

DUDLEY YOUNG CARERS

Creating Young Carer Friendly Schools



CONTENTS

- Carer Friendly School
- Importance of being Carer Friendly
- School Award
- School Award Guide
- Young Carers Champion
- Young Carers Action Plan
- Young Carer Comments

CARER FRIENDLY SCHOOL

What is a Carer Friendly School?

A Young Carer Friendly School is one that recognises, understands, and supports pupils who help care for a family member with an illness, disability, mental health condition, or substance misuse issue. It's a school where staff are trained to spot the signs that a pupil might have caring responsibilities and know how to respond with sensitivity and support. Being Young Carer Friendly means creating an inclusive culture where children feel safe to talk about their caring role without fear of stigma or judgement. These schools have a named Young Carer Champion who acts as a key contact for pupils and families, clear policies and referral pathways for identifying and supporting Young Carers, and visible information around the school showing that help is available. They work closely with local services, such as Dudley Young Carers, to make sure families can access additional support, respite, and wellbeing activities. Young Carer Friendly Schools also adapt their teaching and pastoral support to meet individual needs — for example, offering flexible deadlines, quiet spaces, or emotional check-ins — so that caring responsibilities don't prevent pupils from reaching their full potential. Most importantly, these schools celebrate the kindness, resilience, and skills that Young Carers bring, ensuring they are recognised not just as children with responsibilities, but as valued members of a caring, compassionate school community.

Key Characteristics of a Young Carer Friendly School

- **Whole-School Awareness**

All staff understand who Young Carers are, the challenges they face, and how to support them. Awareness is built into training, assemblies, PSHE, and safeguarding.

- **Named Young Carer Lead**

A trained, visible staff member acts as the main point of contact for Young Carers, families, and staff.

- **Clear Identification and Referral**

Staff know how to recognise Young Carers and refer sensitively to local support such as Dudley Young Carers, using a simple and confidential process.

- **Listening and Involving Young Carers**

Young Carers have a voice in school decisions and access safe spaces where they feel heard and understood.

- **Flexible, Inclusive Support**

Schools make reasonable adjustments — like flexible deadlines, quiet spaces, or counselling — to help Young Carers balance learning and caring.

- **Celebration and Recognition**

Young Carers are celebrated through events, awards, and awareness days that highlight their resilience and kindness.

- **Joined-Up Support**

Schools work closely with families and local services to ensure coordinated, family-centred support.



IMPORTANCE OF BEING YC FRIENDLY

1. Young Carers Are Everywhere — and Often Hidden

Across the UK, it's estimated that 1 in 5 pupils are Young Carers, yet many remain unidentified because they don't realise they are one, or they're afraid to tell anyone. Without this recognition, these pupils can feel invisible, isolated, or overwhelmed, and schools may miss signs that they need help.

Being a Young Carer Friendly School ensures these children are seen, valued, and supported before problems grow.

2. Caring Can Affect Education and Wellbeing

Caring responsibilities can have a major impact on learning and development.

Young Carers are:

- Twice as likely to miss school or arrive late, resulting in them falling behind or disengaging.
- More likely to experience tiredness, anxiety, or difficulty concentrating.

When schools are Young Carer Friendly, they make simple adjustments — like flexible homework deadlines, trusted adults to talk to, and access to wellbeing support — which can make all the difference to a child's progress and happiness.

3. Early Support Prevents Crisis

Identifying and supporting Young Carers early helps prevent:

- School exclusion or absenteeism.
- Family breakdown or caring burnout.
- Mental health struggles in both the child and the person they care for.

When schools create safe spaces to talk and link families with services like Dudley Young Carers, they help families access help before a crisis occurs.

4. Creates An Empathetic and Fully Inclusive School

Young Carers often develop incredible skills — empathy, responsibility, time management, and maturity. A Young Carer Friendly School celebrates these strengths while making sure pupils also have time to just be children.

When pupils feel understood and included, they're more likely to:

- Feel confident to talk about their home life.
- Attend school regularly and reaching their full potential.
- Build positive friendships.

5. Strengthens the Whole School Community

When schools recognise Young Carers, they promote a wider culture of kindness, inclusion, and respect. This benefits every pupil, not just those with caring roles, by teaching empathy and social responsibility. It also deepens partnerships between schools, families, and community organisations, creating a network of support that uplifts the entire school community.

6. Because It's a Legal and Moral Responsibility

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Care Act 2014, and the Education Act 2002, schools and local authorities have duties to identify, safeguard, and support children in need, including Young Carers.

Being a Young Carer Friendly School isn't just about meeting those duties.

