

Young Carers & KCSIE 2026

What schools need to know

KCSIE 2026 continues to identify Young Carers among the children for whom staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support. This now sits within the broader section "Support before statutory intervention".

Being a Young Carer does not, in itself, indicate that there is a safeguarding concern. However, caring responsibilities may form part of the wider picture of a child's needs and circumstances. Understanding those responsibilities can help schools consider what, if any, support or action may be appropriate.

In practice, Young Carers may be supporting someone with:



RECOGNISE

Could caring be part of this child's story?



Physical illness or disability



Mental ill health



Substance use



Additional needs



Other significant care or support needs

Their caring responsibilities may be practical, physical or emotional.

Look beyond what you can see:



UNDERSTAND

What are they doing, and what is the impact?



Absence



Lateness



Tiredness



Anxiety



Changes in behaviour



Difficulty concentrating



Reduced engagement

These indicators do not necessarily mean that a pupil is a Young Carer. However, patterns or changes may provide an opportunity to consider what is happening in the child's life and whether further conversation or support is needed.



RESPOND

What support or action, if any, is needed?

Identification is only the beginning

- What is the child doing?
- How often are they providing care?
- What is the nature and extent of their caring responsibilities?
- What impact is caring having on their education, wellbeing and development?
- Does the child or family need additional support?

Depending on the child's individual needs and circumstances, the response may include:

- School-based support
- Family help and wider support
- Referral to a Young Carers service
- Multi-agency working
- Safeguarding action where concerns are identified

Any response should be based on the individual child's needs and circumstances.

Identification should lead to understanding

Knowing that a child is a Young Carer is only the starting point. Schools should seek to understand the nature and impact of the child's caring responsibilities and consider what help, support or action may be appropriate to their individual needs and circumstances.