



PROCEDURE	Student Carers Support Procedure
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Date	Version/Pages/Sections affected	Summary of changes
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1. Procedure Statement

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect on 1st April 2018.¹ The Act extends and enhances the rights of carers. The legislation helps ensure better and more consistent support for both adult carers and young carers. Education and training for carers is one of the areas included under part 6 of the Act.

As of August 2018, there are an estimated 788,000 people in Scotland who have caring responsibilities. This includes 44,000 who are under the age of 18.

Ayrshire College aims to provide an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the needs of all students. We recognise that many of our students have to deal with the demands of caring for a friend or relative whilst studying, and we are committed to removing barriers to learning for students who have caring responsibilities.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the measures that are in place at the College to identify and support students who have caring responsibilities.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/contents/enacted>

2. Equality Statement

The College is committed to advancing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity and respect.

The College recognises its duties under the Equality Act (2010) to prevent discrimination, including discrimination by association. In the case of student carers, discrimination by association could occur if a student were treated less favourably due to the protected characteristic (e.g. disability or age) of the person for whom they are caring.

3. Scope

The procedure covers all prospective and current students who have unpaid caring responsibilities. The procedure recognises the unique and specific individual needs of each student carer, and that caring responsibilities can fluctuate over time and in intensity.

The procedure does not cover students with parental responsibilities (unless for a child with a disability or support need as outlined in the definition above), or those employed in a caring capacity.

4. Definition

Ayrshire College endorses the Carers Trust definition of a carer, which states:

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. ²

5. Procedure

5.1 Identification

Students are encouraged to declare their carer status during their time at the College. This is to ensure that the necessary support is made available to them.

Students can declare their carer status at any point in their student journey including at application and enrolment stages. Students also have the option to declare their carer status in their funding application. The College accepts the student's self-declaration as evidence of their carer status. Students are not required to provide any further evidence of caring responsibilities.

² <https://carers.org/>

The College may also become aware of a student's carer status during school transition meetings or through communication with other external partners and local Carer Centres.

The College recognises that students may not be carers upon joining the College but may become carers at any point in their student journey.

When a student declares their carer status, this information is shared with the Student Experience Team who will contact the student to offer support.

5.2 Named Contacts

The College has a named contact for student carers on each main campus. The named contacts are a first point of contact for any enquiries relating to student carers. They will liaise with curriculum teams and external partners, as required, to ensure that student with caring responsibilities have access to appropriate levels of support. Student carers may be directed to the named contacts at any stage.

Ayr Campus

Wendy McColl – Student Experience Team Leader

T: 01292 293553

Kilmarnock Campus

Teri Evans – Student Experience Team Leader

T: 01563 523501

Kilwinning Campus

Sylvia Marshall – Student Experience Team Leader

T: 01294 555325

For general enquiries about support for student carers, staff and students can also email inclusivelearning@ayrshire.ac.uk or studentservices@ayrshire.ac.uk

5.3 Internal Support Provision

The College is committed to supporting student carers to successfully complete their course and achieve their full potential.

All students who declare their carer status will be contacted by Inclusive Learning to arrange an individual needs assessment and agree a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP). This allows for the implementation of a range of flexible support recommendations, whilst ensuring minimal disruption to learning and adhering to academic standards.

A summary of the PLSP is shared with the curriculum team to ensure that staff are aware of the student's carer status. Curriculum staff should implement the support

recommendations, including any assessment arrangements, outlined in the PLSP summary.

Initially, some student carers may choose not to complete a needs assessment as they feel that they do not require additional support. In such cases, Inclusive Learning will continue to make contact with the student at key points in the academic year to offer support. Student carers can make an appointment to complete a needs assessment at any point in their student journey.

Student Services staff can also provide support to students on an ongoing basis.

Support may include:

- Orientation visits to the College
- Information on course choices and help with completing an application form
- Confidential information, advice and guidance to help support students with their carer role
- Referrals to student support services including counselling support and the College Liaison Officers
- Signposting to internal resources including Togetherall, the Student Association and the Wellbeing Hub
- Regular 1:1 meetings and ongoing support
- Signposting to external organisations including local Carers Centres
- Support to apply for discretionary funds
- Support with progress and next steps

5.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

The College has a range of Mental Health and Wellbeing support services, which all students can access. Student carers should be made aware of the resources available including:

Togetherall

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

A free online mental health and wellbeing resource, which is available to college students 24/7.

