

Young and Young Adult Carers

TYPE: Policy

PURPOSE: To ensure that Solihull College & University Centre identifies, supports, and safeguards young carers and young adult carers, enabling them to access and succeed in education while protecting their wellbeing and rights.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all staff, students, and volunteers.

RESPONSIBILITY: The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy. The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

LEGAL CONTEXT: This policy is informed by the Children and Families Act 2014, Care Act 2014, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and the Equality Act 2010.

PUBLICATION: Staff Hub, Student Hub

1. Introduction

Solihull College & University Centre recognises that many carers remain hidden, and that caring responsibilities can significantly impact attendance, attainment, wellbeing, and progression.

Young carers and young adult carers may experience barriers including fatigue, anxiety, financial hardship, and reduced access to opportunities. Without appropriate support, this can lead to disengagement or withdrawal from education.

The College is committed to early identification and responsive, individualised support.

The person they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical or learning disabilities
- Mental health conditions
- Long-term illness
- Substance misuse issues

2. Definitions

Young Carer

A learner under 18 who provides unpaid care for a family member or other individual.

Young Adult Carer

A learner aged 18–25 who has caring responsibilities that impact their education, wellbeing, or ability to participate fully in college life.

Carer

A person providing unpaid support to someone who could not manage without help.

Significant Caring Responsibility

Caring duties that negatively impact attendance, progress, wellbeing, or participation.

Excessive or Inappropriate Caring

Caring responsibilities beyond age-appropriate expectations, particularly where they affect health, safety, or education. This may constitute a safeguarding concern.

3. Policy Statement

At Solihull College & University Centre, we believe that that no learner should be disadvantaged due to caring responsibilities.

The College is committed to ensuring that:

- Young carers are identified early and supported effectively
- Learners feel safe to disclose and are treated with dignity and respect
- Appropriate reasonable adjustments are implemented
- Excessive caring responsibilities are addressed through safeguarding procedures
- Young adult carers receive targeted support reflecting their transition to adulthood
- Learners are supported to progress into education, employment, or training

4. Young Adult Carers (18–25)

The College recognises that young adult carers face distinct challenges, including:

- Balancing education with employment and financial pressures
- Independent living responsibilities
- Reduced access to statutory services
- Transition into higher education or employment

Young adult carers will receive targeted, flexible, and progression-focused support, including access to external services and guidance under the Care Act 2014, such as Carer's Assessments.

5. Implications for Young Carers

A Young Carer or Young Adult Carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks can range from:

- Nursing care

- Personal intimate care
- Emotional care
- Domestic care
- Financial care
- Child care

Solihull College & University Centre acknowledges that there are likely to be Young Carers or Young adult Carers among its learners.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a Young Carer or young Adult Carer might experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home
- Concentration problems, anxiety or worry in college
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in college
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, as a result 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
- 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 the young person being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). They may be unable to attend parents' evenings.

6. Policy Objectives

Solihull College & University Centre is committed to:

- Ensuring early identification of young and young adult carers
- Providing timely, personalised support to remove barriers to learning
- Improving attendance, retention, achievement and progression outcomes
- Ensuring learners have a voice in shaping support provision
- Supporting successful transition into further study, employment, or training

7. Policy Implementation

On disclosure, relevant staff will ensure that Student Services are aware in order that the learner receives the appropriate information, advice and guidance.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed
- Monitor impact through reports on attendance, retention, and outcomes
- Maintain oversight via a link Governor, namely Helen Kinghorn

Senior Member of Staff Responsible for Young Carers

The Director of Student Services is responsible for the implementation and conduct of this policy and will:

- Lead implementation and monitoring
- Act as strategic link with external agencies
- Ensure staff training and awareness
- Report impact to senior leaders and governors

Designated Staff (Pastoral Support Officers / Personal Development Coaches)

- Act as primary contacts for identified young carers
- Complete needs assessments and support plans
- Coordinate internal and external support
- Maintain accurate and confidential records

All Staff

- Be alert to indicators of caring responsibilities
- Record and report concerns promptly via safeguarding or student services processes
- Maintain confidentiality in line with GDPR and safeguarding guidance
- Implement agreed support arrangements
- Monitor attendance and wellbeing

9. Identification and Early Intervention

The College will identify young carers through:

- Enrolment and application processes
- Tutorials and pastoral support
- Attendance and progress monitoring
- Safeguarding disclosures
- Self-referral or peer referral

Indicators may include:

- Persistent lateness or absence
- Fatigue or concentration difficulties
- Anxiety about home situations
- Limited participation in enrichment activities

Particular care will be taken to identify young adult carers who may not self-identify.

10. Referral and Assessment Process

1. Concern identified by staff
2. Referral made to Student Services / Safeguarding Team
3. Initial triage within 5 working days
4. Needs assessment conducted
5. Support plan agreed with learner
6. Referral to external agencies where appropriate

All actions will be recorded in line with college monitoring and data protection procedures.

11. Support Arrangements

Support will be tailored and may include:

Academic Support

- Flexible deadlines
- Adjusted timetables (where feasible)
- Remote learning arrangements during crisis

Pastoral Support

- Named key contact
- Regular check-ins
- Emotional wellbeing support

Practical Support

- Financial support assessments
- Access to communication during the day
- Referral to Young Carers services

Family Engagement

- Flexible communication methods
- Accessibility adjustments for parents/carers

Additional Support for Young Adult Carers

- Careers and progression support tailored to caring commitments
- UCAS/employment flexibility
- Signposting to adult services and Carer's Assessments
- Support with managing financial and independent living pressures

12. Safeguarding

Where caring responsibilities:

- Are excessive
- Impact health or education
- Involve inappropriate personal or medical care

This will be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in line with the College Safeguarding Policy.

For young adult carers, concerns will be considered within adult safeguarding frameworks where appropriate.

13. Equality and Inclusion

The College is committed to ensuring that young carers are not disadvantaged and can fully participate in college life.

We recognise that caring responsibilities may intersect with:

- Disability or SEND
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Mental health needs
- Cultural or family expectations

The College will:

- Provide reasonable adjustments
- Promote inclusive practice
- Challenge stigma and stereotypes
- Ensure equitable access to opportunities

14. Partnership Working

The College will work with:

- Local Authority services
- Young Carers organisations
- Health and social care professionals
- Voluntary sector partners

Referrals will be made where additional support is required.

15. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information will be:

- Shared on a need-to-know basis
- Managed in line with GDPR

- Discussed transparently with learners

16. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact

The College will monitor:

- Attendance
- Retention
- Achievement
- Progression outcomes

Data will be analysed separately for:

- Young Carers (under 18)
- Young Adult Carers (18–25)

Impact will be reviewed annually through:

- Data analysis
- Learner feedback
- Safeguarding trends

Findings will be reported to senior leaders and governors.

Reviewed by	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review date	Total Pages
Adam Thomas / Pete Haynes	July 2020	July 2026	July 2029	7