

# MY OASIS

Therapeutic Alternative Provision

## Young Carers Policy

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CHARLOTTE LOWE  
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD



MY OASIS  
THERAPEUTIC ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

[www.charlottelowepsychologicalservices.co.uk](http://www.charlottelowepsychologicalservices.co.uk)

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# Statement of Intent

At My Oasis Therapeutic Alternative Provision (TAP & Independent School), we recognise that some of our students undertake caring responsibilities at home that go beyond what would normally be expected for their age. These young carers may provide emotional, practical, or physical support to a family member who is affected by illness, disability, mental health difficulties, or substance misuse.

We understand that these additional responsibilities can affect a young person's attendance, concentration, emotional well-being, and overall educational experience. Our commitment is to ensure that every young carer is identified early, treated with understanding and respect, and provided with the right level of support to enable them to reach their full potential.

We aim to create an environment where young carers feel seen, supported, and valued, where they can thrive in both their caring role and their education. Our approach promotes equality of access, emotional well-being, and positive relationships, ensuring that no young carer is disadvantaged because of their responsibilities at home.

## Policy Overview

This policy outlines how My Oasis recognises, supports, and promotes the well-being of students who have caring responsibilities at home. It sets out the school's commitment to ensuring that young carers are given the understanding, flexibility, and encouragement they need to succeed in their education and personal development.

By implementing this policy, the school aims to raise awareness among staff, provide appropriate support systems, and create an environment in which every young carer feels valued, included, and able to achieve their full potential.

## Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that **young carers are identified early** and supported to engage fully with school life.
- Provide **practical, emotional, and academic support** so that caring responsibilities do not disadvantage a student's progress or well-being.
- Promote a **positive and inclusive school culture** in which young carers feel valued and understood.
- Increase **staff awareness and confidence** in identifying and supporting young carers.
- Ensure that the **privacy and dignity** of young carers and their families are respected at all times.
- Strengthen **communication between school, families, and external professionals**, where appropriate, to ensure that young carers receive coordinated and effective support.

- Comply with relevant statutory and safeguarding guidance, including the *Children and Families Act 2014*, *Education Act 2002*, and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- **All students** attending My Oasis (TAP) who provide care for a family member with physical, emotional, or mental health needs, or who are affected by substance misuse.
- **All staff members**, including teaching, support, and administrative staff, who have a responsibility to recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of young carers.
- **Parents and carers**, who are encouraged to share relevant information so that appropriate support can be offered.

### This policy outlines how the school will:

- Identify young carers sensitively and effectively.
- Offer appropriate pastoral, academic, and well-being support.
- Ensure that young carers have **equal access** to learning opportunities and extracurricular activities.
- Work collaboratively with **external agencies and support services** to provide further help when required.

## Legislation and Statutory Guidance

### Related Legislation and Guidance

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- ***Children Act 1989 and 2004***
- ***Children and Families Act 2014***
- ***Education Act 2002***
- ***Education and Inspections Act 2006***
- ***The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014***
- ***Equality Act 2010***
- ***Human Rights Act 1998***
- ***Care Act 2014***
- ***Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)***
- ***Working Together to Safeguard Children***
- ***Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)***

This policy also takes into account the following guidance and resources:

- ***Department for Education (DfE): Young Carers: The role of schools***
- ***Carers Trust and The Children's Society: Young Carers in Schools Programme***

- *Local authority and national **young carers' services** guidance and referral processes.*

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *Attendance and Missing from Education Policy*
- *SEND Policy*
- *Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*

## Identification and Definition of Young Carers

### **Definition**

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides regular care or emotional support to a family member who is affected by:

- A physical disability or sensory impairment
- A learning disability
- A chronic or terminal illness
- A mental health condition
- Substance or alcohol misuse

The person receiving care may be a parent, sibling, grandparent, or other relative. In some cases, a young carer may provide care for more than one person within the household.

Caring responsibilities may include:

- Providing personal or physical care, such as helping with medication, mobility, or daily routines.
- Taking on household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, or shopping.
- Offering emotional support and supervision.
- Looking after siblings while parents or carers are unable to do so.
- Managing or monitoring the well-being of a family member.

The level of care provided by young carers often goes beyond what is expected for their age and may have an impact on their emotional well-being, social development, and educational engagement.

### **Identification of Young Carers**

At My Oasis, we are committed to identifying young carers as early as possible to ensure they receive timely and appropriate support. We do this by:

- Encouraging self-identification through confidential conversations and awareness activities.

- Training staff to recognise signs that a student may have caring responsibilities, such as tiredness, lateness, lack of concentration, anxiety, or irregular attendance.
- Including a question about caring responsibilities in admissions and review forms to help identify young carers at the earliest opportunity.
- Maintaining close communication between teaching staff, supporting staff and therapeutic team to monitor changes in behaviour, performance, or wellbeing.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies to share information appropriately and sensitively, in accordance with safeguarding and data protection principles.

Where a student is identified or suspected to be a young carer, the therapeutic Lead will ensure that:

- The student's needs are assessed and documented.
- Appropriate support strategies are put in place.
- The student's privacy is respected, and information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.

The school recognises that not all young carers will self-identify and that their caring role may be hidden due to fear, embarrassment, or stigma. Staff are therefore expected to approach this issue with sensitivity, empathy, and discretion.

## Support for Young Carers

At My Oasis, we are committed to ensuring that all young carers receive the understanding, flexibility, and practical help they need to participate fully in school life and achieve their potential.

