



CHIVIRIKANI PRIMARY SCHOOL

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SCHOOL POLICY

Learner Pregnancy

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____

REVISION HISTORY:

As amended on:

11 October 2016 (South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996));
11 October 2016 (Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution of the RSA, Act 108/1996, Section 28 and Section 29);
11 October 2016 (Teenage Pregnancy – Circular 0077/98;
11 October 2016 – (The Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74/1983));

BACKGROUND

The Bill of Rights, as contained in the Constitution of the RSA, Act 108/1996, affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, including the rights of children (Section 28) and the right to education (Section 29). It is therefore imperative that school managers and governing bodies ensure that the rights and development of female learners are not curtailed and that special measures are taken in respect of pregnant schoolgirls.

Regulation history

This policy replaces the section on Teenage Pregnancy contained in Circular 0077/98: General Manual for the Suspension and Expulsion of Learners from Public Schools (excluding Public Schools for Learners sent or transferred thereto in terms of The Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74/1983) and/or the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51/1977)).

PURPOSE

School Girls should be Made Aware that they put their Health and Future at Risk when they become Pregnant.

RISKS INVOLVED

- The risk of teenage mothers not completing their school careers is very real.
- Their likelihood of finding employment is much less than that of their friends.
- There is the threat of teenage mothers becoming single parents and living in poverty.
- Learners who do not finish school can become an economic burden to society.

POSITION REGARDING PREGNANT LEARNERS

- According to the South African Schools Act a learner who gets pregnant cannot be excluded from attending classes.
- We expect our learners to accept responsibility for their actions and encourage learners to complete their education.

DEALING WITH LEARNER PREGNANCIES

- Staff development sessions as well as support and training for parents and Governing Bodies on how to handle pregnant learners.
- Awareness of teenage pregnancies amongst girls in schools by clinic sisters.
- Affiliation with non-government organizations and the media to introduce educational and communicational programmes on how to prevent teenage pregnancies.
- Closer synchronisation with learning area or life orientation.
- No school girl should be allowed to return to school in the same year that she leaves school due to pregnancy.
- A learner who returns to school after having given birth should submit medical reports to the school to confirm that she is physically ready to return to school.
- These learners should also be able to prove that proper arrangements have been made for the care and safety of the baby.
- Withdrawing from the school for the duration of the pregnancy and taking own responsibility for continued education.
- Grade 12 candidates must be fully informed about examination options and procedures, although they themselves are responsible for registering as private candidates, they must be fully informed about examination options and procedures.
 - Request the parent(s) or guardian(s) to obtain a medical certificate giving an indicative date of confinement. It would be medically advisable for the learner to be absent from school before the confinement, and the date from which it would be medically advisable for her to return to school.
 - Discuss with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the learner, the period during which she must be absent from school, based on the above information.
 - Enter into a written agreement with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the learner in which it is stated clearly that:
 - during the time she attends school it is at her own risk.
 - the school is indemnified from accountability for any pregnancy related injuries or incidents.

