Victoria Lane Academy

Young Carers' Policy

2026 - 2027

A Member of the Tudhoe Learning Trust

Victoria Lane Academy – Young Carers' school policy

At Victoria Lane Academy we believe that all children and young people have the right to learn, enjoy and achieve success; 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 a little extra support to help maximise their potential at school.
We have developed our Young Carers' Policy to show how we will support any pupil who helps to look after someone at home and to demonstrate how we will try to relieve some of the worries which young carers may have about home and their school work.

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

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
Possible effect on education
Victoria Lane Academy 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. As a result 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. Also fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

Victoria Lane Academy will:

- Acknowledge that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, we are giving the message that young carers' education is important.
- The designated link teachers for young carers are Miss H Whitfield & Mrs F Azzouzi, who will liaise with relevant colleagues, Durham Young Carers and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated link.
- Provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- Appreciates that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- Treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.
- 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 throughout areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- Victoria Lane Academy recognises 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, to phone home
- 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). Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited. (DfES 2006)
- 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.

Headteacher: *H. D. Whitfield* **Chair of Governors:** *K Short*

Date: July 2026 **Next Review Date: July 2027**