

Identifying and Supporting Young Carers in Education during the Covid-19 Crisis

Young carers are a particularly vulnerable group during lockdown and many of us are disadvantaged by home learning due to family illness/disability and additional pressures at home. Some young people may also become carers as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown, due to increases in ill health and substance misuse, and lack of access to services and support. Education staff can make a really big difference though. Here's some simple ways you can help!

Our Top Tips

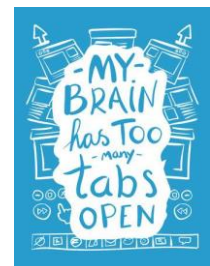
Top Tip 1 – Wellbeing

Caring is hard and can go really up and down, especially in lockdown! We need **someone to talk to regularly** who we can trust and who understands about our caring. Ask our tutor or another person we know **to call us each week** to see how we are coping, not just to talk to us about work.

And **please make appointments** to talk to us – don't just ring out of the blue. We need time to prepare and find a space that is private so we can really tell you how we are.

When you call, please **talk to us, not just our parents**. They might say everything is fine because they're worried what you'll think.

And having a specific **email address that students can contact** if they're struggling at this time could really help too!



Top Tip 2 – Home learning

Many of us don't have the equipment or internet access we need to study at home. We also don't have quiet space and our families are often too ill to help us with studying. It can be really hard to focus too, especially when we have siblings with special needs. **Check with us what support and equipment we need** to help us do our best at home and help us get it, especially if we have disabilities/learning needs and need specialist equipment to be able to learn.

Please turn over...

Young carers are children and young people who provide care for family members who have physical or mental illnesses, disabilities or substance misuse issues. 1 in 12 young people are young carers.

Thanks to all the young carers from these organisations who created these tips (June 2020)



Top Tip 3 – Workloads

The amount of work we're being sent can feel **overwhelming** but we feel embarrassed and worried to ask for help. And in lockdown, we have to prioritise our family's needs over school work. Please always **clearly tell us what work we HAVE to do** and when the deadlines are but also **offer understanding and extra help** if we're getting behind.

And if it isn't safe for us to go back when other students do, please give us extra help – **we shouldn't have to fall behind** because of our caring.

Recording online lessons would really help too so we can watch them at a different time if we have to leave our computers suddenly due to our caring.

And please **understand if we have to be quiet** during online classes – our family might be ill and asleep so we can't always talk loud.



Top Tip 4 – Returning to school/college

Some of us have found balancing caring and learning easier at home, and for others, our families have become more reliant on us over lockdown. Many of our families are high risk too, so we're worried about going back to school/college. We need **lots of information** and notice to help us and our families prepare and feel safe about going back.

Even if you don't know stuff yet, please tell us you don't know... waiting with no information makes us and our families even more anxious!

It would help us to have **photos/videos** of what ALL rooms and areas will look like so we can prepare. We also might need help to get new **uniform** if we've outgrown ours and to know there will be **flexibility** once we go back (a safe space to go if we feel overwhelmed, phased returns or reduced timetables, and flexibility if our families are ill could all really help). We'd also like **PPE** if this is available to help keep us and our families safe.

Top Tip 5 - Transition

If we are moving up to your school, college or university this September, **get in touch** with us to let us know if/when we will be starting and **what support will be on offer for carers** when we get there (pastoral, financial etc).

Virtual tours or meetings with staff could help us feel more at ease too.

Top Tip 6 -Transport

Many of us have family members at high risk from Covid19 so feel anxious about travelling on public transport to school/college.

Find out if you can offer any **other transport options** to get us there more safely.

Top Tip 7- Hidden and New Young Carers

Lots of young carers aren't known to their schools or colleges. Send out **monthly wellbeing surveys** or use other ways to **contact all students and families** acknowledging the impact of lockdown and asking if anyone at home is struggling with mental or physical ill-health, disability or drugs/alcohol. This could make people feel less alone and help them know that support is available. Again, having a specific **email address that students can contact** if they're caring and struggling could really help too!

