



The Queen Anne Royal Free CE Controlled First School

In our Christian Community we Achieve, Enjoy and Include.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23

Young Carers Policy

The school promotes equality and actively challenges all ageist, gender, racist, disablist, homophobic, social and transphobic language and behaviour.

Safeguarding all of our children is at the centre of every aspect of school policy.

Written by: Francesca Collin
Approved by: Judith Street
Next review due: March 2027

1. Policy statement

At The Queen Anne Royal Free First School, we believe that all children have the right to access education, feel safe, be listened to and achieve their potential. We recognise that some pupils may have caring responsibilities at home and that these responsibilities can affect attendance, punctuality, participation, wellbeing, learning and wider school life.

We are committed to identifying young carers early, listening to their views and providing timely, proportionate and compassionate support. We recognise that support for young carers should be child-centred, flexible and responsive to individual need, and that where caring responsibilities are excessive or inappropriate, a whole-family response may be required to safeguard the child's welfare.

This policy sets out how the school will identify, support and safeguard pupils who are young carers, and how we will work with families and external agencies to reduce inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities wherever possible.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- identify pupils who may be young carers as early as possible
- ensure young carers are supported to attend, participate and achieve in school
- provide a named lead and a clear route for pupils, families and staff to access support
- ensure staff understand the possible impact of caring responsibilities
- make appropriate adjustments to support identified pupils
- safeguard pupils whose caring role may be excessive, inappropriate or affecting their welfare
- work in partnership with families, Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service and other professionals
- support effective transition into school, between year groups and on to the next setting
- monitor whether support is improving outcomes for identified young carers

3. Definition of a young carer

A young carer is a child or young person under 18 who helps to care for, or intends to provide care for, a family member who has a physical illness, mental ill health, disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, frailty, or difficulties related to drugs or alcohol.

The caring role may be practical, physical, emotional, supervisory or related to the care of siblings.

A child becomes particularly vulnerable when the level of caring is excessive or inappropriate for their age and development, or when it affects their education, health, wellbeing, friendships, safety or life chances.

4. Examples of caring responsibilities

Young carers may support a parent, sibling, grandparent or another relative. Their responsibilities may include:

- practical tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping or household organisation
- looking after younger brothers or sisters
- helping with routines or appointments
- personal care, such as dressing, washing or mobility support
- helping someone communicate
- supervising a family member to help keep them safe
- emotional support, reassurance or staying with someone who is distressed
- helping a family member manage day-to-day routines

5. Why young carers may be hidden

Many young carers do not identify themselves as such. Some pupils may think they are simply helping out, may worry about stigma or bullying, may not want school to know about home circumstances, or may fear outside involvement. Families may also feel embarrassed, anxious about outside involvement, or unaware of the impact that caring is having on the child.

For this reason, young carers can remain hidden unless schools make active efforts to identify and support them sensitively.

6. Possible indicators that a pupil may be a young carer

Staff should be alert to possible indicators, including:

- regular lateness or absence
- tiredness in school
- poor concentration, anxiety or worry
- inconsistent completion of homework
- underachievement or reduced progress
- emotional distress, low mood or increased sensitivity
- behaviour changes, frustration or anger
- difficulty attending clubs, trips or after-school activities
- social isolation or limited friendships
- bullying linked to family circumstances
- repeated concern about a family member at home
- parental difficulty attending meetings or responding to school communication

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is a young carer, but they should prompt sensitive enquiry and discussion with the Young Carers' Lead and/or DSL.

7. Identification of young carers

The school will seek to identify young carers through:

- admissions and transition information
- pupil voice, wellbeing check-ins and pastoral conversations
- safeguarding, SEND and attendance processes
- concerns raised by staff
- information shared by parents/carers
- liaison with previous schools and receiving schools
- partnership working with external agencies

Any member of staff who becomes concerned that a pupil may be a young carer should pass this information promptly to the Young Carers' Lead and/or DSL.

