Park Academy West London
an Aspirations Academy

Young Carer Policy

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Date of next review:	July 2027	Owner:	DSL
Type of policy:	Academy	Approval level:	Academy

Introduction

Park Academy West London is committed to providing an inclusive, high-quality education that ensures equal opportunity and support for all pupils, including those who balance education with caring responsibilities at home. We believe that a pupil's caring role should not exclude them from having full, independent access to the National Curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and future opportunities.

This policy ensures young carers are recognized early, supported fluidly, and treated with complete sensitivity. It operates in conjunction with the following statutory guidance and school frameworks:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Park Academy West London's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Park Academy West London's SEND Policy

Contacts

- SLT Young Carer Lead: Ms Rogers `krogers@park-aspirations.org`
- Operational Young Carer Lead: Mrs Menia `kmenia@park-aspirations.org`

General Principles

Park Academy West London aims to:

- Ensure young carers experience academic success and feel valued within the academy community.
- Provide equal educational opportunities by removing underlying barriers caused by home duties.
- Offer early intervention and maintain flexible, child-centred support that changes with family circumstances.
- Form collaborative partnerships with external bodies, local councils, and charities like the Young Carers Trust.

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1. Definitions and Identification

A Young Carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides regular or significant care, assistance, or emotional support to a family member who has:

- A physical or learning disability
- A chronic or terminal illness
- A mental health condition
- A substance or alcohol dependency

Identification Procedures

The academy screens and monitors for young carers using a multi-layered approach:

- Admissions Screening: Admission and registration forms include explicit declaration sections regarding young carer status.
- Staff Awareness: Routine training empowers staff to spot indicators (e.g., chronic lateness, fatigue, or drop in attainment).
- Self-Referral Paths: Termly PSHE lessons and student assemblies reduce stigma, encouraging students to self-report in a secure environment.

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2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Body

- Appoints a dedicated Governor to oversee the standard of young carer provision.
- Ensures the young carer policy is evaluated annually and implemented legally.

2.2 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Lead

- Determines the strategic development of young carer resources and academy policies.
- Ensures young carers are included in the school's vulnerable pupils tracking list.
- Monitors whole-school attendance and progress datasets for this specific group.

2.3 Operational Young Carer Lead

- Manages the academy’s central, confidential Young Carer Register.
- Coordinates targeted in-school support groups and safe-space listening sessions.

- Acts as the primary operational liaison with external agencies, including the Young Carers Trust.
- Coordinates student access to holiday benefits like Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding.

2.4 Subject Teachers and Teaching Assistants

- Uphold absolute confidentiality and never discuss a pupil's home situation in front of peers.
- Provide support with access to homework clubs, online platforms and resources when possible and on a case-by-case basis.
- Refer suspected young carers immediately to the operational lead via internal reporting systems.

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3. Operational Support & Flexible Provision

The academy recognises that strict adherence to standard rules may disadvantage young carers. Staff apply flexible, reasonable adjustments across the following areas:

Academic & Homework Adjustments

- Extension of homework and coursework deadlines during periods of high family stress, when requested via the Senior Leadership Team Lead in writing by parents.
- Support with equipment needed for the school day and uniform items that may need to be borrowed, when requested via the Operational Young Carer Lead at the start of the school day.
- Prioritised access to internal homework clubs and quiet learning spaces, such as the library.

Communication & Family Access

- Emergency Contact: Allocation of phone privileges during break and lunch periods to contact home via the Safeguarding Office.
- Accessible Formats: Modified, flexible communication channels for parents with mobility, sensory, or housebound restrictions.

Wellbeing & Inclusion

- Mental Health Pathways: Direct fast-tracking into internal counselling, pastoral and mental health services.

- Respite & Leisure: Provision of dedicated extra-curricular clubs for relaxation, play, and peer connection.
- Basic Needs Support: Access to free breakfast in the School Canteen and essential supplies such as sanitary products via Student Welfare.

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4. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

All young carer records are kept secure and shared strictly on a need-to-know basis among relevant pastoral staff. In accordance with statutory guidance, the academy will activate child protection procedures immediately if a pupil is deemed at risk of significant harm due to an inappropriate or excessive level of caring responsibilities.
