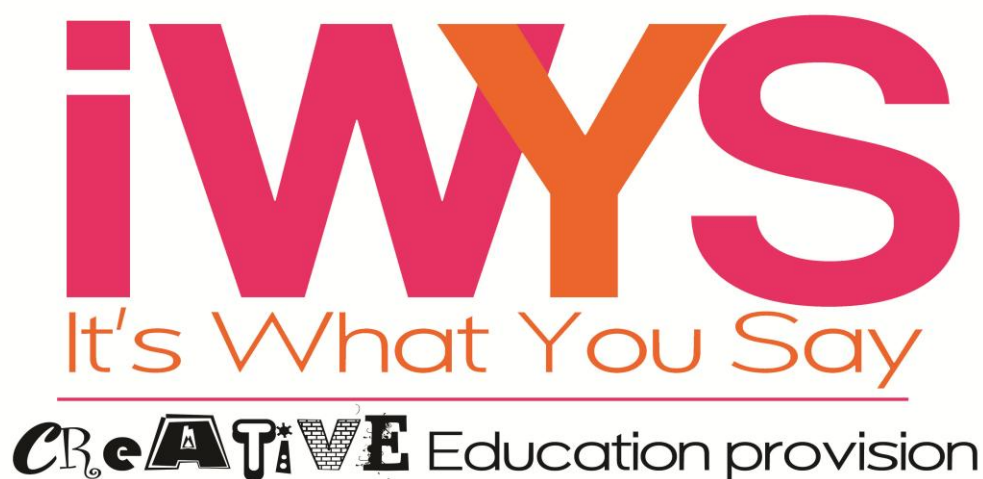




IWYS

Alternative Provision

Young Carers Policy

Document control	Details
Organisation	IWYS Alternative Provision
Policy status	Safeguarding / Pastoral
Applies to	All students attending IWYS Alternative Provision
Policy owner	IWYS - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Senior Leadership Team
Approved by	Charmaine Baines/ Proprietor /DSL
DDSL	Joy Baines
Effective from	September 2026
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Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Purpose
3. Legal and Statutory Framework
4. Definition of a Young Carer
5. Young Carers and Safeguarding
6. Early Identification
7. Disclosure by a Student
8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing
9. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
10. Role of All Staff
11. Assessment of Need
12. Young Carer Support Plan
13. Attendance
14. Educational Progress
15. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
16. Working with Parents and Carers
17. Working with Other Agencies
18. Safeguarding Referrals
19. Equality and Inclusion
20. Student Voice
21. Records and Monitoring
22. Staff Training
23. Preventing Stigma
24. Transition and Future Planning
25. Review of Support
26. Responsibilities
27. Staff Quick-Reference Procedure

28. Young Carer Support Information

29. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

30. Policy Review

Appendix 1 – Identification Checklist

Appendix 2 – Young Carer Support Plan

Appendix 3 – Key Policy Links

1. Policy Statement

IWYS Alternative Provision recognises that some children and young people have caring responsibilities for a parent, sibling, grandparent or another family member who has a disability, illness, mental health difficulty, substance misuse problem or other care or support need.

A young carer is a person under 18 who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person who is not being cared for as part of a contract or voluntary work.

Young caring responsibilities can affect attendance, punctuality, educational progress, concentration, emotional wellbeing, relationships, social opportunities and participation in education. IWYS is committed to identifying young carers early, understanding their individual circumstances and ensuring that they receive appropriate support while maintaining high expectations for their education and future.

2. Purpose

This policy ensures that IWYS identifies young carers early; provides a safe environment for disclosure; recognises the potential impact of caring responsibilities; responds appropriately to safeguarding concerns; provides proportionate support; works with families and relevant professionals; promotes regular attendance and engagement; helps young carers access appropriate support; prevents disadvantage; and ensures staff understand their responsibilities.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy should be read alongside IWYS safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, SEND, equality, medical needs, mental health and child protection policies.

It has been developed with regard to the Children Act 1989, Children and Families Act 2014, Care Act 2014, Equality Act 2010, Education Act 1996, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, current information-sharing guidance, relevant local authority arrangements and applicable data protection legislation.

4. Definition of a Young Carer

For this policy, IWYS uses the statutory understanding of a young carer: a person under 18 who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person who is not being cared for as part of a contract or voluntary work.

Examples can include preparing food, household tasks, shopping, helping someone move around the home, emotional support, helping to look after younger siblings, helping with communication or appointments, and supervision. Being helpful in a family does not automatically mean a child is a young carer; IWYS will consider the nature, frequency and impact of responsibilities and the student's own experience.