Wellbeing Hub

Students can access the [Wellbeing Hub](#) on MyLearning.

The Hub contains useful websites, local and national resources and self-help guides.

Student carers can also contact studentservices@ayrshire.ac.uk for information on:

- Counselling
- Mental Health Liaison Officer
- Drug and Alcohol Liaison Officer

5.5 Flexible Attendance Support

Where possible, timetables will be issued in advance to student carers so that they can make necessary care arrangements.

The College recognises that student carers may not be able to attend academic activities in the event of late changes to timetables

If a student carer requires to take time off due to caring responsibilities, college staff will take steps, where possible, to ensure that the student has access to missed materials or rescheduled activities.

The College may also consider the following:

- Discussing flexible attendance and how support might be provided
- Allowing time out of study for an agreed amount of time if caring responsibilities are required
- Allowing authorised absences for periods of medical appointment, where the student carer is required to provide support
- Making arrangements for the student to catch up on missed classes, where possible
- Offering flexible deadlines for assessments

5.6 Funding Support

The Student Funding Team can offer individualised funding advice and assistance for Student carers and will aim to ensure income maximisation based on the student's individual circumstances.

Students can contact the Funding Team at each main campus by emailing:

Ayr Campus - studentfunding_ayr@ayrshire.ac.uk

Kilmarnock Campus - studentfunding_kilmarnock@ayrshire.ac.uk

Kilwinning Campus - studentfunding_kilwinning@ayrshire.ac.uk

Students can find out more about Student Funding on the College website:

<https://www1.ayrshire.ac.uk/students/funding-and-fees/funding/>

Student carers who are undertaking a full-time course in the College, are not eligible for carer's allowance. Student Services can support student carers to apply for additional funding such as the discretionary fund.

Contact studentservices@ayrshire.ac.uk to make an appointment.

Student Information Scotland

<https://www.studentinformation.gov.scot/>

Official government information about all aspects of Further and Higher Education funding including student loans, bursaries, tuition fees and grants.

Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS)

<https://www.saas.gov.uk/guides>

For information about Funding for Higher Education Student Carers

5.7 Student Carers Forum

Ayrshire College's Student Association has established a Student Carers Forum, which aims to:

- Raise awareness of the experiences of student carers
- Empower Student Carers and ensure that their experiences are considered across all College activities.
- Provide a peer support network for Student Carers
- Celebrate the achievements of Student Carers at Ayrshire College

Student Carers can find out more about the Student Carers Forum by contacting charlotte.mitchell@ayrshire.ac.uk

6 Further Information and Support

Carers Trust Scotland

<https://carers.org/>

E: info@carers.org

Carers Trust Scotland is part of the Carers Trust, which is a major charity for, with and about carers. They aim to improve support, services and recognition for unpaid carers.

Carers Trust Scotland is the largest provider of comprehensive carers support services in Scotland.

Carers Scotland

<https://www.carersuk.org/scotland>

T: 0808 808 7777

Carers Scotland is part of Carers UK. Their aim is to make life better for carers by:

- giving expert advice, information and support
- connecting carers so no-one has to care alone
- campaigning for lasting change
- innovating to find new ways to reach and support carers.

Carer Information Scotland

<https://www.careinfoscotland.scot/>

T: 0800 011 3200

Care Information Scotland offers advice and information for unpaid carers. It also offers a telephone helpline and chat facility from Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Carers Centres

East Ayrshire Carers Centre

<https://www.eastayrshirecarers.org.uk>

The aim of East Ayrshire Carers Centre is to create a carer led service by placing carers at the heart of the organisations and ensuring that services are effective and accessible to all carers regardless of location (rural or urban), personal circumstances or their caring situation.

20 The Foregate

Kilmarnock

KA1 1LU

T: 01563 571 533

E: admin@eastayrshirecarers.org.uk

South Ayrshire Carers Centre

Unity Carer Centre offers specialist information, support advocacy and advice for unpaid carers living in South Ayrshire. They also offer respite, health and wellbeing services, social activities and peer support.

43 Sandgate

Ayr

KA7 1DA

T: 01292 263000

E: southayrshire.carers@unity-enterprise.com

North Ayrshire Carers Centre

Unity Carer Centre offers specialist information, support advocacy and advice for unpaid carers living in South Ayrshire. They also offer respite, health and wellbeing services, social activities and peer support.

174 High Street

Irvine

KA12 8AN

T: 01294 311 333

E: northayrshire.carers@unity-enterprise.com