

VICTORIA DOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

YOUNG CARERS POLICY



Working together for your children

Date Written: Autumn 2019

To Be Reviewed: Autumn 2021

INTRODUCTION

At Victoria Dock Primary School we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education, regardless of what is happening at home. When a young person looks after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or a substance misuse problem, he or she may need extra support to help him or her get the most out of school. This Young Carers' Policy says how we will help any pupil who helps to look after someone at home.

We welcome any young person, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help their child in achieving their potential.

OBJECTIVES

The Deputy Head teacher/Headteacher will lead on our young carers' support work. They will be the point of contact for young carers and their families and will liaise with young carers' services. Their name and contact details can be found by telephone from the school office.

Victoria Dock Primary School:

- is accessible to parents who have mobility and communication problems;
- respects people's right to privacy and will only share information with people who need to know in order to help;
- will consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities such as sports and concerts due to their caring role;
- wherever possible, talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends, unless the young carer asks for a friend to be present.

DEFINITION OF A YOUNG CARER

Young carers are children and young people (up to the age of 18) whose life is affected by looking after someone with a disability or a long term illness. The person they care for may be a parent, a sibling, another family member or a friend, who does not necessarily live in the same house as them.

They carry out significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which is inappropriate to their age. Caring tasks can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well-being. The impact of taking on an inappropriate caring role can include underachievement or absenteeism at school, mental or physical ill health.

"Disability" refers to actual or perceived physical, sensory, emotional or learning impairment, long-term illness, HIV, drug or alcohol dependence, mental health problems, frailty or old age.

SUPPORT

Victoria Dock Primary School has a member of staff special responsibility for young carers and lets all new pupils know who they are and what they can do to help.

Support may consist of any combination of the following:

- Sessions in PSHE lessons on the challenges faced by young carers;
- Establishing links with NCH Young Carers Project and other support services;
- Offering advice/support about how to get their children into school when transport is a problem.
- Homework will be set as deemed appropriate.
- Making bespoke arrangements if a parent is unable to travel to parent sessions due to family circumstances.

IDENTIFYING A YOUNG CARER

Some of the warning signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

- regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing;
- tiredness in school and a lack of concentration; anxious or worried;
- erratic response to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks;
- under-achievement for potential capability;
- behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration;
- few or no peer friendships but possibly a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age;
- victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to a young carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion;
- lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school;
- apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at meetings.

The above may be indicators of a range of problems not associated with caring, but staff should ask the pupil if they are helping to look after someone at home.

Staff should also discuss concerns with the child's class teacher to ascertain behavioural tendencies throughout the day and inform the SLT.

Education welfare officers and education social workers, together with pastoral support staff investigating pupils causing concern, should also countenance the possibility of caring roles, especially when working directly with family members.

During the Admissions process the school will seek to establish if:

- the pupil has parents/relatives with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health problems;
- the pupil has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal inter-personal relationships within a family setting;
- the family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the pupil.

Victoria Dock Primary School respects the right to privacy and will only share information about young carers and their families with people who need to know in order to be able to help. Before sharing information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer or, if they are not able to understand, a parent.

