

Young Carers – Information for Governors

Young carers are children and young people under 18 years old who provide regular and on-going care to another person who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances. This is a legal definition.

Young carers provide a wide range of care including:

- Practical care (e.g. washing, cooking, cleaning for the whole family)
- Personal care (e.g. bathing, dressing)
- Emotional support (e.g. listening, being present)
- Childcare (e.g. caring for younger siblings, taking younger siblings to school)
- Communication (e.g. translating at medical appointments, paying bills/ dealing with finances)

The impacts on young carers can be significant and have long-term effects:

- 27% of young carers miss school or experience educational difficulties.
- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE (the equivalent of nine grades lower than their peers), and are less likely to go on to higher education.
- 38% of young carers report having mental health problems.

Young carers say they have problems completing homework, feel isolated from other children their age because they feel others don't understand their lives, have a lack of time for play, sport or leisure activities, struggle with guilt and resentment when there is conflict between their needs and the needs of the person they are caring for.

Many young carers don't realise that they are carers and this is therefore a hidden problem. It is estimated that as many as 1 in 12 school pupils are young carers, so it is likely that we have a significant number of students at CCHS who have a caring role that we are unaware of.

We want to ensure that our young carers are supported in the best way possible and our first steps will be to raise awareness of young carers with staff, students and parents so that more young carers can be identified and directed towards appropriate support where necessary. Much of this support is already available in school and further, personalised support can be accessed by referring students in need to the Essex Young Carers Service (part of Essex County Council).

The Young Carers in Schools Award programme is designed to support schools in identifying and support young carers, and we are currently working towards the Bronze Award. Emma Hiett (Year 12 Leader) is leading this work and acting as the Operational Lead for Young Carers, and is supervised in this project by Fiona Harrison, who is designated as the SLT Lead for Young Carers.

In summary, it is important that we recognise that there are young carers in our school and that we consider their needs so that they are able to attend and enjoy school in the same way as other students, and achieve their potential. We look forward to updating you on our progress with this important work.

Emma Hiett