



Pregnant Student and Young Parent Policy

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Ready, Respectful, Safe

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Introduction

Nunthorpe Multi Academy Trust (NMAT) and Nunthorpe Academy are committed to support pregnant students, fathers-to-be and Academy aged parents, so that they may continue their education, allowing them to reach their full potential and manage this along with the demands of their new role and the needs of their child. This policy includes information around joint working with other agencies that can provide further support to this group of young people.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics show that conception rates in young women under-18 are dropping both nationally and locally. However, the UK still has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and abortion in Western Europe.

Reducing teenage conceptions remains a priority in the local area. Traditionally, local authority areas on Teesside had consistently seen high teenage conception rates. Despite a reduction and a sustained downward trend the local rate remains higher than the national average.

The Policy is written to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which is to legally protect students from discrimination during pregnancy and subsequent maternity.

¹ Department for Education (2013), *Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training for Local Authorities*, March 2013.

² Department for Education (2013) *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, Statutory guidance for local authorities*, January 2013

³ Department for Education (2013) *School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, October 2013

Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance for Academy staff about how to support young women who become pregnant, young men who are expectant fathers and those who are parents.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to set out to make clear that the Academy expects staff and students to be guided by the following principles:

- avoid less favourable treatment of students who are pregnant or within the protected maternity period
- think flexibly about supporting the continued engagement of students in teaching, learning, research and assessment during pregnancy and maternity
- be supportive and sensitive to the needs of students who are trying to balance the different needs of pregnancy and study
- support informed decision-making by students taking an open-minded and non-judgmental approach
- Students who are expecting a baby should have an allocated key worker to provide pastoral and curriculum support throughout any pregnancy and resultant birth.
- Ensure that procedures are in place for joint working between the agencies involved with pregnant teenagers and young parents.
- Ensure that confidentiality and safeguarding is followed correctly in relation to the rights of the young person.
- Provide a framework for assessing risks for young women who are pregnant and identify a process for making reasonable adjustments and managing those risks.

Legislation

Schools already have a duty of care to their students and It is not expected that they alter their policies because of the new legal provision of the Equalities Act 2010, providing they are not excluding pregnant students or requiring them to study at home or in alternative provision when they wish to remain in school, and are letting them return to education when they have had their babies.

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 ensures protection from discrimination for students who are pregnant. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced guidance on the Equality Act. This means that it is **unlawful for academies to treat a pupil less favourably because she becomes pregnant or has recently had a baby, or because she is breastfeeding**. Academies will also have to factor in pregnancy and maternity when considering their obligations under the new Equality Duty.

Although the specific provision in the Act is relatively new, academies should already be aware of their specific responsibilities to any student in their care that become pregnant or are parents. Previous government guidance makes it clear that academies must not exclude simply on the grounds of a student becoming pregnant but should allow her no more than 18 calendar weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of her child. This is in order to ensure that she is reintegrated into education as quickly as possible.

¹ Department for Education (2013), *Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training for Local Authorities*, March 2013.

² Department for Education (2013) *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*, *Statutory guidance for local authorities*, January 2013

³ Department for Education (2013) *School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, October 2013

Pregnancy is not an illness and therefore DfE guidance for students who cannot attend school because of health needs does not apply unless there is a secondary medical difficulty diagnosed which would meet criteria.

Statutory Guidance on Participation

The Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training (DfE, March 2013)¹ also sets out that parents caring for children would be expected to participate in education and may qualify for a Care to Learn grant (<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>) to enable them to do so. A reasonable period of maternity leave (up to 18 calendar weeks) is, however, justified.

Education Act 1996

Local Authorities have a duty under the Education Act 1996 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 needs of the student and should take account of their age, ability, aptitude and individual needs including any special educational needs they may have.

The 2001 guidance emphasises the importance of support from re-integration and education welfare officers to enable pregnant students and school age mothers to complete their education.

Academies already have a duty of care to their pupils and are not expected to alter existing policies because of this new legal provision, providing they are not excluding pregnant students or requiring them to study at home or in alternative provision when they wish to remain in school, and are letting them return to education when they have had their babies. Parents of students who believe they are being discriminated against have the right to make a discrimination claim in court but may wish to seek independent legal advice before doing so.

Guidance for Pupils Who Cannot Attend School Because of Health Needs

Whilst pregnancy is not an illness, there may be cases where young people present with health problems in pregnancy. Medical confirmation may be required that a school age parent is unable to attend school because of their pregnancy before the Local Authority would consider providing alternative education on health grounds.

In this instance, DfE guidance² provides a basis for the level of education such students can expect. Children with health needs should have provision, which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school.