It is about doing what's right: ensuring that every child, no matter their circumstances, has the chance to learn, play, and thrive.



CARER FRIENDLY SCHOOL AWARD

Being a Carer Friendly School means recognising, valuing, and supporting pupils who care for a family member at home. It involves creating a safe and understanding environment where Young Carers feel seen, heard, and supported to achieve their full potential. Carer Friendly Schools raise awareness across the whole school community, offer flexible support when needed, and work in partnership with families and local Young Carer services. By embedding Carer awareness into school culture, policies, and practice, schools can make a lasting difference in the lives of Young Carers.

Step 1 - Appoint a member of staff within school to be the Young Carers Champion.

Step 2 - Attend a NYC online training session on how to identify and support Young Carers.

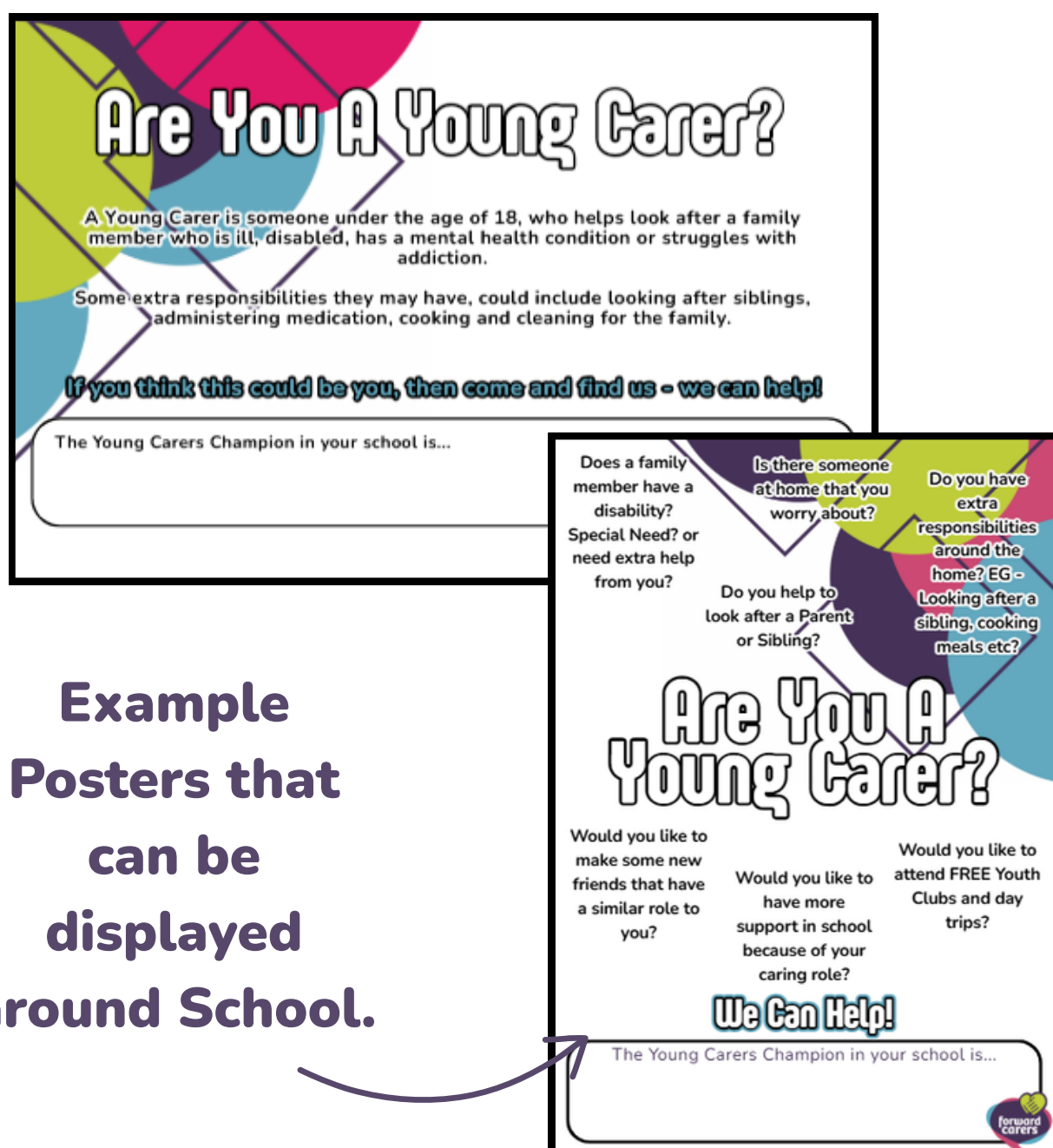
Step 3 - Communicate with Parents and Carers.

