The Sir John Colfox Academy
Inspiring Learning, Achieving Excellence

The Sir John Colfox Academy
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Autumn Term 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Supporting Young Carers at Sir John Colfox Academy

It has been one year since I was appointed Young Carers Champion at Colfox School. During this time, we have made positive inroads not only in identifying Young Carers within our school, but also in fostering a culture of understanding around what it means to be a Young Carer. We have achieved this through assemblies, our weekly tutor programme, wall displays, and regular updates in the student bulletin. Through this work, we aim to break down barriers and eliminate stigmas surrounding young carers.

we adopt the comprehensive definition of a Young Carer, by the children's commissioner which is:

> *'Young Carers are young people under the age of 18 whose lives are affected by the care needs of someone they live with. This is usually a parent, sibling or grandparent. The person they care for could have physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health issues or problems with drug and alcohol use. Sometimes they may be affected by domestic violence. Young carers may help to provide practical and personal care and it is also important to realise the emotional impact of living with someone with disabilities or long-term illnesses, and that this is often more difficult to understand. Some tasks a young carer may undertake may be expected for someone of their age (e.g. babysitting or domestic chores) but the level to which a young carer is relied on to do this is often a lot higher than would be normal for a young person of their age. Some tasks may be considered inappropriate for a young person to undertake, especially in the case of personal care'*

I am extremely proud of our Wellbeing Pathway at Colfox School. We operate a layered support system where students are placed on a specific pathway and wave; as the wave level increases, so does the intensity of support provided. We collaborate with outstanding external partners, including the Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST)—who deliver exam stress workshops for Year 11 students—Social Prescribers, the Targeted Youth Service, School Counsellors, and specialized Young Carer counsellors through the charity Leonardo's. Additionally, our in-school support includes trained ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) practitioners.

Over the past year, our school has become a leader in the provision offered to Young Carers. In September 2026, we hosted a regional training day at Colfox, inviting school leaders to participate in workshops delivered by MYTIME. Furthermore, I was deeply honored to be nominated for and awarded **'Young Carers Champion for Dorset'**, which was fantastic recognition of the hard work our team and school have put into supporting these young people.

To complement these services, we host a weekly break-time group for Young Carers, supported generously by local businesses. Rise Bakery kindly donates a pastry for every Young Carer in the school every six weeks, Morrisons has provided funding toward the group, and several other local organizations are in the process of setting up support. Our overarching ethos at Colfox is to provide a complete network of wrap-around care, extending from our school directly into the wider community.

Looking ahead to the coming weeks, 8 of our Young Carers will take part in a 4-day employability programme designed to help them recognize how the skills they gain as carers transfer directly to the workplace. This initiative includes college tours and a work experience placement with a local business. We are also preparing for "Operation Christmas" (where every recognised Young Carer receives a gift bag) and hosting our first Young Carers Pupil Champions meeting. These student leaders will help run assemblies, design displays, and write bulletin updates to continue changing the narrative around young caring.

Over the next few weeks, the student champions and I will visit tutor groups to deliver a short presentation raising awareness of Young Carers and sharing first-hand perspectives on daily caring life. Following these presentations, students will be directed to this letter and the self-referral form linked below:

Young Carers Self-Referral Form

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's Head of Year, who are also fully knowledgeable on our Wellbeing Pathway.

Yours sincerely,

David Dummackin

Young Carers Champion

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