Where full-time education would not be in the best interests of a particular child because of reasons relating to their physical or mental health, Local Authorities should provide or authorise part-time education on a basis they consider to be in the child's best interests.

Full and part-time education should still aim to achieve good academic attainment particularly in English, Maths and Science.

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Entitlements of School Aged Pregnant Women and Young Parents

Right to Remain in Education

The young woman has the right to remain in education and cannot be excluded from, encouraged to be home educated by the parent/carer or removed from the roll of an Academy because she is pregnant. Young men who are expectant fathers have the same rights as the mother.

Pastoral and Educational Support

The young woman will have access to a named member of Academy staff with whom she will meet regularly and who will oversee her pastoral and educational support. This will include organisation of a full pregnancy risk assessment and development of a corresponding action plan. The young man who is the expectant father will also have a named member of Academy staff whom he will meet with regularly to oversee his pastoral needs and offer education support.

Attendance

The young woman is expected to attend school as regularly and punctually as her pregnancy allows as she is still a child of compulsory school age. The parent/carer of the pregnant young woman is legally responsible for ensuring attendance. Being pregnant does not prevent a young woman from attending school.

The young woman will be entitled to take time out of the classroom to rest during the day during her pregnancy if required. The young woman is also entitled to attend antenatal classes and should be encouraged to do so. Expectant Young Fathers are entitled to and will be encouraged to attend antenatal sessions where appropriate.

With regard to Attendance the student will be registered as 'unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' ascertaining the reason for this absence as one of the below;

Code M: Medical or dental appointments – should the young person need to attend ante or post natal appointments (evidence will be required)

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment – If the young person is attending another educational setting such as hospital teaching service.

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school – Once student goes on maternity or paternity leave.³

Pregnant young people will be encouraged to take full part in all curricular activities. Arrangements for Academy trips, outings and sporting activities will be made in consultation with the student.

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² Department for Education (2013) *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, Statutory guidance for local authorities*, January 2013

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Absence Entitlements

The young mother is entitled to up to 18 weeks “authorised absence”⁴ (Code “C” for registration purposes) to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child.

Up to 2 weeks paternity leave for a young father to help to care for his child is considered reasonable and should be in line with statutory paternity leave provision⁵.

Paternity leave cannot start before the birth, but the start date must be either the actual date of birth, an agreed number of days after the birth or an agreed number of days after the expected week of childbirth. Leave must finish within 56 days of the birth (or due date if the baby is early).

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/teenager-pregnant.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/pregnancy-birth>^P

What will a pregnant student and young parent experience at the Academy?

Pregnant students and Young Fathers to be, will be supported to continue in learning for as long as possible.

Individual timetable decisions will take place in an initial meeting to ensure a good breadth of academic subjects is maintained whilst future career plans are considered.

Pregnant students and Young Fathers to be, cannot be legally removed from school roll and this will not be encouraged. The Head of School is legally responsible for ensuring that the young person remains on the school roll including during the period of authorised absence and during the time the baby is born.

Pregnant students will be kept in their normal routine where possible and we will encourage them to attend regular classes.

Responsibilities of the Designated Professional

A pastoral/Inclusion member of staff will be appointed as the designated professional within the Academy to have responsibility for individual school age parents

The individually named member of staff will be responsible for overseeing an education and pastoral support plan.

Step 1

This will involve meeting with the young woman and her parents or carers and supporting the young woman to stay in learning together with the father, if he is also on the Academy roll.

Step 2

If needed (this may already be in place) the named person will also be responsible for organising a referral to the Early Help/Stronger Families Assessment.

At this stage a multi-agency planning meeting will be called to invite all those professionals who will have a role in supporting the young woman and her family through the pregnancy. These professionals could include: school lead, school nurse, stronger families, Family Nurse

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Partnership (FNP), social worker or midwife. The AVP Inclusion as Safeguarding Lead will be invited to this meeting to lead the group. This list of professionals is not exhaustive and will depend on which agencies are needed to support each young person.

The purpose of this meeting is to plan how professionals are going to support the young woman during her pregnancy and will include reintegration back to school where this is appropriate.

The aim is very clearly to support the young woman to stay in learning.

After this meeting the AVP Inclusion will notify the manager of the Home and Hospital Teaching Service (via Local Authority) of the Expected Date of Delivery for information purposes only. The expectation is that all young women will continue their learning in the Academy and will be supported by her Academy.

This support plan created in this meeting will include:

- Agreement about pregnancy/parent related absence being authorised.
- Academy issues such as modifying the curriculum, uniform, movement around the Academy site and need to inform teaching staff will be completed through a risk assessment.
- Transport arrangements.
- Examination arrangements (possible request for special consideration).
- Expected Childcare arrangements.
- Sign posts to parenting and support classes for both school aged mothers and fathers.