Step 4 - Promoting Awareness around the School.

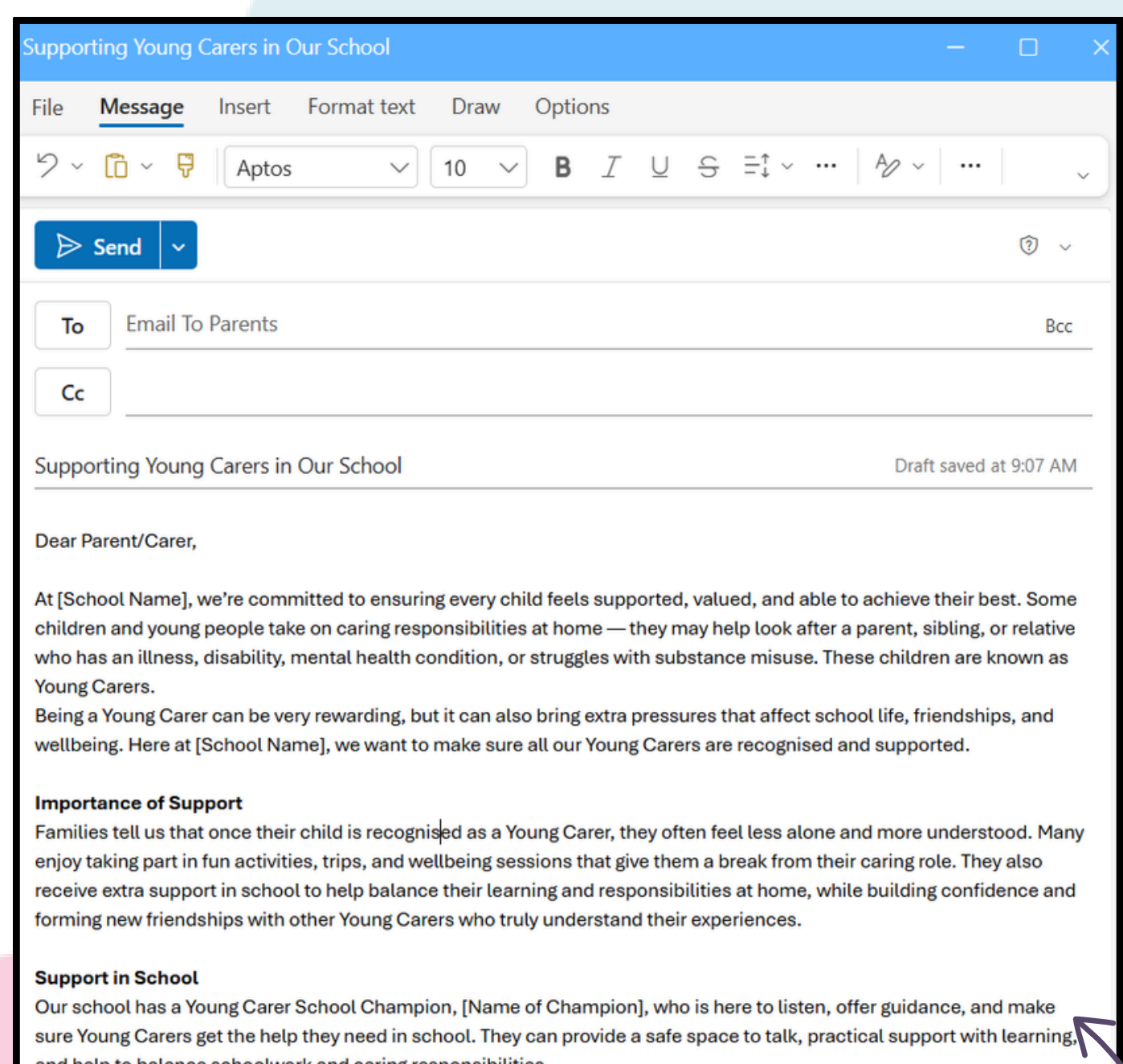
Step 5 - Form a Young Carers Action Plan & School Policy.

Step 6 - Record the number of Young Carers on the school Census.

Supportive resources can be found in the resource pack.



Example Posters that can be displayed around School.



Example email that could be sent to Parents.



Badge able to be worn by the Young Carers Champion.



SCHOOL AWARD GUIDE

Step 1 – Appoint a Young Carers Champion

Every school needs a dedicated staff member to lead on identifying, supporting, and celebrating Young Carers.

