

# YOUNG CARERS POLICY

Notre Dame Catholic College is committed to supporting young carers to access education. This policy aims to ensure young carers are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

A young carer is a child or young person who is helping to look after someone at home. 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 will have one or more of:

- Physical disability (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

Notre Dame Catholic College 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 education.

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

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home
- concentration problems, anxiety or worry in school
- emotional distress
- tiredness in school
- 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

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

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Notre Dame Catholic College acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, the school is giving the message that young carers' education is important.

The designated link teacher for young carers is the Headteacher, who will liaise with relevant colleagues, young carers and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated link.

- we will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers
- we 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
- we will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality
- we will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school
- we will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring
- we 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.

The school 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 (where these are available)
- lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible)
- arrangements for school work to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis). Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited. (DfES 2006)
- 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.

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