



# SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS IN SCHOOLS

Good Practice Guidelines



## Introduction

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A young carer is someone under the age of 18 (or who is 18 but still attending school) who provides, or intends to provide care to another person. Caring responsibilities are both practical and emotional in nature and will vary by individual. Young carers are recognised in The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 with the expectation that education authorities provide additional support to young carers who may be experiencing barriers to learning. The following good practice guidelines have been co-developed with young carers, education staff, young carers services from across Edinburgh, and the City of Edinburgh Council (Psychological Services and the Additional Support for Learning Service). Quotes from Edinburgh based young carers have been included throughout, to highlight their current experiences and show the need for this document.

## Why are these Guidelines needed?

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Schools requested more guidance around how best to support young carers in their establishments. This document gives a structure with consistent expectations for all schools to assist in identifying young carers and considering the subsequent support they provide. It is clear from talking to young carers that there is a difference in their understanding of who supports young carers in their Primary or Secondary school. It is also clear that there are significant issues around trust. These were mostly stemming from a lack of communication around what happens to their information and why some information is requested. These guidelines both support and challenge schools to continue their excellent work as Right's Respecting Schools and develop their work with young carers to ensure their expectations are realistic, rights-focused, and transparent.

## Information Sharing and Children's Rights

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- Have a clear communication policy, which includes information about who the Young Carer Coordinator is for staff, pupils and families. Explain the purpose of the Young Carer Coordinator and how information will be shared within the school
- Respect the child's right to privacy and ensure consent to share information from the young carer. Being identified as a young carer is not automatically a safeguarding concern but follow your school's safeguarding policy on an individual basis
- Communicate and work with external support services including young carers services, social workers, to provide timely and appropriate support to young carers
- Work collaboratively between primary and secondary school to support transition
- Each young carer to be offered a Young Carer's Statement including details of their circumstances and any support required



**'I told someone about what happens at home, and they told everyone'**

**'I've not talked to anyone in my school about being a young carer'**

**'I don't think they would do anything anyway, they just talk and nothing happens'**

- Young carers should be able to choose which member of staff they feel most comfortable speaking to for advice and support and they should be clearly told what will happen to the information they share
- Each school to appoint a Young Carers' Coordinator who will be responsible for overseeing supports available to young carers and disseminating relevant information to staff and pupils. The Coordinator should be clearly named on a Young Carer's Notice Board, and their contact details accessible to all children and families

I feel like I'd do better with more support



## Identification

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- Each school to record young carer status in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations and have a tracking system in place
- Young carers to be issued with a card (optional) that identifies them as young carers and can be produced to cover lateness, mobile phone being on, need to be excused from class
- Where necessary and in line with the principles of Getting It Right For every Child, young carers will have an individual child/young person's plan which recognises their specific needs as a young carer



'I don't want to miss break or lunch to talk to my young carer worker'

## Raising awareness

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- Ensure all children and staff are aware who the school's Young Carer Coordinator is. Ideally through a visual young carer information board in a public parts of the school and locations which would not single out a young person from looking at the information.
- Schools will make sure all staff have regular access to Continuous Professional Development opportunities that develop their understanding of the needs of young carers, and how to identify and support them. This should be updated on a regular basis and be available to all new members of staff. (this should include teaching, support, admin and domestic staff)
- Awareness raising presentations, highlighting the role of young carers and the support available to them, should be included in the schedule of assemblies across all year groups
- Awareness of young carers and associated needs should be included in the schedule of PSE lessons and children should be made aware of what happens after an identification is made
- The school should clearly communicate information to parents/carers about young carer identification and supports available including how the family can self-refer to gain support for child
- Information leaflets and posters should be available in school and on the school website
- Each school should have a young carers policy



## Academic support

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- Staff should exercise flexibility in terms of coursework and home learning deadlines for young carers
- Each school to offer home learning clubs or academic learning groups for additional support - particularly in the lead up to exams and deadlines
- Each school to provide additional support for young carers in accessing and applying for further education opportunities
- Consider a blended learning approach to support children and young people with caring responsibilities i.e. providing support for young carers to learn from home if appropriate
- Plan an enhanced transition between primary and secondary for young carers. Work collaboratively with partner services to support transition. Does the high school have a Young Carer Coordinator? Work with young person to agree what information and level of detail they consent to share. Review Young Carer's Statements to support transition
- Secondary pupils approaching transition should be aware that they can access widening and participation programmes to support progress to further and high education



**'Schools should talk to each other' more'**

**'It would be good if school could be flexible about the time I arrive on a morning'**

## Health and wellbeing support

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- Young Carers Coordinator to identify and signpost appropriate organisations, training and resources to young carers and their parent/carer in order to support respite, skill development and hobbies/interests
- Schools to provide opportunities for young carers to contact home when appropriate
- Each school to value and celebrate academic and extracurricular achievements of young carers
- Young carers to be included in the school community and decision making in relation to young carers
- Each school to provide opportunities for young carers to access peer support

Look into We Care for more information and link in with your local young carer service for further information, guidance and support

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