Actions

- Nominate a staff member (teacher, pastoral lead, or SENCo) to act as the Young Carer Champion.
- Inform all staff, pupils, and parents who this is.
- Display their photo and contact details on the Young Carers noticeboard and school website.

Step 2 – Attend Dudley Young Carers (DYC) Online Training

To ensure staff understand who Young Carers are, how to identify them, and what support is available through school and local services.

Actions

- Book a place on a DYC training session for all key staff.
- Share learning with wider staff team (e.g. through staff meetings or newsletters).

Step 3 – Raise Awareness Among Parents and Carers

To help families recognise when their child might be a Young Carer and understand what support is available through school.

Actions

- Send a newsletter or email to all parents introducing Young Carer support (see sample letter above).
- Include information on the school website and social media.
- Offer confidential conversations with the Young Carer Champion.

Step 4 – Promote Visibility Across School

To ensure all pupils and staff know who the Young Carer Champion is and where support can be found.

Actions

- Display posters around the school explaining what a Young Carer is and how to get help.
- Ensure the Young Carer Champion wears a badge or lanyard to make them approachable.
- Create a Young Carers noticeboard (in a corridor or wellbeing area).
- Hold an assembly or PSHE lesson to raise awareness.

Step 5 – Develop a Young Carers Action Plan and Policy

To embed Young Carer awareness into the school's ethos, curriculum, and support systems.

Actions

- Create a Young Carers Policy (with relevant approval).
- Develop a Young Carers Action Plan covering:
 - Identification and support processes
 - Awareness and inclusion
 - Partnership working with DYC
 - Review and monitoring

Step 6 – Record and Review

To ensure Young Carers are recognised and supported through school systems and data.

Actions

- Record the number of Young Carers identified on the School Census.
- Keep a confidential register for internal tracking (managed by the Young Carer Champion and DSL).
- Review attendance, progress, and wellbeing regularly.
- Report to governors annually on outcomes and impact.



YOUNG CARERS CHAMPION

It is important that as many Dudley schools have a Young Carers Champion — a named staff member who identifies and supports pupils with caring responsibilities. Young Carers are often hidden, and without someone looking out for them, they may struggle in silence. A Champion ensures these pupils are recognised, valued, and connected to the right support.

Key Responsibilities of a Young Carers Champion

1. Identification and Awareness

- Leads efforts to identify Young Carers, working with teachers, pastoral staff, and safeguarding leads.
- Raises awareness across the school community — through assemblies, displays, PSHE sessions, and staff training.
- Helps create a culture where Young Carers feel safe to disclose their caring role.

2. Support and Advocacy

- Acts as a trusted adult that Young Carers can speak to.
- Ensures appropriate pastoral or academic support is in place — such as homework flexibility or time-out cards.
- Advocates on behalf of Young Carers in school meetings, transitions, or care planning.

3. Referral and Partnership

- Gains consent from families and makes referrals to Dudley Young Carers.
- Keeps up-to-date with support offers and eligibility criteria.

4. Staff Engagement and Training

- Ensures all staff understand who Young Carers are and how to spot the signs.
- Coordinates training opportunities and shares relevant resources with colleagues.
- Encourages a whole-school approach to supporting Young Carers.

5. Recognition and Celebration

- Supports the school to take part in Young Carers Action Day and other awareness campaigns.
- Helps ensure that Young Carers' achievements are celebrated and their contributions are recognised.

Why the Role Matters

Young Carers often go unnoticed, but having a visible and named Young Carers Champion in school can make a real difference. It ensures that there is always someone looking out for them and signals clearly that the school recognises and supports pupils with caring responsibilities. It also helps staff, pupils, and families know exactly who they can approach for guidance or support.

A Young Carers Champion doesn't need to have all the answers — they just need to be present, proactive, and passionate about making a difference.



CHAMPION ACTION PLAN

School Example Action Plan

Having a Young Carers Action Plan is really important because it turns good intentions into real action. It gives the School Champion a clear structure, helps track progress, and makes sure supporting Young Carers doesn't get lost among other priorities.

Below is a great example of a Young Carers Action plan - blank template in Resources pack.

