



Young Carers

Approved by:	Pupil Outcomes and Wellbeing Committee	Date: 9.3.26
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Last reviewed by:	Mrs K Turner
on:	March 2026

Next review due by:	March 2028
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FGB Ratification:	May 2026
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This Policy is based on West Sussex County Council's Model School Policy which can be accessed via the County website

Young Carers' Policy

Downlands School is committed to supporting young carers to access all areas of education as reflected in the national inclusion strategies. This policy aims to ensure that young carers are identified and offered appropriate support, in order to help them access education.

1. Definition

A young carer is someone under 18 years of age who is helping to care for someone at home. They may be looking after a parent, grandparent, sibling or other relative. The person they look after may have one or more of the following:

- * A physical disability including sensory disability
- * Learning disability
- * Mental health issues
- * Chronic or terminal illness
- * Substance misuse problem
- * Be elderly and frail

A young carer may need to take on responsibilities in addition to those appropriate for their age and ability.

These extra responsibilities may include:

- Personal Care – administering medication, changing, dressing or assisting with mobility
- Intimate Care – washing, dressing and assisting with toileting requirements
- Emotional Support – helping to meet the emotional needs of the person, hearing adult problems
- Household Chores – these may include washing, cooking and cleaning – in some cases for the whole family – shopping and the payment of bills and dealing with finances
- Childcare – helping to look after younger siblings, including taking them to school
- Translation/Interpreting

We acknowledge that there will be young carers among our students, and that their own care and welfare must be of paramount importance.

2. Educational Effects:

Downlands School acknowledges how a young carer's extra responsibilities can impact on their education and emotional and physical well-being. It is possible that due to this they may:

- Arrive late in school
- Have erratic attendance
- Not complete homework on time or at all
- Underachieve academically
- May not be able to attend after school clubs or detentions
- Suffer emotional distress
- Be consistently tired
- May experience a lack of concentration in lessons

- Experience bullying
- Display behavioural issues
- Have low self esteem
- Have difficulty socialising with peers

It may also be difficult to engage parents due to their health issues.

3. Support Available to Young Carers

Downland School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to enable them to have equal access to education. This policy reflects our commitment to supporting young carers' needs and also to the message that a young carer's education is important.

At Downlands School, all of our Pastoral Support Officers (PSO's) work to support our young carers by liaising with other staff on the students' behalf. PSO's provide opportunities for students to speak in private and away from peers, should they wish. Our Lead PSO is our Young Carers' Champion. The right to pupils' and families' privacy will be respected and the school will only share information with professionals and agencies on a 'need to know' basis in order to support pupils and families. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for Safeguarding has overall strategic responsibility for Young Carers within Downlands School.

At all times young carers will be treated in a sensitive and caring way, and confidentiality will be upheld.

Downlands School recognises that a young carer may not feel comfortable to discuss their caring role; this will be acknowledged and respected. To support our pupils, we will put an indicator on their Bromcom so staff can make reasonable adjustments.

Young Carers at Downlands School who are carrying out a medium to high level caring role will be offered a referral to **West Sussex Young Carers Family Service** if they meet the criteria and in agreement with the parent/guardian. This will be through the designated member of staff. They can also be referred to the Young Carer team if they are already not registered for further support.

Downlands School will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carers at risk of any significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

Downlands School makes an annual commitment to staff training on young carers with all relevant staff.

Downlands School delivers information about Young Carers to pupils via the PDC curriculum and tutor pastoral program.

Downlands School uses student voice to seek the views of our young people which will include seeking the views of our young carers regarding their schools young carers provision.

Downlands School will offer support to the young person and their family highlighted during the transition process.

Downlands School will allow young carers to use the school phone to call home during break and lunchtimes, to reduce any worry they may have about a family member.

Downlands School will provide a display board for young carers, providing up to date information.

Downlands School acknowledges that extra support for young carers may be needed to enable them to access all areas of school curriculum.

Downlands School will make flexible reasonable adjustments within school. This includes flexibility in responding to their needs:

- Flexibility with homework deadlines
- Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions, where possible
- Access to their PSO throughout the day
- Access to work via Century if they are not able to come into school
- Provision for alternative communication with parents who are unable to attend target setting days and parent evenings

Please visit <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/young-carers/> for further information