The Springfields Academy Young Carers policy

Aims:

This policy aims to ensure that when Young Carers are identified at The Springfields Academy, they are supported, and enabled to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. In keeping with Springfields' inclusive ethos, "support, understanding and enablement" and valuing each pupil's uniqueness, we are committed to removing barriers to learning and fostering independence for all, including Young Carers.

What is a young carer?

A Young Carer is defined as a pupil under 18 who provides care, assistance, or emotional support to a family member or close friend with disabilities, health concerns, or substance misuse issues. Young carers are recognised by the DfE and the school as children who are vulnerable. This is because the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care is often above that expected for that child's age and stage of development, and can negatively impact their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and outcomes.

The Springfield Academy's work with young carers is underpinned by the following aims:

- To identify young carers within The Springfields Academy
- To engage with students and families to support young carers to achieve educationally
- To promote a positive culture in which young people are safeguarded by the prevention of undertaking care that is often above that expected
- To use a whole family, inter-agency approach to accessing services
- To reduce the impact of caring on the wellbeing of young carers
- To provide enrichment opportunities for young carers such as trips and rewards (not only to reward their hard work but also offer them avenues for personal growth, relaxation, and social interaction. These opportunities are designed to acknowledge their valuable contributions at home and help them experience the full benefits of school life)

At The Springfields Academy we understand the issues faced by young carers and their families, what to look and listen for and how to respond, by:

- Keeping up to date with national and local developments affecting young carers and their families

- Displaying information about young carer issues on staff noticeboards, classroom notice boards and the school website
- Embedding training on young carer issues for all staff including specific training about how to identify young carers
- Providing an inclusive support network for families and pupils, through coffee mornings and pupil groups. These coffee mornings and pupil groups will offer activities and support that enhance their wellbeing, skills and sense of community.
- Hold termly "Heard" sessions (pupil voice forums) specifically for young carers, facilitated by our Young Carers Lead
- Use anonymised feedback forms following support sessions or interventions to guide improvements

The Springfields Academy respects the privacy of young carers and their families:

- A young carer's privacy is respected and information about their caring role is not communicated in front of their peers
- The school views young carers as any other student but understands that they have the additional pressure of caring responsibilities, which may require additional support or flexible arrangements

Parental/Carer Engagement

- Open communication: parents and carers are welcomed and involved in care plan development.
- Involvement in planning to ensure home responsibilities are understood and considered.

Staff training:

- All school staff receive regular training to understand the challenges young carers face and how to identify and support them effectively. This is part of the school's annual CPD programme and induction for new staff. Training is reviewed and updated annually to ensure best practices are followed.

Pupil Awareness:

We will deliver briefing videos in place of whole school assemblies at least twice per academic year to raise awareness of young carers among our pupils. These briefings will be tailored by key stage and may include:

- Age-appropriate stories or case studies
- Visits or videos from local young carer organisations

- Information on how pupils can seek help if they are or know a young carer

These briefings aim to reduce stigma and encourage self-identification and peer understanding.

Roles and responsibilities:

- **Young carers in schools Senior Leader:** Connie Knight – connie.knight@springfieldsacadmey.org, ensures policy is implemented at whole-school level.
- **Young Carers operational Lead:** Young carers operational lead: Maxine Page – Maxine.page@springfieldsacademy.org, responsible for coordinating support, overseeing identification, liaising with families, and leading pupil engagement activities.
- **All Staff:** Trained to identify young carers and refer them to the Young Carers Lead.

Signed by Head Teacher: Date: September 2026

Date to be reviewed (annually): September 2027