

At The Meadows Academy, we are committed to ensuring that all students receive the support they need to have a **positive school experience**, feel **happy in school**, and achieve their **full potential**.

We recognise that for some students, factors outside of school can have a significant impact on this—particularly when there is someone in their family or a close friend who is ill, disabled, experiencing mental health difficulties, or affected by addiction. In every class, there may be students who help to support someone in this way—these students are known as **young carers**.

Understanding Young Carers

Young carers may support others in a range of ways, including:

- Providing **physical support**, such as helping a parent with a health condition (e.g. fibromyalgia or ME) with cooking, shopping, or daily tasks
- Supporting someone with a disability in more **personal ways**, such as dressing, mobility, or care routines
- Offering **emotional support**, such as comforting a sibling, supporting a parent with anxiety or depression, or taking responsibility for younger siblings
- Managing additional responsibilities at home or **worrying about a loved one's wellbeing**

Some young carers take on significant responsibilities, while others may do less but are still impacted by their circumstances. All are recognised and valued.

Our Approach

We recognise that **being a young carer is not, in itself, a social care issue**. Many families manage challenges successfully within their own family networks and do not require outside intervention.

However, we also understand there can sometimes be **feelings of stigma, privacy, or reluctance to share**. We are committed to working in a way that ensures **families and young carers feel respected, safe, and never judged**, with support offered sensitively and without intrusion.

We believe it is always better to be aware of potential young carers, even where families are managing well, so that **support can be put in place quickly if circumstances change**.

Our Commitments

Belonging

We are committed to ensuring young carers feel understood and included.

- We commit to **early identification** through sensitive and respectful approaches
- We commit to creating a **safe, trusting environment** where students can share if they choose
- We commit to ensuring young carers feel **valued, respected, and part of our community**

Becoming

We are committed to helping young carers thrive.

- We commit to supporting young carers in **thriving in education**, with high expectations and appropriate adjustments
- We commit to supporting **attendance at school**, responding flexibly where needed
- We commit to providing **freely available counselling** and emotional support
- We commit to supporting students to **develop hobbies, interests, and a sense of identity beyond their caring role**

Beyond

We are committed to removing barriers and broadening opportunities.

- We commit to supporting young carers to **attend enrichment activities, trips, and wider opportunities**
- We commit to ensuring they have **time for themselves**, recognising the importance of rest and wellbeing
- We commit to developing **confidence, independence, and future aspirations** so students can go beyond their current circumstances

Working with Families

There is a wide range of support available for young carers and their families, both within school and through external services.

If you believe your child may be a young carer, we encourage you to contact the school. Even if your family is managing well and does not feel support is needed, sharing this information helps us to:

- Better understand your child's experience
- Keep appropriate support ready if circumstances change
- Ensure your child continues to thrive in all aspects of school life

Our Promise

We will listen, understand, and act to ensure young carers at The Meadows Academy:

- ✓ Feel they **belong**
- ✓ Are supported to **become** confident, successful learners
- ✓ Are empowered to go **beyond** their circumstances and achieve their full potential