

**STUDENT CARER
POLICY**

Academic Year: 2020/21 onwards

Target Audience:

Students, College staff and Governing Body members.

Summary of Contents:

This Student Carer Policy outlines the challenges faced by students who have substantial caring commitments.

The College support services for student carers are explained and key staff identified.

Links with statutory partners are outlined and the process for referring students.

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Approval by:

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Related Documents:

Learning Support SOP

Safeguarding Care and Welfare Policy

Superseded Documents (if applicable):

Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Screening Information (Section 75):

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Student Carer policy version history

Version	Description of Changes	Date
1.0	Created	January 2021
1.1	Terms Young Carers and Young Adult Carers replaced with Student Carers.	February 2021

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1.0 Introduction

South Eastern Regional College values the work of carers and recognise that some students have substantial caring responsibilities at home which impacts their academic performance.

These students are commonly referred to as either Young Carers (16-18) or Young Adult Carers (18-25) - this policy will refer to both groups as Student Carers. Many student carers do not self-identify as carers and/or are reluctant to disclose their caring role. As a result, they miss out on vital support and have very little knowledge of their rights as carers.

The College is working towards achieving the Carers Federation 'Quality Standard in Carer Support' which will provide a robust management system to identify and support student carers, thereby potentially increasing their retention, attendance and achievement rates.

This policy sets out the support mechanisms to ensure no student carer is disadvantaged due to their caring role.

The policy applies to student carers who have regular caring responsibilities for a family member or friend who has a disability, mental health condition or dependency on drugs or alcohol.

2.0 Scope

This policy outlines the steps being taken by the College to recognise student carers as a vulnerable group and the resources to support their needs. Raising awareness for new and existing staff and links with external agencies is also covered.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

There are clear lines of responsibility regarding student carers within the College:

- The College Governing Body is accountable for ensuring there is a policy in place and that is adhered to;
- The College Senior Management Team is responsible for resourcing student carer support;
- The Lead Carer is responsible for implementing operational support and managing referrals with external stakeholders;
- All staff are responsible for encouraging student carers to use the college student carer services. All new and existing staff must complete the mandatory staff training module on student carers;
- Student carers are encouraged to review college practices for student carers and suggest improvements.

4.0 Strategic Commitment and Carer Rights

The College ethos supports recognising student carers as a vulnerable group and supporting them achieve their potential so they can become effective members of society. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 creates a duty on public bodies to have due regard to promote the equality of opportunity and protect student carers against discrimination because of their caring duties.

5.0 Raising Awareness

New and existing staff will receive training on the responsibilities and challenges faced by student carers. All staff will complete a mandatory staff training module and receive periodic updates from the Lead Carer on the support measures put in place by the college.

Prospective student carers will learn about the college support services for student carers through the college carers webpage. Student testimonials and links to external agencies will also be contained on this webpage.

Existing student carers will receive regular communications on the available services and the benefits to be gained in using them.

Post-primary schools in the college catchment area will receive periodic updates on the college resources available to prospective student carers. These updates will be channelled through the college School Partnership Manager and the college marketing team.

6.0 Lead Carer Role

The roles of the Lead Carer include:

- Development of systems to identify student carers and for them to request confidential support;
- Sharing of information to help students self-identify as student carers;
- Engage student carers to shape college resources for student carers and enhance networking;
- Utilise college resources including the Student's Union, Learning Support and Pastoral Care teams to support student carers;
- Raising awareness among new and existing staff of the challenges faced by student carers;
- Improve access to external carer support services using a multi-agency approach and manage referrals from the college.

7.0 Recognition & Support for Student Carers

The College will provide additional supportive measures for student carers including:

Early Identification

Research has shown student carers will not ask for assistance due to several negative connotations perceived to be associated with being a carer. The College will give student carers opportunities to anonymously identify themselves to the Lead Carer or delegate, including using the online application form and using the studentcarers@serc.ac.uk email address.

Student Carer cards

Student carers can apply for a Student Carer card. These can be shown discreetly to a lecturer should a student needs to leave class early or arrive at class late to fulfil a caring need.

Improving Educational Outcomes

The Lead Carer or delegate will explore with teaching teams, opportunities for flexibility with learning and coursework/assessment deadlines to ensure student carer progress with learning and assessment is not disadvantaged due to their caring role.

Quality Assured Provision

SERC have achieved the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) accreditation. Developed by carers, this demonstrates good practice in supporting carers in the wider community.

Assistance with completing referral forms for external carer support

The Lead Carer or delegate will assist student carers complete application forms for financial, physical and psychological support applications with external agencies including the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust and Action for Children.

Self-Care

Student carers often neglect themselves physically and mentally as an indirect result of their caring responsibilities. The Lead Carer or delegate will encourage student carers to avail of college well-being initiatives and other student activities organised by the Students Union, GoGreen and Enterprise teams.

8.0 Links with External Partners

The College will work with external partners to provide student carers with comprehensive support covering financial, physical, emotional and psychological support.

9.0 Improving Outcomes

The College will ensure key academic performance indicators for student carers are supported based on solid evidence. The College will do this by:

- Monitoring the number of student carers each academic year;
- Monitoring achievement and retention of student carers;
- Monitor student carer referrals to the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust and partners and the associated outcomes where possible;
- Carry out an annual self-evaluation of services provided for and involving student carers.

9.0 Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every 2 years, however if changes are required outside of this cycle to reflect changes in circumstance, this policy will be passed through the relevant approval processes at the earliest opportunity.