Staff should speak to pupils sensitively and privately and should avoid discussing family circumstances in front of peers.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

The governing body will:

- ensure the school has an effective policy and review cycle
- support a whole-school culture which recognises and supports young carers
- ensure this policy aligns with safeguarding, attendance, SEND and equality duties
- seek assurance that the school monitors the impact of support for identified young carers

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- promote a culture in which young carers are recognised and supported
- ensure staffing, training and systems are in place to implement this policy
- oversee links with safeguarding, attendance and inclusion

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- respond to safeguarding concerns linked to a pupil's caring role
- decide when information needs to be shared for safeguarding purposes
- liaise with children's social care, early help and other agencies where appropriate
- ensure records are accurate, proportionate and secure
- ensure that where caring responsibilities may place a child at risk, safeguarding procedures are followed without delay

Young Carers' Lead

The Young Carers' Lead will:

- act as the main point of contact for pupils, families and staff
- maintain oversight of identified young carers
- arrange and review support plans where needed
- coordinate referrals to Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service or other services
- support transition in and out of school
- monitor attendance, participation, wellbeing and progress for identified pupils
- ensure pupil voice informs support and policy review
- promote staff awareness and training

Attendance Lead / Senior Attendance Champion

The Attendance Lead will:

- monitor attendance and punctuality patterns for identified young carers
- ensure attendance support is joined up with pastoral and safeguarding support
- work with families and external agencies where attendance is affected by caring responsibilities

All staff

All staff will:

- be alert to signs that a pupil may be a young carer
- respond with sensitivity and discretion
- pass concerns on promptly
- follow agreed support strategies for identified pupils
- avoid making assumptions or drawing unnecessary attention to a pupil's home life
- understand the school's internal reporting route, local referral pathway and safeguarding escalation process

9. Support available in school

Support for young carers will be tailored to individual need. Depending on the child and family, this may include:

- a named trusted adult in school
- regular or flexible check-ins
- a Young Carer Support Plan
- support with homework or deadlines, where appropriate
- flexibility following difficult nights, emergencies, appointments or crises at home
- support with attendance, punctuality and morning routines
- emotional wellbeing and pastoral support
- support to access clubs, trips and wider opportunities
- a quiet space or time with a trusted adult if needed
- support around transition between classes and schools
- flexibility in communicating with parents/carers where family circumstances make this difficult

10. Young Carer Support Plans

Where appropriate, the school will create a short Young Carer Support Plan in partnership with the pupil and parent/carer. This will be proportionate and reviewed regularly.

It may include:

- what the pupil would like school to know
- agreed signs that the pupil may be struggling
- who the pupil can go to for help
- agreed adjustments in school
- arrangements for communication with home
- attendance and punctuality support
- emergency arrangements, where relevant
- review dates and next steps

The pupil's views will be central to this process.

11. Escalation of concerns

If any member of staff believes that a pupil may be a young carer, or that caring responsibilities are affecting a pupil's wellbeing, attendance, safety or access to education, they must record the concern and share it promptly with the Young Carers' Lead and/or DSL.

The school will then consider the most appropriate response, which may include:

- discussion with the pupil and/or parent/carer
- in-school support
- a Young Carer Support Plan
- referral to Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service
- early help
- referral to children's social care where the child may be in need or at risk of harm

Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, staff must follow the school's child protection procedures without delay.

12. Safeguarding

The school recognises that some young carers may be children in need and that a small number may be at risk of significant harm.

Where a pupil's caring role appears excessive, inappropriate, unsafe or harmful to their welfare, the school will follow safeguarding procedures without delay. This may include consultation with the DSL, early help, referral to children's social care or emergency action where required.

The school recognises that the right response is often a whole-family response. The aim is not to criticise families, but to reduce inappropriate caring, improve support for the person who is ill or disabled, and protect the child's welfare and education.

Examples of concerns requiring immediate discussion with the DSL may include:

- a child undertaking intimate or inappropriate personal care
- a child being left to supervise unsafe situations at home
- a child regularly missing school in order to care
- concerns linked to mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse or neglect
- a child appearing overwhelmed, frightened or emotionally distressed by their caring role

13. Attendance and punctuality

The school understands that caring responsibilities can affect attendance and punctuality. We will not assume that attendance issues are purely behavioural or parental-choice issues. We will consider whether caring responsibilities, family illness, emotional distress or crisis at home may be contributing factors.

Where attendance is affected, the school will:

- talk with the pupil and parent/carer sensitively
- identify barriers and agree practical support
- align attendance support with safeguarding, SEND and pastoral support where needed
- liaise with external agencies where appropriate
- avoid punitive responses where support and assessment are needed first

Persistent or severe absence linked to caring responsibilities will be considered through the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures together.

14. Referral to local specialist support

In RBWM, the local specialist service for young carers is Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service.

Staff who become concerned that a pupil may be a young carer should record the concern and pass it to the Young Carers' Lead and/or DSL.

