

Education Department Policy

Title: Policy on the Education of School Age Parents

Date: April 2016

1. Overview

The Education Department (ED) has a duty to provide suitable education for all students for whom they are responsible, including students of compulsory school age who become parents. Suitable education must meet the particular needs of the student. The student and their parents or carers should be consulted to secure a package which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and individual needs, including any special educational needs they may have.

The following policy provides information for the ED and school staff on how to support school age parents and their families whilst providing the highest level of education.

Is it worth specifying that each individual's situation should be dealt with on a case by case basis and that whilst this policy provides appropriate guidance, further advice may be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) . For instance where a student has learning difficulties and there is a potential child protection issue.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff in provided schools who are responsible for the education and support of school age parents and all members of the Education Support Team based at the Education Department.

3. Responsibilities and distribution

i. Responsibility of the Education Department

The Education Welfare Service should be advised if a student becomes pregnant and will monitor the student's progress on behalf of the Education Department.

For pregnant teenagers or those who are mothers, the young woman's school would normally be expected to oversee her education, including setting and marking work while she is away. Every effort will be made by the Education Welfare Service to re-engage young mothers who have dropped out of school.

Pregnant school girls and school age mothers will remain on the roll of their school. In circumstances where the girl has become pregnant in Year 11 and is unable to complete the year the aim should be to encourage the young woman to consider further education or other suitable post 16 provision. Careers Jersey can provide support and advice through this process.

ii. Responsibilities of Schools

Health and safety should not be used as a reason to prevent a pregnant student attending school. The school's aim should be to keep the pregnant student or school age mother in learning. This means keeping the student on the school roll, even if she may not be able to attend for a period of time; keeping up to date with her progress and working with the Education Welfare Service in looking for a suitable time to re-integrate her into the school. If, exceptionally, a headteacher considers that the school is no longer a suitable environment for the education of a pregnant student or school age mother, the student, her parents and the Education Welfare Service should be involved in deciding the most suitable provision for that young person.

There is no evidence to suggest that keeping a pregnant girl or school age mother in school will encourage others to become pregnant. Effective Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) can alert teenagers to the risks and realities of early parenthood and can be used to encourage understanding of a young parent's situation amongst the other students.

4. Policy/Standards

i. Childcare

Lack of appropriate or affordable childcare can prove to be a significant barrier to participation in education.

The fact that a young woman under 16 is pregnant or has a baby does not automatically mean that she or her baby is a 'child in need'. This will have to be assessed individually by Social Services. Services can be provided if they are essential to safeguard and promote the welfare of mother or baby or if one of them is disabled. In most cases childcare is provided by the extended family. Information on benefits available can be obtained from the Social Security Department.

ii. Home-School transport for pregnant teenagers

DfE (Department for Education) good practice suggests that the department should provide assistance with transport in circumstances where, for example, a general practitioner certifies that the student's stage of pregnancy is such that she is no longer able to walk to school. There is evidence to suggest that help with transport for this group has a positive impact on attendance.

iii. If the school becomes aware that a pupil is pregnant

Teachers should ensure that they act consistently with the guidance on confidentiality contained within the Child Protection Policy and Guidelines issued by the Education Department. Teachers should make clear that they cannot offer or guarantee students unconditional confidentiality. A member of staff who discovers that a student is pregnant should ensure that the student receives full information about services available to her, knows how to access them and has the opportunity to talk through the options available to her.

A young woman who is considering adoption or has decided not to continue with the pregnancy or who has already had a termination should also be offered access to relevant support services.

- **Notifying interested / relevant parties**

In cases where a student has decided to continue with her pregnancy, the pupil should be advised that the headteacher and nominated Education Welfare Officer will need to be informed so that arrangements can be made for her continuing education. The headteacher should respect the young woman's wishes on confidentiality, in line with school policy. A member of school staff should assist the young woman and take responsibility for her continuing education. The headteacher should make sure that the pregnancy is dealt with sensitively by teachers and students within the school. The nominated member of staff is not obliged to tell the pregnant student's parents or carers but they should make a determined effort to encourage the young woman to talk to her parents or carers and record that they have done so. They should make sure the pregnant student has access to Brook medical staff who will ensure clear pathways for the welfare of the young woman.