- no alternative or additional logistical arrangements can be demanded from the school.
 - no exceptions can be made regarding adherence to the school's code of conduct.
- Make it clear that when the learner returns to school after the birth, she will not be allowed to bring the baby with her.
- Take any further decisions, for example about:
 - whether the matter must be handled confidentially or not.
 - appropriate behaviour and actions on the part of the learner.
 - participation behaviour and actions on the part of the learner.
 - participation in the school's extra-curricular activities.
- Should it be known or established that a male learner at the school is responsible for the pregnancy, it is essential that confidentiality be maintained.
 - The principal must inform the School Governing Body.
 - The principal and SLES professionals within the EMDC must ensure that:
 - attention is given to the male learner's co-responsibility.
 - the male learner is counselled and provided with information on matters of sexuality, responsibility for actions and the legal implications of obligations and rights.
 - A written agreement must be entered into with the parent(s) or guardian(s), the male learner and the Governing Body about appropriate behaviour, which conforms to the school's code of conduct.
- Should it be known or established that a learner at another educational institution is responsible for the pregnancy; the principal concerned must be notified.
- The educational consequences of learner pregnancy and parenting are twofold: young mothers and fathers run a risk that they will not obtain the educational skills needed to become self-supporting, economically productive citizens, something which often results in their children entering the educational system with economic and developmental disadvantages.
 - A school is expected to act appropriately in cases of learner pregnancy. However, it is also important that the school should approach the situation from an educational and values-driven perspective, with the ultimate goal to enable the learners whose futures could otherwise be jeopardised by unfortunate circumstances, to achieve success in the classroom and in their personal lives.
 - It is essential for the learner concerned that her education should continue with as little disruption as possible. Alternative suitable arrangements must be made to cover the curriculum. This means that lesson notes and assignments must be made available to her and that she must take responsibility for completing and returning the assignments to the school for continuous assessment (CASS).
 - The process of gathering valid information about the learner's performance and the formal recording of her progress throughout the year (CASS) must be continued as far as practically possible whether she is at school or at home. The evidence of assessment and recording contained in her profile and portfolio will help the EMDC multifunctional team to decide about her progression at the end of the year.

- The importance of providing children with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values regarding their sexuality and the accompanying social responsibilities in especially the subject: Life Orientation cannot be over-emphasised. The principle that it is best for learners to abstain from sexual activity should be stressed. Emphasising the importance of good moral values should be the backbone of sexual education.
- Schools can also enable parents and guardians to play a more active role in the sexuality education of their children by attending educational support programmes.

PREGNANCY DURING SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

When a full-time Grade 12 candidate becomes pregnant, the principal must deal with the case as follows:

- In cases where special arrangements are required, the principal must report the pregnancy to the Director: Examinations at the Department immediately and submit a medical certificate as proof.
- The learner has the right and choice to attend school as close to the confinement date as is considered medically advisable.
 - If a learner will be 32 weeks (or more) pregnant on 1 October of the Grade 12 year, as indicated in a medical certificate, she will have the following options:
 - To write the October/November Senior Certificate Examinations in a separate examination room at the school or in a separate venue in the vicinity.
 - To write the October/November Senior Certificate Examinations at another centre as a private candidate, should she decide to terminate full-time school attendance, subsequent the conditions pertaining to special centres.
 - To enter for the supplementary examinations in the following March:
 - The reason for these options is that candidates have the right to write their Senior Certificate Examinations in the best possible examination environment, and they could become upset if a candidate in an advanced stage of pregnancy goes into labour during an examination session.
 - If the learner chooses to write and is allowed to enter for the supplementary examinations of the following March, she must submit a medical certificate confirming that the term of her pregnancy was so advanced that it was impossible for her to write the October/November Senior Certificate Examination.
 - A candidate, who is unable to write the examinations either in November or in March, may register as a private candidate for subsequent examinations. It is her own responsibility to register for these examinations.
 - If the pregnant learner in Grade 12 is less than 32 weeks pregnant on 1 October and chooses to sit for the examinations, the following options will be available:

- To write the October/November Senior Certificate Examinations at her own school.
 - To write at another school in the vicinity or at a special Examination Centre.
 - To write at a special Examination Centre as a private candidate should she decide to terminate full-time school attendance.
- Should the candidate choose to write the October/November Senior Certificate Examinations at a special Examination Centre, the following will apply:
 - The principal must assist the candidate and arrange with the Director: Examinations at the Department for her to write at a special Examination Centre.
 - If the learner is the only candidate at a special Examination Centre, she (or her parent(s) or guardian(s)) will be responsible for remunerating the invigilator. The candidate must pay the required invigilation fee to the Education Department, which will then pay the invigilator.
 - The Circuit Manager must approve the invigilator and the special Examination Centre, which must be situated as near as possible to the school.
 - The special invigilator must receive a question paper for the specific examination session from the chief invigilator when the question papers are opened in the school's official examination venue, and take it to the special Examination Centre

After every examination session the special invigilator must hand the answer script(s) to the Chief invigilator who will send it/them to the Department with the rest of the school's scripts