Example Goals	Easy (This Week)	Medium (3-12 Months)	Long-Term (12+ Months)
Awareness	Put up posters	Conversation about being a Champion at Staff meetings and training sessions.	At the start of every school year, hold an assembly to all students, and a staff training session.
	YC Champion to wear the badge	Section to be added about YC to the school website.	Website kept up to date.
Encourage	Note down key dates for National YC Awareness Days.	Create a YC Ambassador Role for one student per year group	Ambassador to help identify YC and help plan the yearly Awareness Day.
Identify	Email to Parents the "Are you are Young Carer quiz"	Create a register of all YC in the school. Refer to Dudley Young Carers.	Completing the School Census.
Organise	Start creating a YC support group	Termly YC group check in Young Carers Policy created/ updated.	Yearly YC Awareness Day/ Event.
Understand	Attend this training	Termly refresh on YC resources	Attend yearly DYC Conference.

Our Young Carer Action Plan is built around five main goals — Awareness, Encourage, Identify, Organise, and Understand.

To make them easy to remember, each goal begins with one of the five vowels: A, E, I, O, U. Together, they form a simple framework that guides schools to recognise, support, and celebrate Young Carers effectively.

Each goal is broken down into achievable steps over different timeframes to help schools progress at their own pace:

- Easy (This Week) – Quick wins or immediate actions that can be started straight away, such as displaying posters or nominating a Young Carer Champion.
- Medium (3–12 Months) – Development goals that take more planning, like staff training, policy updates, or building partnerships with Dudley Young Carers.
- Long Term (12+ Months) – Sustainable goals focused on embedding Young Carer awareness into school culture, curriculum, and leadership strategy.

This tiered approach helps schools make steady, meaningful progress — starting small, growing stronger, and ultimately becoming a fully Young Carer Friendly School where every pupil feels seen, supported, and valued.



DYC EVIDENCE GUIDE

To achieve and maintain your Young Carer Friendly School status, schools should keep clear and consistent evidence showing how they meet each standard.

This guide outlines what to record, how to store it, and examples of good evidence for each step.

Step 1 – Appoint a Young Carer Champion

Every school should have a designated staff member responsible for leading Young Carer support. This person acts as the main contact for pupils, families, and staff.

Examples of Evidence

- A copy of the email sent out to parents introducing the Young Carers Champion.
- Introduction photo or profile of the Champion on the school website or newsletter.

Step 2 – Attend a DYC Online Training Session

Key staff (including the Champion and Safeguarding Lead) should attend training from Dudley Young Carers (DYC) on identifying and supporting Young Carers.

Examples of Evidence

- No evidence needed for this one.

Step 3 – Communicate with Parents and Carers

Raise awareness among families by sharing information about Young Carers, how the school can help, and who to contact.

Examples of Evidence

- Copy of the newsletter or email sent to parents.
- Screenshot of the message on the school website or app.
- Parent feedback or responses (if collected).

Step 4 – Promote Awareness Around School

Make Young Carer support visible across the school so pupils know help is available and staff can easily signpost.

Examples of Evidence

- Photos of posters, displays, or noticeboards in school.
- Assembly plan or PSHE lesson plan raising awareness.
- Photo of the Champion wearing their badge/lanyard.

Step 5 – Develop a Young Carers Policy and Action Plan

Set out how your school identifies, supports, and celebrates Young Carers through a clear policy and measurable goals.

Examples of Evidence

- Signed and dated Young Carers Policy.
- Young Carers Action Plan showing short, medium, and long-term goals (A, E, I, O, U framework).

Step 6 – Record Young Carer Data on the School Census

Schools should track the number of identified Young Carers and record them appropriately in the census and internal systems.

Examples of Evidence

- Census report showing Young Carer figures.
- Confidential internal register of identified Young Carers (held securely).

Evidence doesn't need to be lengthy or complicated — just clear, dated, and authentic.

Show how your school recognises, supports, and celebrates Young Carers through visible actions, consistent processes, and measurable outcomes.



YOUNG CARERS COMMENTS

“Trying to remember everything is hard. I have to make sure the house is clean, but I have so much homework”

“Lessons just aren’t my priority right now. My head just isn’t at school”

“Sometimes I worry about if my Mom is coping at home. Her mental health is really bad”

“Everyone thinks that because I am the oldest I can handle it, but I cant and I feel guilty all the time”

“If I tell someone I am struggling, they will put us in care and I don’t want that”

“My teacher isn’t going to believe that I just didn’t have time to do my homework...”

“No one knows I am a Young Carer at school, how would I even tell them?”

“I like my teacher and I could talk to her but she has other kids in the class that need her more than me”

“When my brother is up all night, I get no sleep. I am so tired for school then”

“I need to remember when my Mom has to go to the doctors. She always forgets and she needs to go”

“My Dad started chemo yesterday and I had to go to school. I didn’t concentrate all day”

“I get detentions when I am late but I have to take my little sister to school first”