If a young woman in public care becomes pregnant her Child Care Officer should be involved in discussions and review of the care plan for the young person to ensure that her educational needs are considered alongside her other needs.

- **Child Protection Concerns**

In the case of a young woman under 16, if a teacher believes there is a child protection issue to be addressed, they should liaise with the school's designated teacher for child protection. Teachers should make clear that they cannot guarantee unconditional confidentiality and that if confidentiality has to be broken, the student will be informed first. Good practice would indicate that a student under the age of 13 should be referred to the Child Protection Team for assessment. The ED Child Protection Policy documents more detailed criteria for referral for child protection concerns.

- **Ensuring a continued learning experience**

The school should ensure that the young woman continues learning for as long as possible up until the birth by exploring all opportunities for curriculum support. There may be times when the pregnant girl is unable to attend school for health reasons but would still be able to study. In these circumstances the school should provide work for the student to do at home. The school should try to maintain continuity of learning when the young woman is absent from school for the birth, this is especially important for those studying for academic awards. It may be appropriate for the headteacher to make arrangements for the young woman to be disapplied from the full curriculum in order to maintain progress in core subjects.

- **Maternity Leave and Entitlement**

A student who becomes pregnant is entitled to no more than 18 calendar weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. Should the student fail to return to school within this period, she should continue to have access to support from the school, the Education Welfare Service and the Careers Service to help and encourage her to return to education when ready. After the maximum length of authorised absence, the school should follow the guidance on absence from the Education Welfare Service. Absence for attendance at ante-natal classes or if the baby is ill, should be classified as authorised.

- **Unauthorised Absence**

If the school discovers that a girl who is not attending school is pregnant, the school should arrange a meeting with the girl, her parents or carers and an Education Welfare Officer to discuss how her educational needs are to be met. As with any student who has spent time out of school, a school age mother should have an individual re-integration plan.

iv. School age Fathers

Schools should acknowledge the additional needs that school age fathers and fathers-to-be may have. If a member of staff finds out that a student is a father or a father-to-be they should follow the same procedure as when they find out a girl is pregnant. If the school thinks it appropriate, they should consider what flexibility they can offer to the timetable and curriculum through the Education Support Team Referral Panel. Schools may consider it necessary to help a boy to have access to a counsellor in some circumstances or help from other agencies such as Social Services or Careers Jersey.

Schools should be supportive of both parents in their responsibilities for caring for their child. Particular sensitivity may be required if both parents are attending the same school.

5. Further information and related documents

For further information please contact the Education Welfare Team on 449493. You may also reference the Child Protection Policy if you have concerns in this area.

Useful Contact Information

Health Visitors, Family Home Care and Nursing Tel: 443600
Social Services / Childrens' Service Tel: 443500
The Bridge – Parenting Support Tel: 449495
Education Support Team Tel: 449442
Careers Jersey Tel: 449440

- Ante-natal Clinic 442495
- Appointment Enquiries 442437
- Antenatal Assessment 442433
- Maternity Unit 442450
- Delivery Suite 442448
- In-Patients 442789
- Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) 442458
- Obstetric Scanning 442438
- Ambulance Station 444701

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date Issued	Issued by	Reason for Change
0.1	12 th December 2006	Senior Education Welfare Officer	First Draft for review
0.2	6 th March 2007	Senior Education Welfare Officer	Second draft for consultation
0.3	12 th October	Senior Education Welfare Officer	Minor amendments
0.4	May 2014	Assistant Director, Inclusion & Family Support	Change of ownership to Senior Education Welfare Officer Minor amendments
0.5	April 2016	Director, Inclusion & Family Support	Change of Ownership to Director, Inclusion & Family Support. Updated to reflect new Department names and job titles/contacts.

APPROVAL

Presented To	Approved by:	Date
Secondary Head Teachers		
Primary Head Teachers		
Senior Management Team		24.04.07
Education Minister		

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Planned review date:	Distribution:	
December 2007	All Head teachers, Teachers, School Counsellors	
Associated policies	Name	Reference
	Child Protection Policy	