With parent/carer consent, the school may make a professional referral to Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service for specialist support. Family Action's RBWM service supports young carers aged 5–18 and accepts professional referrals. Referral forms are submitted to rbwm.referrals@family-action.org.uk. General enquiries can be made via rbwm.yc@family-action.org.uk or 01628 626991.

Where there are additional safeguarding concerns, or where the child may be in need or at risk of harm, the DSL will consider referral through children's social care / MASH / other safeguarding routes in line with school procedures.

15. Partnership with families and external agencies

The school will work in partnership with families and external agencies to secure support at the earliest possible stage.

This may include:

- Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service
- early help services
- children's social care
- school nursing
- SEND services
- adult social care
- health professionals
- attendance services

The school will seek to work openly and honestly with pupils and parents/carers and will take a supportive, non-judgemental approach.

16. Confidentiality, recording and information sharing

Information about a young carer will be recorded and stored securely in line with the school's safeguarding, records management and data protection procedures.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis so that the child can be supported appropriately.

The school will seek to work openly and honestly with pupils and parents/carers. However, where there is a safeguarding concern, information may be shared without consent if this is necessary to keep a child safe or to promote their welfare. Decisions about sharing safeguarding information will be made by the DSL and recorded appropriately.

17. Transition

The school recognises that transition can be a vulnerable time for young carers. We will support transition:

- on admission to the school
- between year groups
- when moving to the next setting
- when home circumstances change

Where appropriate, relevant information will be shared with the next setting so support does not have to begin again from the start.

The school will seek to ensure that the receiving setting knows:

- that the pupil is a young carer, where appropriate
- what support has been helpful
- who the pupil's key adult is
- what arrangements should continue

18. Training and awareness

The school will ensure that teaching and support staff have appropriate awareness of:

- what a young carer is
- how caring responsibilities may affect pupils
- indicators that a pupil may be a young carer
- how to respond sensitively
- how to record and pass on concerns
- how this policy links to safeguarding, attendance, SEND and equality
- the school's internal reporting route
- the local referral route to Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service
- safeguarding escalation procedures

All staff will receive regular briefing and refresher training on the identification of young carers and the school's reporting and referral processes.

The school will also seek to raise awareness among pupils and families, where appropriate, so that hidden young carers know how to access help.

19. Equality and inclusion

The school will ensure that young carers are treated fairly and with dignity. We recognise that some young carers may also be affected by poverty, SEND, disability, mental health needs, bereavement, domestic abuse, family illness or other vulnerabilities.

Our support will therefore be inclusive, child-centred and responsive to the individual child's circumstances.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Behaviour Policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- Transition arrangements and induction documents

20. Monitoring and review

The Young Carers' Lead, in liaison with the DSL and Attendance Lead, will monitor:

- numbers of identified young carers
- attendance and punctuality patterns
- participation in school life
- wellbeing and pastoral needs
- progress of identified young carers

- support plans and review dates
- referrals and outcomes
- pupil and parent/carer feedback
- staff awareness and training needs

The school will review whether support and referrals are improving outcomes for identified young carers. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, local arrangements or school practice.

21. Key contacts

Young Carers' Lead: Francesca Collin – SENCo / Deputy DSL

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Judith Street

Young Carers' Champion: Francesca Collin

Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service

Professional referrals: rbwm.referrals@family-action.org.uk

General enquiries: rbwm.yc@family-action.org.uk

Telephone: **01628 626991**

22. Staff flowchart

Young Carer Concern – Staff Flowchart

Concern raised about a pupil

Possible signs may include tiredness, lateness, anxiety, poor concentration, missed homework, low mood, worries about home, or comments suggesting they help care for someone.



Record the concern

Make a brief factual record on CPOMS.



Inform the Young Carers' Lead and/or DSL

Share the concern promptly, and on the same day where possible.



Initial consideration by school

Speak sensitively with the child and/or parent/carer as appropriate.
Consider attendance, wellbeing, safeguarding and support needs.



Decide the most appropriate pathway

If there is no immediate safeguarding concern

→ With parent/carer consent, refer to **Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service** for specialist support.

If there is a safeguarding or significant welfare concern

→ Follow school safeguarding procedures immediately.

→ The DSL should consider early help / children's social care / MASH as appropriate.

**Put support in place in school**

Agree practical support such as a trusted adult, check-ins, attendance support, flexibility, and a Young Carer Support Plan if needed.

**Review regularly**

Monitor wellbeing, attendance, participation and the impact of support.

23. Legal and guidance framework

This policy has been informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)
- Family Action RBWM Young Carers Service guidance and referral information