



Woolwich Polytechnic
School for Girls



Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls POLYMAT Young Carers Policy

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Introduction

We believe that all children and young people have the right to an education regardless of what is happening at home. When a young person looks after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or substance misuse problem, they may need extra support to help to ensure they achieve their potential. This Young Carers' Policy says how we will help any student who helps to look after someone at home.

A young carer is a student under 18 years of age who helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. At Woolwich Polytechnic, we recognise that caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well-being. The level of responsibility assumed by a young carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up; as such it may impact on the education of the young person.

Identifying a young carer

Unless the school is advised about a pupil's home circumstances, young carers risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some young carers worry about appearing different to their peers, bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers. Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services, or an Early Help Assessment.

Some of the signs that a student is in a caring role are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing periodically
- Tiredness in school
- Erratic responses to homework with incomplete, late or work not being presented.
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Under-achievement for potential capability
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
 - Fewer peer friendships than expected but good relationship with adults and appearing mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to young carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
- Lack of interest in extracurricular activities, especially after school
- Apparent parental disinterest, e.g. non-attendance at parent's meetings, delays in responding to phone calls/letters, etc.

Woolwich Polytechnic School:

- Respects the young person's right to privacy. Wherever possible, the Head of Year/DSL will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends unless the carer asks for a friend to be present.
- The Head of Year can put young carers and their families in touch with the local Young Carers' Service.
- Heads of year will put in place personalised support for YCs varying from detentions at different times, being allowed to phone home, ensuring access to trips, extra-curricular activities, negotiate homework deadlines etc.