

WELKOM SECONDARY SCHOOL



SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

PREGNANCY POLICY

Policy approved 10 June 2018

Welkom Secondary School (hereinafter 'the school') and its governing body subscribe to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (hereinafter 'the Constitution'); the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (hereinafter 'the Schools Act'), as well as all relevant, enforceable departmental regulations and policies, including the Learner Attendance Policy promulgated in terms of *General Notice 361 of 2010, GG 33150 4 May 2010* (hereinafter 'the Learner Attendance Policy'). This pregnancy policy was drafted having had due regard to all the aforementioned statutes and policies.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct for Learners, of which it forms an integral part.

1. Introduction

1.1 The school:

1.1.1 acknowledges the responsibility and impact of the South African education system with regard to learner pregnancies; and

1.1.2 accepts its responsibility to inform all its learners of their right to education.

2. Policy statement and general principles

2.1 The school strongly advocates abstinence from sexual activities among its learners.

2.2 However, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Schools Act, the school will not discriminate unfairly against pregnant learners.

3. Dealing with pregnancies among school girls

3.1 Any learner pregnancy will be dealt with confidentially.

3.2 Each case should be assessed throughout in order to protect the learner's educational interest, her right to education, her right to privacy as well as her right to bodily and psychological integrity subject to the provisions of this pregnancy policy.

3.3 The school principal or his/her delegated senior female staff member must, in the presence of a/another senior female staff member, consult with the learner and/or her parents/guardians in case of a reasonable suspicion that such learner may be pregnant where the school has not been formally informed by the affected learner and/or her parents/guardians.

4. The learner's responsibility

4.1 A pregnant learner and/or the parents or guardians of learner who have reason to believe that she may be pregnant is encouraged to inform the school immediately.

4.2 As soon as the school is informed of a learner's pregnancy, the school principal or his/her delegated senior female staff member must consult with the pregnant learner and/or her parents/guardians, requesting that the school be supplied with written medical confirmation (i.e. by a professional medical practitioner) of the learner's pregnancy, including the estimated date of birth. The school will encourage the learner and/or parents/ guardians of learner to voluntarily keep the school up to date with her general health as well as that of her unborn child.

4.3 Should it be impossible to consult with the parents/guardians of the pregnant learner, the school may refer the learner to a doctor or medical centre (i.e. a clinic or hospital) with the consent of the learner. The doctor or professional health practitioner shall supply the school with evidence of the learner's pregnancy, should the learner agree, including the estimated date of birth, and must also provide the school with regular progress reports on the general condition of the learner and her unborn child.

4.4 **The pregnant learner and/or her parents/guardians must be properly informed that the school has no medical staff, and that no staff member of the school is professionally trained to deal with any complications during a pregnancy.** In addition, the learner and/or her parents/guardians must take note of potential health risks, trauma for her and/or her unborn or new-born child, as well as the possible concomitant effect on and/or trauma for the rest of the school community.

4.5 **Considering the abovementioned factors as well as in accordance with general labour law provisions, this policy provides that a pregnant learner may take pregnancy leave from the start of week 32 of her pregnancy,** thereby ceasing all participation in normal school activities and/or classes. With this measure, the school aims to ensure that the learner is able to give birth to her child in a safe environment, while also affording her ample time for pre-natal classes and related activities and promoting the best interests of the other learners of the school.

- 4.6 It will be the pregnant learner's and/or her parents'/guardian's responsibility to convince the school by way of a medical certificate signed by a professional medical practitioner that she is 32 weeks pregnant.
- 4.7 The pregnant learner and/or her parents/guardians must also note that paragraph 13(i) of the Learner Attendance Policy inter alia provides that it may from time to time be undesirable for her to attend school, including if the school principal is of the opinion that it is in the best interest of the learner or inevitable for her rather to stay home.
- 4.8 Therefore, the pregnant learner and/or her parents/guardians must be informed that the school principal shall exercise the abovementioned discretionary power should he/she at any stage during the learner's pregnancy be of the opinion that it is either in the learner's best interest or inevitable for her rather to stay home, even if the learner has not yet reached week 32 of her pregnancy, in which case the provisions of this policy shall be enforced as if the learner has already reached week 32.
- 4.9 Should the period of absence of the pregnancy until the date of birth fall within a year-end examination, the school will as far as possible attempt to assist the pregnant learner still to write her examination.