5. Young Carers and Safeguarding

Young caring responsibilities are not in themselves a safeguarding concern. However, early help or safeguarding intervention may be needed where caring is excessive or inappropriate for age; affects wellbeing or education; prevents social development; involves inappropriate physical tasks; involves medication or personal care beyond what is safe and appropriate; exposes the child to domestic abuse, substance misuse or serious parental mental health difficulties; leaves the child without appropriate supervision; or causes significant distress.

6. Early Identification

Identification may occur through student disclosure, tutor discussions, induction, attendance concerns, changes in behaviour or wellbeing, parent/carer information, referring-school information, social care, health professionals, SEND assessment, pastoral reviews or safeguarding discussions.

Staff should not wait for a formal declaration if there are reasonable indicators of significant caring responsibilities.

7. Disclosure by a Student

If a student discloses that they are a young carer, staff should listen calmly, take the disclosure seriously, thank the student, avoid judgement, avoid promising confidentiality, establish whether there is an immediate safeguarding concern, record accurately, inform the DSL or Deputy DSL promptly, follow safeguarding procedures where necessary and ensure the student knows that appropriate support will be considered.

8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information about caring responsibilities will be treated sensitively. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information indicates that a child or another person may be at risk of harm. IWYS will share information where necessary, proportionate and lawful to safeguard and support the child, in line with safeguarding and data protection procedures.

9. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL has overall safeguarding responsibility for young carers. The DSL will ensure staff understand indicators; oversee identification and recording; assess concerns; coordinate support; liaise with families, referring schools and professionals; make referrals where appropriate; monitor attendance and progress; review support plans; maintain records; and ensure appropriate information sharing.

10. Role of All Staff

Staff should recognise that caring responsibilities may affect attendance, punctuality, concentration, behaviour, appearance, emotional wellbeing, relationships and learning. A student's caring responsibilities

should not automatically be interpreted as poor motivation, laziness, defiance or lack of commitment. Concerns should be discussed with DSL – Charmaine Baines

11. Assessment of Need

Assessment should consider education (attendance, progress, engagement and future plans), wellbeing (stress, fatigue, anxiety, social isolation and recreation), caring responsibilities (what, how often, duration and age appropriateness), safety, family circumstances and existing support.

12. Young Carer Support Plan

Where appropriate, IWYS may create an individual Young Carer Support Plan. This may cover attendance, punctuality, learning support, work completion, pastoral check-ins, emotional support, safeguarding, careers, family support and review arrangements. Support will be individualised rather than automatically applied to every young carer.

13. Attendance

IWYS recognises that caring responsibilities may contribute to attendance difficulties. Where attendance is a concern, IWYS will explore reasons, consider caring responsibilities, speak with the student and parents/carers as appropriate, liaise with the referring school where applicable, consider early help or referral, and develop an attendance support plan where necessary. Attendance remains subject to IWYS's Attendance Policy and applicable statutory requirements.

14. Educational Progress

IWYS will monitor whether caring responsibilities affect educational progress. Support may include additional learning support, structured study time, catch-up opportunities, scaffolding, reasonable flexibility around completion of work, mentoring and careers guidance. Support should promote independence and achievement rather than lower expectations.

15. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Staff should be alert to tiredness, withdrawal, anxiety, low mood, frustration, emotional outbursts, concentration difficulties, reduced engagement and social isolation. Staff should not diagnose mental health conditions. Concerns should be discussed with the DSL or appropriate pastoral lead and safeguarding procedures followed where required.

16. Working with Parents and Carers

IWYS aims to work collaboratively with parents and carers, listening to family circumstances, considering the student's views, identifying practical difficulties and signposting to appropriate services. Where contacting a parent/carers immediately could increase risk, the DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

17. Working with Other Agencies

Depending on circumstances, support may involve children's social care, young carers services, adult social care, health services, mental health services, family support, the referring school, voluntary/community

organisations, substance misuse services or domestic abuse services. Local authority referral routes should be checked before referral.

18. Safeguarding Referrals

Where IWYS believes a student may be at risk of significant harm, the DSL will follow safeguarding procedures and make an appropriate referral. Concerns may include abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, serious parental substance misuse, significant household mental health concerns, dangerous caring responsibilities, serious self-neglect, lack of appropriate supervision or exploitation. Immediate danger requires emergency action.

19. Equality and Inclusion

IWYS will ensure that young carers are not unfairly discriminated against because of their caring responsibilities. Young carers should have equal opportunities to access education, develop friendships, participate in activities, achieve qualifications, receive careers guidance, develop independence and prepare for further education, training or employment.

20. Student Voice

IWYS will seek the student's views when assessing need. Students should be encouraged to explain what they do, what they find difficult, what support would help, whether they feel safe, how caring affects education, what they want adults to understand and what their aspirations are.

21. Records and Monitoring

Appropriate records may include identification date, source, nature of responsibilities, assessment of need, support, referrals, meetings, attendance, progress, safeguarding actions and review dates. Records must be stored securely and handled in accordance with IWYS data protection procedures.

22. Staff Training

Relevant staff will receive appropriate safeguarding training and understand what a young carer is, potential indicators, impact on education and wellbeing, responding to disclosure, when to involve the DSL, safeguarding thresholds, information sharing and available local support.

23. Preventing Stigma

IWYS will avoid language or practices that stigmatise young carers. Many young people may be proud of supporting their families. The aim is not to remove positive family relationships unnecessarily, but to ensure caring responsibilities are safe, appropriate and do not prevent healthy development or educational achievement.

24. Transition and Future Planning

For students approaching post-16 education, training or employment, IWYS will consider how caring responsibilities may affect transition. Support may include careers discussions, applications, vocational

planning, apprenticeships, transport planning, discussion of future caring responsibilities and signposting to support services.

25. Review of Support

Young Carer Support Plans should be reviewed at appropriate intervals. Reviews should consider attendance, educational progress, changes in caring circumstances, wellbeing, effectiveness of support, need for external agency involvement, safeguarding risk and the student's views.

26. Responsibilities

The Proprietor/Management ensures implementation and review. The DSL has overall safeguarding responsibility. Deputy DSLs support the DSL. Tutors and teachers identify concerns and provide appropriate support. Pastoral staff monitor wellbeing. Attendance leads monitor patterns. All staff listen, respond appropriately and report concerns. Parents/carers work with IWYS where appropriate. Students participate in support planning where appropriate and safe.

27. Staff Quick-Reference Procedure

NOTICE → LISTEN → RECORD → REPORT → SUPPORT → REVIEW

NOTICE: Look for attendance, punctuality, behaviour, wellbeing or learning changes.

LISTEN: Give the student time to talk.

RECORD: Record factual information accurately.

REPORT: Inform the DSL or Deputy DSL.

SUPPORT: Consider pastoral, educational and external support.

REVIEW: Monitor wellbeing, attendance and progress.

Stage	Action
NOTICE	Look for changes in attendance, punctuality, behaviour, wellbeing or learning.
LISTEN	Give the student time to talk and avoid judgement.
RECORD	Record factual information accurately.
REPORT	Inform the DSL or Deputy DSL promptly.
SUPPORT	Consider pastoral, educational and external support.
REVIEW	Continue to monitor wellbeing, attendance and progress.

28. Young Carer Support Information

IWYS will maintain an up-to-date list of relevant local and national services. Depending on location, families may be signposted to the local authority Young Carers Service, children's social care, early-help services, Carers Trust, Carers UK and relevant health services. Local services and referral routes should be checked before referral.

29. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Effectiveness will be monitored through the number of identified young carers, attendance data, educational progress, safeguarding records, support-plan reviews, student feedback, parent/carers feedback, referrals and outcomes, and staff feedback. The DSL will review whether young carers are identified promptly and supported effectively.

30. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, KCSIE, Working Together, local safeguarding arrangements or IWYS procedures change. Next scheduled review: September 2027.

Appendix 1 – Young Carer Identification Checklist

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Tutor/key worker: _____

Possible indicators:

- ☐ Frequent lateness
- ☐ Unexplained absence
- ☐ Tiredness/fatigue
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating
- ☐ Anxiety or emotional distress
- ☐ Withdrawal from peers
- ☐ Sudden change in behaviour
- ☐ Difficulty completing work
- ☐ Concern about leaving home
- ☐ Regularly discusses responsibilities at home
- ☐ Looks after siblings
- ☐ Supports a parent/relative with illness or disability
- ☐ Provides emotional support to an adult
- ☐ Other: _____

Student's own description of responsibilities:

Immediate safeguarding concern? ☐ No ☐ Yes – DSL informed ☐ Emergency action required

Action taken:

DSL informed: _____ Date: _____ Review date: _____

Appendix 2 – Young Carer Support Plan

Student: _____ Date: _____

Review date: _____

My caring responsibilities

How these responsibilities affect me

What I would like adults at IWYS to understand

My education – attendance / learning / support required

My wellbeing – what helps me / who I can speak to

External support or referrals

Student's views

Support	Person responsible	Review date

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Staff signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/carer signature (where appropriate): _____ Appendix 3 – Key Policy Links

Use the latest versions of the following documents when implementing this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – GOV.UK
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 – GOV.UK
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners – GOV.UK
- School Census 2026–27 – Young Carer Indicator – GOV.UK

Document control note: This policy should be checked against the latest published statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements before formal approval.