TOLWORTH SCHOOL
Happy children, successful learners

Tolworth School is committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Young Carers Policy

Member of Staff / Governors' Committee Responsible	Linda Jackson (Children & Families Co-ordinator) / Children, Families and Community Committee
Status	Voluntary
Review Cycle	Every 2 years
Date reviewed	September 2024
Date of next review	September 2026

TOLWORTH SCHOOL
School Young Carers Policy

Tolworth Junior School is a good school. It's school ethos states that its highly inclusive approach ensures that all pupils work well together and respect each other.

Tolworth School is committed to supporting young carers to access education. This policy aims to ensure young carers at Tolworth School are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

Definition
A young carer is a child or young person who is helping to look after someone at home. Most are caring for a parent, commonly in a single parent family, but some may be taking responsibility for a sibling, grandparent or other relative. In some instances a young carer may care for more than one family member.

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

- Physical disability (including sensory disability)
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

Caring Tasks
A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

Nursing care - giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.
Personal intimate care - washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements
Emotional care - being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up.
Domestic care - doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc
Financial care - running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc
Child care - taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities

Possible effects on education
Tolworth School acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its pupils, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's education.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might experience:

- Being late or absent due to responsibilities at home
- Concentration problems, anxiety or worry in school
- Emotional distress
- Tiredness in school
- Lack of time for homework
- Poor attainment
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, because 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
- Limited social skills
- 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 child 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.

Support Offered

Tolworth School has been awarded a Gold Award from Young Carers in School (part of the Carers Trust) for the support we give our pupils. Tolworth School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education. Through this policy, Tolworth School is giving the message that young carers' education is important.

The designated strategic lead for young carers is **Rachel Nye**, Headteacher/DSL. The operational lead for young carers is **Linda Jackson**, Children and Families Coordinator/DSL who will liaise with relevant colleagues, Kingston's Young Carers and other relevant organisations with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated staff in the school.

We are particularly aware of how COVID-19 could add additional pressure to our young carers, and during lockdown Tolworth School ensured all our young carers were given additional support as they had to deal with the struggle to balance home schooling and caring responsibilities. This included weekly contact and provision of laptops (when needed and available).

Tolworth School will ensure that all young carers have access to government food vouchers or food deliveries if needed.

Tolworth School will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.

Tolworth School appreciates that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person's caring role will be acknowledged and respected.

Tolworth School will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.

Tolworth School will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school.

Tolworth School will follow child protection procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

Tolworth School will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.

Tolworth School recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers. Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
- Weekly Drop-In lunchtime club and access to homework help and clubs
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (when there is a genuine crisis). Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited. (DfES 2006)
- Access for parents with impaired mobility.
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound or have a learning difficulty.
- Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school.
- Referral to AFC Early Help services in partnership with the family, if additional support needed.

For further information please contact Linda Jackson, Tolworth School on 020 8399 4472.