The outline and timeframe of statutory education provision for the young person needs to take consideration of:

- The expected date of delivery.
- The maternity pathway.
- Examination times.
- The 29 week maternity grant (if eligible).
- Support from the Local Authority (if appropriate).
- Other issues such as housing, health and wellbeing e.g. mental health, nutrition and lifestyle, need to be addressed by members of the planning group.

If the student has an EHCP then an interim review will be called to allow information to be shared in this forum.

The named member of staff will be responsible for organising work and monitoring progress including while she is away at the time around the birth.

If the young person is out of school for health reasons the named member of staff will be responsible for sending work home and for making arrangements for it to be returned to the Academy and for feedback to be given.

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The named member of staff will meet with the young person regularly during any periods of absence (in line with “ten days eyes on”) to ensure that her needs are being met appropriately and to offer pastoral support.

Pregnant young women are encouraged to stay in school as close as possible to the birth, unless there are any medical or health reasons not to.

Academies can liaise with the midwife to establish this.

Where the young woman is year 11 and due to take exams, this will need careful consideration and entries may need consideration for a 1:1 setting.

Step 3

Risk Assessment- The named member of staff will be responsible for organising an Academy risk assessment for the pregnant student and ensuring reasonable adjustments to her school day are put in place.

Step 4

The Birth- The named member of staff should maintain appropriate contact and ensure that the new mother and young father have continued and consistent support and contact from the Academy.

Pregnant students and subsequent young mums are allowed up to 18 calendar weeks maternity leave which can be taken from the 29th week of pregnancy.

Less time off than this can be negotiated with the Academy and must be approved medically. It is, however, essential that the young Mum has time to bond with the baby and adapt to motherhood and the Academy supports this wholeheartedly.

Step 5

Re-integration- The named member of staff will be responsible for developing a personalised reintegration plan in consultation with the young woman and her parents or carer and other core professionals known to the young person. The named member of staff and/or parents can take advice from the Education Welfare Service to do this.

Before returning to the Academy following the birth of a child the reintegration part of the support plan will be drawn up. This is with consultation with the young woman, her parents/carers and the named member of staff supporting her.

The young woman cannot return to school within two weeks of giving birth but if they wish to return to school before the six week post-natal check, her GP must confirm in writing that she is fit enough to attend the Academy.

If it is found that the young woman is unfit to return, or is ill, then medical evidence will need to be submitted and part-time attendance or arrangements for additional needs may be made.

Three weeks before the young person intends to return to the Academy the named member of staff will coordinate the return to education through the early help assessment plan.

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The three week timescale may vary, and if this is the case the rationale will be recorded in the young person's plan. This meeting will be hosted by the Academy at a venue convenient to the young woman.

The purpose will be to discuss the following;

- Academy timetable
- Childcare and feeding
- Transport
- Young person's support structures
- Review of Risk Assessment

The young woman will also be entitled to time out of lessons in the case where she is breastfeeding a child. Attendance arrangements can be made to allow this to happen. If needed then the Academy can provide a room where the young woman can express milk and a fridge space in which she can store breast milk and have access to it as needed. This may be in the medical room or Inclusion. Safe and correct storage of breast milk will be in line with safe storage of medicines and be included within the risk assessment.

The Academy will allow time off for medical appointments if the baby is ill. Young parents will be allowed some time out of school to attend parenting programmes and young parents support groups where needed to develop good parenting skills. This attendance will be built into the Support Plan. Attendance will be marked as authorised absence for this reason.

School Aged Fathers-to-be and Fathers and Designated Professional

The Academy acknowledges the additional needs that school age fathers and fathers to be may have.

A student who is a father or father-to-be will be allocated a pastoral member of staff to take responsibility for addressing their needs.

The named member of staff will encourage the young man to speak to his parents or carers and a referral will be made to the Local Authority for on-going family support.

The Academy is committed to allow young fathers or fathers-to-be authorised absence to accompany partners to antenatal and post-natal health checks and permit a father to take two weeks paternity leave if he so wishes.

Paternity leave may be taken in accordance with ordinary parental leave. Leave cannot start before the birth and must end within 56 days of the birth.

If the paternity leave coincides with external examinations then leave will not be permitted until examinations have finished.

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Looked After Children (LAC) / Child In Our Care (CIOC)

Looked After Children (also known locally as Children In Our Care) whom are pregnant are often the most vulnerable, they should be encouraged to tell their allocated social worker and/or foster carer so that they can be involved in the young woman's care plan to ensure that her educational needs can be met. If they have not disclosed this information to their social worker or foster carer there is a duty of care for the Academy to disclose to the social worker responsible for their care planning.

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