We understand that each young carer's circumstances are unique and that the level and type of support required will vary. Support will therefore be individualised, respectful, and needs-led.

### **A. Emotional and Pastoral Support**

- Regular check-ins are offered to discuss well-being, progress, or any changes in home circumstances.
- Where appropriate, students are referred to counselling, mentoring, or wellbeing sessions within the school.
- Staff are encouraged to show understanding and flexibility, particularly during times of stress or crisis at home.
- The school works to promote a culture of empathy, understanding, and inclusion, so young carers feel supported by both peers and staff.

### **B. Academic and Practical Support**

- Adjustments can be made to support attendance, homework deadlines, and participation in extracurricular activities.
- Teachers are informed (confidentially and on a need-to-know basis) of any circumstances that may impact learning or engagement.

- Young carers may receive additional academic mentoring, tutoring, or catch-up support if caring responsibilities have affected progress.
- The school will consider access to study spaces or quiet areas where students can complete work in a calm environment.
- When necessary, flexible timetabling or personalised learning plans will be arranged to help balance school and home commitments.

### **C. Information, Guidance, and External Support**

- The school provides information about local and national young carers' services and helps students and families connect with them.
- Staff liaise with external professionals (such as health, social care, and voluntary organisations) to ensure a joined-up approach to support.
- Information about entitlements, benefits, and well-being resources is made available to families.
- The Young Carers Lead ensures that referrals and partnerships are handled in line with safeguarding and data protection regulations.

### **D. Awareness and Whole-School Approach**

- Staff receive training to increase awareness of the challenges faced by young carers and how to respond appropriately.
- Assemblies, PSHE lessons, and awareness activities promote understanding, empathy, and respect for all students, including young carers.
- Information is displayed on school noticeboards and the website so that students and families know how to access help.

Our aim is to ensure that every young carer feels seen, supported, and successful—able to manage their caring role without their education or well-being being compromised.

## Working with External Partners

At My Oasis, we recognise that effective support for young carers often requires collaboration beyond the school environment. We are committed to working in partnership with external agencies to ensure that young carers and their families receive the most appropriate and comprehensive support available.

We work collaboratively with external professionals and organisations, including but not limited to:

- **Local Young Carers Services and charities**, who can provide advice, activities, and peer support opportunities.
- **Social Care and Early Help teams**, to ensure that families receive coordinated support and access to appropriate interventions.

- **CAMHS and other health professionals**, to address emotional and mental health needs linked to caring responsibilities.
- **Local voluntary and community organisations**, which may offer respite, mentoring, or practical assistance for families.

Where a student is identified as a young carer and additional support is required, the school may refer or signpost to relevant services. All referrals are made with the consent of the student and their family (unless there are safeguarding concerns that require disclosure) and are handled with sensitivity, professionalism, and respect for privacy.

The school's approach is based on the principle of working together to build strength and stability for the young carer and their family, ensuring that no student faces their caring responsibilities alone.

## Roles and Responsibilities

At My Oasis, supporting young carers is a whole-school responsibility. Every member of staff plays a role in recognising, understanding, and responding to the needs of students who have caring responsibilities at home.

### **The Headteacher:**

- Has overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensures that the needs of young carers are recognised within the school's pastoral and safeguarding systems.
- Oversees the allocation of support and resources to meet the educational and well-being needs of young carers.
- Ensures that all staff receive guidance on how to identify and support young carers appropriately.
- Liaises with parents, carers, and external agencies where necessary to ensure a coordinated approach.

### **The Therapeutic team and Safeguarding Team:**

- Acts as the main point of contact for students who may be identified as young carers.
- Maintains confidential records of identified young carers and monitors attendance, progress, and well-being.
- Offers emotional and practical support, ensuring that individual circumstances are considered when making decisions about attendance, homework, or behaviour.
- Ensures any concerns are addressed through the appropriate safeguarding channels.
- Works collaboratively with teaching staff and, where appropriate, external agencies to ensure that young carers receive consistent and effective support.

### **Teaching and Support Staff:**

- Are aware of the potential signs that a student may have caring responsibilities and remain alert to changes in behaviour, engagement, or attendance.
- Provide flexibility and understanding in their classroom practice to help young carers manage their responsibilities.
- Share any concerns or relevant information with the Pastoral and Safeguarding Team in a timely and confidential manner.
- Contribute to creating a school culture that values empathy, understanding, and inclusion.

### **Parents and Carers:**

- Are encouraged to inform the school if their child provides care for a family member, so that appropriate support can be offered.
- Work with the school to agree on realistic adjustments that balance family needs with the student's education.
- Engage with advice, signposting, or referrals made by the school to ensure their child receives appropriate support.

### **Students:**

- Are encouraged to talk to a trusted member of staff if they are helping to care for someone at home or need support balancing their responsibilities.
- Are expected to treat others with empathy and respect, contributing to an inclusive and understanding school community.

## Monitoring and Review

My Oasis is committed to ensuring that this policy continues to make a positive difference to the lives of young carers within our community. The policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and aligned with current best practices.

The Headteacher will review the implementation and effectiveness of this policy each year to make sure it continues to meet the needs of young carers within the school community.

Feedback will be sought from students, families, and staff to evaluate how well the policy is working in practice and to identify any areas for improvement.

Monitoring will include analysis of:

- Attendance patterns
- Academic progress and engagement
- Wellbeing and pastoral outcomes for identified young carers

The policy will be updated as necessary to reflect any changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice. Any revisions will be approved by the Headteacher and clearly communicated to all staff to ensure consistent understanding and implementation.