However, such assistance is subject to the school's capacity, and may only be granted if:

- 4.9.1 it is feasible to allow the pregnant learner to complete her examination on her own under proper supervision (preferably that of a senior female staff member) for the full duration of the examination;
- 4.9.2 her entire examination can be completed in terms of all departmental prescripts on supervision; and
- 4.9.3 at the governing body's discretion, it is not in conflict with the interests of the other learners of the school.
- 4.10 Should the period of absence of the pregnancy until the date of birth fall within the pregnant learner's Grade 12 year-end examination, the school principal or his/her delegated senior female staff member shall offer the learner and/or her parents/guardians the option of voluntarily deregistering as learner of the school in order to take the examination as private candidate. The administrative process in this regard shall be dealt with by the learner and/or her parents/guardians themselves.

4.11 Should the pregnant learner decide against this, the school will as far as possible attempt to assist the learner still to take her Grade 12 examination.

However, such assistance is subject to the school's capacity, and may only be granted if:

4.11.1 it is feasible to allow the pregnant learner to take her examination on her own under proper supervision (preferably that of a senior female staff member) for the full duration of her Grade 12 examination;

4.11.2 her entire examination can be completed in terms of all departmental prescripts on supervision in a Grade 12 year-end examination; and

4.11.3 at the governing body's discretion, it is not in conflict with the interests of the other learners of the school.

4.12 Should the pregnant learner indeed take the examination at the school in any of the aforementioned cases, this arrangement would apply only to the examination concerned and no other school activities.

4.13 If the pregnant learner does indeed take the examination at the school, the provisions of paragraph 4.4 above must be expressly brought to the attention of the learner and/or her parents/guardians, and the learner and/or her parents/guardians must be requested to make sufficient arrangements for proper medical care to be immediately available should the learner and/or her unborn child require it.

4.14 **The learner will only be re-admitted to the school and normal school activities if she provides the school with a medical certificate by a professional medical practitioner that confirms that she is medically fit and able to attend her classes as usual.**

4.15 Once the learner has resumed her normal school classes and activities following the birth of her child, the school principal or his/her delegated senior female staff member may, depending on the circumstances, approach the learner to enquire after her baby's care and well-being.

4.16 The pregnant learner must also be informed of the possibility that some members of the school community may not necessarily accept her situation or support her, due to the particular value system to which the community subscribes.

4.17 A male learner who accepts responsibility for the paternity will be treated in accordance with paragraph 13 of the Learner Attendance Policy.

5. Parents and guardians' responsibility

- 5.1 The parents/guardians of the pregnant learner shall be requested to take the lead and co-operate with the school in order to support the learner and monitor her health and progress.
- 5.2 The parents/guardians of the pregnant learner shall be requested to take steps in order to ensure that the learner receives her school assignments and all other homework if she has missed school due to her pregnancy, and shall see to it that completed assignments and homework are returned to the school timeously for assessment.

6. Indemnity against loss or damage

- 6.1 Every pregnant learner as well as her parents/guardians accept that the school is an educational institution, and does not necessarily have the required expertise, facilities and other resources to render medical, psychological and/or other services relating to a pregnancy; and
- 6.2 The pregnant learner as well as her parents/guardians irrevocably indemnifies the governing body and the school against any action with regard to any loss or damage of any nature or on any grounds that may relate to the learner's pregnancy and/or giving birth. This indemnification shall be effective from the date on which the learner became pregnant, and will lapse once she resumes her normal school activities following the birth of her child.

7. The school's responsibility

- 7.1 Finally, **Welkom Secondary School** shall:
 - 7.1.1 strongly encourage the pregnant learner to continue her education both during her pregnancy and following the birth of her child;
 - 7.1.2 ensure a climate of understanding and respect with regard to unplanned pregnancies;
 - 7.1.3 inform the pregnant learner and/or her parents/guardians that this policy is in no way intended as a punitive measure of any kind, but that the interests of the pregnant learner, her unborn child, the school community, the staff of the school, fellow learners as well as others are involved and, therefore, had to be taken into account when this policy was adopted;
 - 7.1.4 keep a register of learner pregnancies; and

7.1.5 ensure that a copy of this policy is handed to the pregnant learner and/or her parents/guardians as soon as possible after the relevant learner pregnancy has come to light.

7.2 In addition, **Welkom Secondary School** confirms and undertakes that the pregnant learner's records will not be scrapped due to her having fallen pregnant or given birth.

The School Governing Body may from time to time amend, modify, supplement and/or alter the contents of this document.

Signed at WELKOM on this day of 2018.

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F AUGUS
CHAIRPERSON: SGB

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G.J DE JAGER
PRINCIPAL

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JE WILLEMSE
SECRETARY