

Brine Leas School

An Academy

STUDENT PREGNANCY POLICY

It is against the law to discriminate against a student because she is pregnant and a school cannot exclude a student on the grounds of pregnancy.

In the event that a student becomes pregnant, it is the school's aim to keep the student on the school roll, even if she is not able to attend for a period of time and to offer support by way of:-

- allocating a mentor,
- sending work home,
- keeping in touch with her progress.
- reintegrating her back into school at an appropriate time after the birth of the baby.

If, however, the Headteacher considers that Brine Leas School is no longer a suitable environment for the education of a pregnant student, the parents/carers and any other relevant agencies will be involved in deciding the most suitable provision for that young person.

1. If a Student Informs a Member of Staff that she is Pregnant

- 1.1 The disclosure will be dealt with sensitively. As the standard procedure with disclosures, staff will make it clear from the start that they cannot guarantee unconditional confidentiality and that if confidentiality has to be broken, the student will be informed first. Where possible, the school must respect the girl's wishes regarding confidentiality.
- 1.2 If there is a child protection issue to be addressed (if the pregnancy is a result of sexual abuse, if the girl is aged 16 years or under, or is a vulnerable student under the age of 18), this should be referred to the school's Safeguarding Lead and the Headteacher.
- 1.3 If there are no Safeguarding concerns, the girl will be advised to talk with her parents/carers. The prime concern at all stages is the interests and safety of the girl. In some cases it may be in the girl's best interest not to inform the parents if that is her wish. If this is the case, it is essential to ensure that the girl receives support from Health and/or Social Services.
- 1.4 Staff will ensure the girl receives full information about services available to her.

2. When a Student Continues her Education at Brine Leas up until Maternity Leave

- 2.1 The Headteacher will allocate a mentor to be responsible for monitoring the welfare and progress during her time at school, ensuring she has access to appropriate support from Health and Social Services, and maintaining contact whilst she is on maternity leave.

- 2.2 The mentor will arrange a planning meeting with the Assistant Headteacher (Student Services), the school nurse, relevant school staff, the girl and her parents/carers to develop and action/care plan. This may take the form of a CAF. The plan will include a decision on when and how to inform staff and students. All staff will be required to treat the matter in a consistent, sensitive manner, respecting the girl's wishes on confidentiality wherever possible and treating her as 'normally' as possible. Risk assessment for certain lessons needs to be created.
- 2.3 The girl must continue her learning as long as possible before the birth. If she is unable to attend school for health reasons before or after the birth, it is the school's responsibility to provide work to do at home. A maximum of 18 weeks authorised absence will be allowed to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the baby. Brine Leas School must encourage and support the girl to return to education and consider post 16 choices- liaising with careers team, and the authority with minimum interruption. Absence for ante-natal classes should be classified as 'authorised'.
- 2.4 If the girl is not attending school because of the pregnancy, the mentor will arrange a meeting with the girl, her parents/careers and relevant agencies to discuss how her educational needs are to be met during the pregnancy.

3. Support For The Student After The Birth Of The Baby

3.1 Making Reasonable Adjustments

In order for a student to continue with her education for as long as possible, reasonable adjustments will be made by Brine Leas School. Examples of reasonable adjustment might include, but are not restricted to:-

- Appointing a specific member of staff to have responsibility of the student's care, co-ordinating any necessary arrangements.
- Allocating a buddy to the student, especially where the student may be at risk of bullying.
- Allowing the student to leave five minutes before the end of each lesson so she can get to her next class before the corridors become congested.
- Allowing the student to wear suitable clothes for maternity in school colours.
- Allowing a student to be excluded from contact sports or exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals (i.e. in Science or Technology).
- Accommodating attendance at post-natal classes and being sensitive to medical needs and symptoms of pregnancy such as morning sickness. Absences which are pregnancy related should be classed as authorised.

3.2 Health & Safety, Sports and School Trips

Health & Safety should not be seen as a reason for mothers-to-be or young parents not to attend school and, wherever possible, students should be encouraged to fully engage with the curriculum. Arrangements for sports and school trips will be made in consultation with the student and the school will be flexible and encouraging in its endeavours to include the student in all aspects of the curriculum. Further guidance and advice may be sought from the student's midwife and/or GP if required.

3.3 Examinations

Students are responsible for arranging childcare around scheduled exams and may request assistance from their mentor in doing so.

Exams which take place after the birth of the child do not need to be re-scheduled, unless there is a medical reason for doing so, in which case the procedures for special consideration or re-sits will apply, as per the Examinations Policy.

Should a student be due to give birth close to, or during, the external exam period, every effort will be made by the school to make it possible for the student to sit the exam. This may include allowing the student to take regular comfort breaks or arranging for the exam to be undertaken at home. The usual protocol for special arrangements should be followed.

3.4 Breastfeeding Onsite

Young mothers have every right to feed their baby in this way, and should be supported in doing so. The choice to breastfeed may be used by some young mothers as a barrier to returning to education and so the school will make every effort to accommodate the student and her choice to breastfeed. All activities associated with breastfeeding onsite would be subject to a risk assessment.

4. Teenage Fathers

- 4.1 If a boy informs a member of staff they are about to become a father, the same procedure as Section 1 is followed.
- 4.2 Brine Leas School acknowledges the additional needs that school age fathers-to-be and fathers may have. If appropriate, a mentor will be allocated to the student and this may be the same person providing support to the mother if she is also a student at Brine Leas School.
- 4.3 If appropriate, school will encourage the boy to be involved with the girl's pregnancy, attend ante-natal classes and the birth (in accordance with the girl's wishes), and care of the baby, whilst trying to maintain minimum disruption to his education.

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