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Dear Parent/Carer

Identifying and supporting Young Carers at Bridgwater College Academy

We are committed to ensuring that all students get the support they need to have a positive school experience, are happy in school and can achieve their fullest potential.

We know that for some students, factors outside of school can have a big impact on this, particularly if there is someone in their family or a friend who is ill, disabled, or has a mental health problem or an addiction. Research indicates that in every class there could be as many as 2 pupils who are helping to support someone because of one of these factors; we call these students **young carers**.

Students can be young carers for lots of different reasons:

- They might be providing physical support to a parent with a physical illness such as fibromyalgia or ME, including cooking, fetching things or helping with things like putting shoes on or doing the shopping.

- They might be helping a parent with a disability who needs support with more personal tasks such as getting dressed, bathing, or changing dressings

- Or it could be more emotional support – like being there if their autistic sibling is upset, taking responsibility for young siblings whilst parents attend health appointments, or checking that a parent with depression/anxiety is ok.

Some young carers might be doing lots of caring, others just a small amount but are impacted by the situation at home. This can be anything, for example worrying about the person with the health condition or needing to do more things for themselves compared to other students.

There is lots of support available for young carers and their families should they ever need it – both inside and outside of school. You can find out more information about support available by visiting the Somerset Carers website. and the Somerset Local Offer.

If you think that any of the above applies to your child, and that they could possibly be a young carer, please contact Sally Bowes, 07744 548 0350. Even if you feel your child or family are doing really well and don't need any support, we find that it's better for us to be aware and have them on our radar as potential young carers, in case the situation suddenly changes, and they (or you) do need support. It just means that you and your child don't have to start from scratch with letting us know what is going on if things have become difficult.

You can find information about our school's commitment to supporting Young Carers on our website.

Yours faithfully,

Sally Bowes, Young Carers' School Operational Lead