be difficult to engage parents/carers of young carers due to the sensitive issues related to their situation or a fear of their children being taken into care.

6. Support Offered by Plume Academy

Whilst we appreciate that young carers may not wish to discuss their situation at home, our strategies for inclusion and safeguarding foster an environment of openness and a willingness to share information and access support. We aspire to treat young carers with compassion in acknowledging the important role they fulfil at home and caring for them in child-centered manner in the school environment.

Support delivered in a dignified manner is offered in the following ways:

- Provide someone to talk to.
- Assist and develop emergency crisis plans.
- Mental health support.
- Access to homework clubs and extra-curricular activities.
- Negotiable start/finish times to the academy day.
- Lunchtime provision for catch up sessions if required.
- Regular access to a telephone if contact with home is required during the school day.
- Regular meetings to review academic progress and home situation with pastoral staff.

- Track attainment, effort, behaviour, homework and attendance of young carers, implement suitable interventions and operate a reward system.
- Links established and fostered with local community organisations who actively support young carers.
- The academy achieved the Silver Award for supporting young carers through the 'Carers Trust' in 2023. In 2024/25, the Academy is working towards achieving the new Young Carers in Schools Award.
- Actively seek to apply for awards recognising the role and qualities of individual young carers.
- Provide CPD and information to staff in relation to the role of a young carer and who they are, so that the appropriate support can be provided.
- Provide opportunities for young carers who may not have the same opportunities as others outside the academy; to include reward/leisure activities and visits to support aspiration and academic excellence.
- Develop a Young Carer Forum who will help to drive activities and initiatives to support young carers in the academy.
- Educate all students of the academy about young carers and their responsibilities and experiences.
- Support national media campaigns in relation to young carers.
- Share good practice with other academies.
- Staff training within the academy.
- Actively liaise with our feeder schools to identify young carers who transition into the academy.

At all times the needs of the young carer is at the forefront of the academy's support strategies and, in consultation with all appropriate professionals, action planning will be regular and effective.

The Safeguarding Network suggests that 1 in 5 secondary school students are providing some care in the home, with a third of these providing high levels of care. By increasing awareness and effectively identifying young carers, we can:

- Reduce stigma and ensure that everyone promotes a culture of openness around those who care for others.
- Ensure that staff are aware that every child is a potential young carer and have this in mind when talking with pupils.
- Reduce the number of times that a child has to tell their story.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the need to privacy when around the young person's peers.

Providing this support will help to reduce potential issues that the young carer may have, for example:

- **Being bullied** – young carers are more likely to be bullied because of their caring role, reasons include presenting as withdrawn, not having a social life, general appearance, jokes being made about the person they care for.
- **Not getting homework done because of caring responsibilities** – young carers may not be able to do homework after school because of their caring role. The academy can support this being completed within the academy day.
- **Deadlines for multiple pieces of work being at the same time** – where young carers are able to do homework their time is often limited.

- **Worry because they cannot use their phone to check on the person they are caring for** – many schools have restrictions on phone use, however, for young carers this can present problems. Bespoke plans can be design to assist with this.
- **Missing out on school trips or extra-curricular activities due to having to be at home to care** – often these clash with the requirements of caring. With the support of other agencies, plans could be made to allow the young person to access these activities.

<https://safeguarding.network/content/safeguarding-resources/young-carers/> (July 2022)

7. Responsibilities of Stakeholders

Board of Trustees (BoT)

- The Board of Trustees (BoT) will ensure implementation of this policy from date of its ratification.
- The BoT will delegate to the pastoral team to monitor particular performance of students considered to be young carers and challenge underperformance of any students within this micro-population.
- The pastoral team will feed back progress regarding impact of this policy to the BoT as appropriate.
- Ensure that the Senior Leadership Team respond appropriately to national/local advice/ guidance issued in relation to maximising opportunity and performance of students considered to be young carers.
- Plume Academy's trustee link is Kay Mehrtens.

Senior Leadership Team

- Plan to ensure that there are opportunities for staff development and sharing good practice in relation to performance and opportunities provided for students considered to be young carers.
- Support any appropriate opportunities for students considered to be young carers outside of the curriculum through a programme of enrichment or targeted activity.
- Ensure analysis of data in all areas of this micro-population (including but not exclusive to behaviour, attendance, progress, attainment) in order to celebrate success or put intervention in place and monitor the impact of this.
- The Senior and Operational Lead for Young Carers in the academy is Joanna Frost j.frost@plume.essex.sch.uk.

Safeguarding in the Academy

- Ensure that staff are vigilant and aware of the students that are young carers.
- Ensure that the students that are young carers are aware of the support and the personnel around them, if they require additional input or support.
- The DSL, ADSL and DDSL's are to work to ensure that the student is supported on a regular basis however the young carer/student identifies they require support and work with external agencies to ensure that the relevant support is in place both inside and outside the academy where we can facilitate and support the student.

Students and Parents

- Young Carers themselves should be empowered to make every effort to engage with opportunities available to them both inside and outside the curriculum and parents should encourage students to embrace this in any way they can.
- Parents/carers and students (young carers) are encouraged to share information with the academy's pastoral teams which will enable the team to meet their needs more effectively.

8. Quality Assurance

Policy Planning and Development

- Views of stakeholders and changes in any guidance and legislation will be taken into consideration in the implementation of this policy.
- There will be a systematic review of the impact of policies within an appropriate time scale.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Quality assurance procedures for monitoring will be in keeping with agreed systems and evidence of implementation will be found in academy records and data collection systems.
- Data collected and analysis (including attendance/progress/attainment/behaviour) will be used to inform further academy planning, action, target setting and decision making in relation to maximising opportunity and potential for students considered to be young carers.
- This process of developing provision for this micro-population will be continuously developed and monitored by the academy's senior leadership team.

9. Useful Links

<https://www.plume.essex.sch.uk/young-carers>

The external agency links are:

Action for Family Carers

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Supporting Young Carers in Schools

W: <https://www.caringtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Final-editable-version-Feb-2017-CTC-Branded.pdf>