



Smithdon High School

Young Carers Policy

Approved by: Governing Body

Date: March 2026

Last reviewed on: March 2026

Next review due by: March 2027

1. Introduction

Smithdon High school is committed to supporting young carers to access education.

This policy aims to ensure young carers at Smithdon High School are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

As a school we working towards completing the Young Carers in School Award and hope for this to be awarded by the end of the 2025-2026 academic year. This will recognise the schools support for its students who are young carers.

2. Definition

A young carer is a child or young person who is helping to look after someone at home. Many are caring for a parent at home, 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

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.

Domestic care - doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc.

Financial care - running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc.

Child care - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities.

4. Possible Effect on Education

Smithdon High School 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 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.

5. **Support Offered**

Smithdon High School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, we want to give the message that young carers' education is important.

The Young Carer Lead (Mr Ward) will be the main contact for the Young Carers in the school. The Young Carer Lead will liaise with relevant colleagues and agencies with the consent of the Young Carer and parent where necessary.

Smithdon High School will

- 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.
- A young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive manner.
- Ensure young carers can access all available support services in school.
- Follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- 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.
- Provide staff access to information and training to enable them to recognise indications that a child has a caring responsibility.
- Identify Young Carers as a vulnerable group.

In addition, Smithdon High School will 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 breaks and lunchtime in the Pastoral Offices, to phone home when needed. The Young Carer must seek a member of the Pastoral Team before use.
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed).
- Access to homework clubs (where these are available).
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis).
- 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.

6. **Succession Planning**

If the Young Carer Lead leaves post a new lead will be appointed within one term.

7. **Further Information**

Caring together charity; 0345 241 0954
 Email - hello@caringtogether.org
 Registered charity number 1091522.

Approved:

There will be an annual review of this policy by the Headteacher