



Leigh Academy
Longfield

Young Carers Policy

December 2025

Review Date: September 2026

J Hurt

Young Carers Policy

Leigh Academy Longfield is committed to ensuring that all students who are young carers are identified, supported, and have equal access to educational opportunities. We recognise the vital role of young carers and aim to create a safe, understanding, and supportive environment where their caring responsibilities do not become a barrier to their learning and wellbeing.

Who is a Young Carer?

A Young Carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (a family member, such as a parent, sibling, or other relative) who is unable to fully care for themselves.

The person they care for may have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability or long-term physical illness.
- Mental health condition.
- Learning disability.
- Substance misuse issue (e.g., problems with alcohol or drugs).

What Does It Mean to Be a Young Carer?

Being a young carer means taking on additional responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult, often impacting the student's own health, wellbeing, and education.

These responsibilities can include:

- Practical tasks: Cooking, cleaning, shopping, and managing the household.
- Physical care: Helping with mobility, dressing, washing, or feeding.
- Personal care: Assisting with medication, making appointments, or providing help with toileting needs.
- Emotional support: Listening, monitoring the person's emotional state, and trying to keep them calm or cheerful.
- Childcare: Looking after younger siblings.

Due to these responsibilities, young carers may experience tiredness, worry, stress, difficulty completing homework, or sometimes poorer attendance. Our goal is to ensure they are fully supported to manage these challenges alongside their education.

Through our development of positive relationships with families, we seek to ensure each student's individual challenges are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity.

Identification of Young Carers

Early identification is crucial to providing effective support. We aim to identify young carers through a variety of channels, respecting their right to privacy and confidentiality.

- Self-Referral: Students are encouraged to identify themselves or a peer to a trusted member of staff.
- Staff Awareness: All staff receive regular training to increase their understanding of young carers and the signs they might display (e.g., tiredness, lateness, difficulty concentrating, or sudden changes in behaviour).
- Curriculum and Assemblies: Young Carers are covered in PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic) lessons and the academy assembly program. This whole-school approach aims to remove the stigma, raise awareness, and normalise asking for support.
- Parent/Guardian Disclosure: Families are encouraged to inform the academy if their child has a caring role, particularly during enrolment or if the family situation changes.
- External Agency Referral: The academy is able to support in making referrals to external agencies designed to support Young Carers. This includes, but is not limited to, Imago.

Support Available

Once identified, the academy will work with the young carer and their family to ensure the most suitable support is put in place.

Designated Young Carer Leads

The named staff members responsible for coordinating Young Carers support are:

Role	Staff Member
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Jodie Hurt
Safeguarding Officer	Joseph Watkins

Young carers are encouraged to speak with Mrs Hurt or Mr Watkins if they need support or advice. These staff members, alongside college pastoral teams, will act as the main points of contact for young carers and liaise with teachers and external services as needed.

In-School Support

We will offer flexible and tailored support, which may include:

- A confidential space and time to talk to key staff members about their concerns.
- Access to a phone during breaks or lunchtimes to contact home if they are worried about the person they care for. This will be provided through college admin teams.
- A quiet space at breaktimes/lunch times if the student wants to catch up on work.
- Access to homework club on Wednesdays
- Flexibility with homework and coursework deadlines when appropriate and agreed upon with teaching staff.
- Support with catching up on missed work due to caring responsibilities.
- Support with referrals to the local Young Carers Service (IMAGO) for out-of-school support, activities, and whole-family assessments (with the student and family's consent).
- Reasonable adjustments to sanctions where necessary.

This policy is a clear statement of our commitment to safeguarding the welfare of young carers and ensuring they achieve their full potential