

Welcome to this week's SMRT safeguarding update...

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

Young Carers Action Day March 12

This week we are highlighting the advice and support that we give to those students, in school, who are Young Carers. The Young Carers Action Day 2025 theme, '**Give Me A Break**', highlights the important need for young carers to have time to rest and recharge while also calling on schools and employers to provide better support, helping them balance their responsibilities and achieve their full potential.

To support our Young Carers at SMRT we have designated staff members available for them, they run a breakfast club every Monday morning to check in and see if they need any support. This is held during tutor times and gives our young people a calm, nurturing environment, where breakfast is made and there is good company to relax with. Two of the school learning mentors and the school pastor staff this each week. In addition, towards Christmas and the summer term, trips for the group are organised, to enjoy time with their fellow young carers/ friends at school in a different environment and experience some enrichment and shared fun experiences outside of school.

During Young Carers Action Day, an opportunity to get together will be organised during break time on Wednesday 12 March, details of where to go to access this will be sent to staff at the beginning of next week. It will be an opportunity to meet up, share experiences and welcome new young carers to our group. It will also be a chance to give pupils a voice regarding the support they receive and how we can improve our services.

What is a Young Carer?

A young carer is someone under 18 years who helps to look after someone in their family who has a disability, a long-term illness, a mental health condition or has difficulties with drugs and/or alcohol misuse.

Young carers often take on responsibilities that are normally expected of an adult and might include:

- Practical tasks - like cooking, cleaning, and shopping
- Physical care - such as lifting, helping the person they care for to move about
- Personal care - dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs and medication
- Organising things - like money, appointments or collecting prescriptions
- Looking after younger siblings - playing with them, feeding them, or taking them to school
- Emotional support - making sure the cared-for person is OK
- Interpreting and translating due to a hearing or speech impairment or if English is not the family's first language.

Some young carers don't realise they are young carers - they are just looking after someone who needs help and getting on with what needs to be done.

Young carers are doing an amazing job helping others. For some, the amount of caring is relatively small and they can still manage to socialise with friends, keep up with homework and do a range of things they want to do.

However, for many young carers the additional responsibilities of caring can make life quite difficult, feel under stress and needed extra support.

Young carers are known to face a variety of issues including:

- Feeling isolated and alone
- Having little or no time to socialise with their friends
- Feeling worried, stressed or angry
- Having anxiety, depression or other difficult emotions
- Feeling tired and withdrawn
- Lack of confidence
- Difficulties at school due to lateness or being frequently absent
- Struggling to get homework in on time
- Bullying

Though many do not realise they are a young carer there are likely 2 young carers in every class of 30 students.

Research by BBC News and Nottingham University (2018) found that 22% of children provide some care for a family member with an illness or disability. Of those children, 32% were classed as doing a high level of caring, with nearly a tenth (9%) carrying out the highest amount of care.

Further support for Young Carers is available from Carers Support at:

<https://www.carersbsg.org.uk/young-carers/overview>

Support for young carers:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/social-care-and-health/carers/young-carers/support-for-young-carers>

Barnardos:

https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/young-carers?qad_source=1

Young Carers Support Bristol/ South Gloucestershire:

<https://www.carersbsg.org.uk/young-carers/overview>

BBC Young Carers Information, charities and services:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1rsZS8dzkkVSqQhJXHY67kj/information-and-support-carers>

Carers Support is a charity that works with the Local Authority to provide help and support to children aged 8-18 in South Gloucestershire and 5-18 in Bristol, their families and professionals working with young carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

Carers Support tailor support to meet young carers needs and can offer:

- An initial meeting, called an assessment, to help us understand the caring situation, find out what support would help and set up a support plan.
- Signposting to a range of information and support services
- 1-1 support sessions providing time to talk and make positive changes
- Group work (at the moment this includes Resilience Lab for mental health and well-being; themed group work helping specific experiences; and an ASD programme of three sessions for young carers caring for a sibling with ASD).
- Respite activities: including trips, creative, cookery, physical and nature-focused sessions.

- Free Family days out (free family passes to Wild Place, Puxton Park and Noah's Arc)

If you want to refer a young person to Carers Support, this can be completed via this link:

<https://www.carersbsg.org.uk/for-professionals/referring-a-young-carer>

As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk