



Supporting Young Carers in Education Settings

Strategic leadership for equity: ensuring young carers are not left behind.

Autumn 2025

Recent national data and reports show that young carers remain at a significant disadvantage in education. This bulletin highlights key findings on attendance, suspensions/ exclusions, and Ofsted's new inspection framework, with practical recommendations for school leaders.

Key insights on young carers

- **Attendance:** Young carers miss an average of 23 days per year (vs 14 for peers). Nearly half of secondary young carers (46%) are persistently absent. Caring responsibilities contribute to lateness.
- **Suspensions & Exclusions:** Young carers are more than twice as likely to be suspended (27 suspensions per 100 vs 11 for peers) and almost twice as likely to be permanently excluded. Rates are highest in secondary schools.
- **Wellbeing & School Experience:** Almost half (48%) report being bullied; many struggle with homework and revision due to caring duties. One in four report "no support at all" in their school.
- **Attainment:** Young carers are significantly less likely to achieve GCSE and A-Level benchmarks and to progress to higher education. An All-Party Parliamentary Review for Young Adult Carer access to Higher Education is in progress. The findings of the report will be published and launched in Parliament on Monday 12th January.

Ofsted's new inspection framework (from Nov 2025)

The new inspection framework and toolkit for education providers has included multiple references to young carers in both inclusion and attendance sections, expected as standard. This is included in toolkits for state-funded schools, academies, non-association independent schools, FE/Skills and initial teacher training.

- **Inclusion** is now a core evaluation area and a "golden thread" across inspections
- Inspectors will look at how schools **identify and support** vulnerable pupils, including young carers, in attendance, achievement, wellbeing and behaviour.
- Schools will need to evidence effective systems of identification of young carers, and how they adapt support to remove barriers to their attendance, achievement, and wellbeing.



School Census – Top Tips for Recording Young Carers

The date for 2025/26 data collection on Young Carers is **January 15th 2026**. This is the only census within the academic year which captures this data.

1. Accurately Code

Schools will be asked to record the information using the following codes.

Note, the default value will be 'N', not declared. This is not a mandatory field, and it is possible to move to the next stage of the census without completing this field. In 2025, Nationally, 69% of schools reported they have no young carers in their school.

Code	Young Carer indicator
N	Not declared
P	Identified as a young carer by parent or guardian
S	Identified as a young carer by school

For young carers identified by the school (e.g. a young carer self-identified on the back of an assembly, tutor time or pastoral support), use the 'S' code, identified as a young carer by school. For a young carer identified by the parents/carers or local young carers service, use code 'P', identified by parent/guardian.

Note, an education setting does not need a Young Carers Service to confirm whether a young person is a young carer. This may result in some young carers not being identified should there be barriers to them accessing an external support service.

2. Ensure Accurate Information

Family Action works closely with school staff when supporting young carers in RBWM, and has registered and directly supported young carers in most education settings in RBWM. Yet in 2025, 53% of schools in RBWM reported they have no young carers.

Not all school systems have a method for identifying a pupil as a young carer. It is important that those that know who their young carers are (trained Young Carer Champions, DSLs, pastoral staff) pass this information on to those who populate the data in the school census.

3. Identify & Support

Once you have an accurate understanding of which pupils are juggling caring alongside their education, seek to find ways to support them with this balance (flexible homework, attendance support, pastoral care).



Recommendations for education providers

To prepare for inspection and improve outcomes for young carers:

1. Appoint a **Young Carer Lead/Champion** – ensure all staff and pupils know who this is.
2. Adopt a **Young Carers Policy** – set out clear support (flexibility with attendance, homework, mobile phone use for emergencies).
3. **Improve Identification & Recording** – actively capture young carers on enrolment and census returns; ensure accurate reporting.
4. **Strengthen Support** – provide pastoral support, access to phones, young carer groups, and mental health/wellbeing provision.
5. **Evidence Impact** – keep records of interventions, attendance data, and pupil voice to show inspectors.
6. **Raise Awareness** – train staff and pupils/families to understand young carers' challenges; reduce stigma and improve peer awareness.

Key message for education providers

Young carers are at higher risk of absence, suspension, and exclusion, yet often remain hidden. With Ofsted now scrutinising inclusion more closely, schools must demonstrate robust identification and support. Proactive action will not only improve inspection outcomes but, crucially, will help close the education gap for young carers.

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For further information and resources, visit our [website](#)

References

All Party Parliamentary Group (Nov 2023) [Inquiry into the life opportunities of young carers and young adult carers](#)

Carers Trust (2024) [Caring and classes: the education gap for young carers](#)

Carers Trust (July 2025) [Young Carers and suspensions/exclusions from school](#)

Gov UK (Sept 2025) [Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025](#)

Young Carers in Schools [Young Carers and the School Census](#)