



HAGLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



CARING FOR OUR 'YOUNG CARERS'

How to identify a 'Young Carer'

Many young carers can go unnoticed for years and as a result under-achieve and fail to receive the necessary support that can have a significant positive impact on all aspects of their life.

The school enrolment process during the admissions phase can play a key part in identifying young carers. As a result from July 2015 the following questions will be built into the Year 7, Sixth Form or in-year admission interview:

- i) Does the student have parents or other family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical and mental health problems?
- ii) Does the student help to look after them and what impact does this have on their education?
- iii) Is the family in touch with support services that could reduce the caring role?

Although some families may choose to keep their problems secret, by offering signposting information about other services at an early stage this may make a significant difference to the individual student and family.

Signs for teaching and support staff to look out for:

Young carers are not easy to spot and many actively attempt to conceal their caring role from school staff and their peers for fear of bullying or outside interference in their families.

The following signs may be an indicator that a child is a Young Carer:

- Often late or misses days or weeks off school for no apparent reason.
- Often tired or withdrawn, finds it difficult to concentrate.
- Difficulty joining in extra-curricular activities.
- Few or no peer friendship, finding themselves isolated or a victim of bullying; either because of the situation in the family home or because they lack social skills when with peers. In contrast, they may be confident with adults.
- Under-achievement, homework/coursework may be of poor quality, not submitted on time or not handed in at all.

- Anxiety/concern over ill/disabled relative.
- Behavioural problems – there is often a big difference between the young person who seems 'mature beyond their years' in their home environment where they are very protective of a disabled relative, and the young person who takes out their pent up frustration at school.
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting an adult.
- Difficulties in engaging parents (parents not attending parents evening)

How to help a Young Carer:

Teachers' Action List:

1. Speak to the Young Person in private to avoid being overheard by their peers. Explain the confidentiality rule which is part of the school safeguarding policy.
2. Identify what caring tasks they are carrying out and why. Ascertain how their caring role affects them;
 - Are they being bullied?
 - Do they struggle with school work?
 - Do they worry when they are out of contact with home?
 - How can you/the school help with these issues?
3. Reassure the student that there is a wealth of support available both in school and externally. Remind the student that the people in school responsible for supporting Young Carers are S Horan and L Imrie. Give them the students the details of external agencies who can support them e.g. Barnados, Young Carers etc. Point them towards the further information on the school website.
4. Report your concerns to the school Young Carer leads who will contact parents to offer support such as referral to other agencies.
5. The school will formulate a plan with the family that is realistic and achievable and will let the Young Carer attend school and get the most from their education.