

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & YOUTH**

**SCHOOLS DIVISION**

**STUDENT SERVICES SECTION**

**TEENAGE  
PREGNANCY  
POLICY**

**JANUARY 1996 - REVISED AUGUST 2005**

# **TEENAGE PREGNANCY POLICY FOR SCHOOLS**

## **1.0 RATIONALE**

The Ministry of Education and Youth in liaison with other agencies is dedicated to the provision of quality educational and support services to students so that they become well-informed, educated, reliable, responsible, self-sufficient and caring citizens. For students coming from backgrounds that present obstacles to these goals, support services such as counselling and advice are also given.

Statistics from MISD census coupled with those of the National Youth Study (1999) indicate some serious issues and concerns relating to teenage pregnancy and abortion. Since the majority of those teenagers are in both primary and secondary schools it is the Ministry of Education and Youth's prerogative to use realistic and pragmatic ways to address these issues.

It is a well-known fact that the single mothers trying to raise children without stable support are at higher risk of the following: poverty, poor housing conditions, malnutrition, unemployment, child physical, sexual and psychological abuse, neglect, lower school achievement for the children, etc. This is accentuated in the case of single mothers who are still of school age.

The actions undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Youth are twofold: prevention of teenage pregnancy and provision of educational services for those who become pregnant. The prevention activities are being implemented in the Personal and Social Education (PSE) classes and through the support programmes of school-based counsellors.

## **2.0 AIM OF THE POLICY**

The Teenage Pregnancy Policy for Schools aims to provide procedures, guidelines and regulations to be followed by schools, the Student Services Section in the Ministry of Education and Youth and the parents to assist them in decision making and providing support for students who become pregnant before completing their formal education cycle.

## **3.0 PROCEDURES**

When students become pregnant, the following procedures should be implemented and maintained:

- 3.1 The student who is of compulsory school age is allowed to remain in the same school for the first six months of her pregnancy, no matter in which class she happens to be.

After the six months of pregnancy, given the various physical and medical pressures on the student, she may leave school to have her child. She may return to the same school after the birth of the child. Guidance counselling is provided when she is at school and after her return.

- 3.2** The student is transferred to another school. This is only after discussions with the Head teacher, Deputy Head Pastoral, Studies Coordinator, Counsellor, the parents and Social Services reveal that opposition to her presence in that particular school is so vehement that a change of surrounding is ABSOLUTELY in the best interest of the student.
- 3.3** If the student leaves school during the first two terms, then she needs to repeat the class she was in upon her return to school. This is due to the fact that she would not have covered enough of the curriculum content to be promoted
- 3.4** If the student leaves during the third term and she completes the required course-work, assessments and or examinations for that term, then she may be accepted in the next grade after the birth of the child and **NOT** repeat the same class.
- 3.5** The student who becomes pregnant in S5 during the third term is allowed to complete her studies and sit the IGCSE National Examinations if she has been registered. She may apply for post secondary education and training if she wishes to take this option.
- 3.6** The student has to apply for reinstatement in school within one year after the birth of the baby. All applications must be submitted to the Principal Secretary (EHRD).
- 3.7** Before reinstatement, both parent(s) and student are provided with the necessary counselling – the parent(s) on the type of support to give the student to allow her to continue with her studies and the student on her responsibilities vis-à-vis her studies and looking after the baby.
- 3.8** The school management must be prepared for receiving the student and ensuring that she is supported without prejudice.
- 3.9** If the student is to be reinstated in the same school, then the other students must also be prepared through counselling to avoid any undue harassment or stress placed on the student.
- 3.10** The student is referred to Youth Health Centre for support through the youth parent program.

**NB:** Schools are bound by this policy and will endeavour to do their utmost to provide adequate support to these students. Teachers and other members of staff, and students who deliberately discriminate against the pregnant student or the student-mother shall be severely reprimanded for their actions. Head teachers shall ensure that everybody respects this policy.

#### **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

Within this policy, all partners: the parent(s) of the pregnant student, the student, the school management and the Student Welfare Unit in the Student Services Section has crucial roles to play.

##### **4.1 The Parents**

- Inform the school management of the student's pregnancy as soon as they have the information.
- Discuss possible options if the student is to be reinstated after delivery with school management and SWU Officers.
- Request for the student's reinstatement to the Principal Secretary (EHRD).
- Give as much support as possible to the student during her pregnancy after delivery and after her re-instatement.

##### **4.2 The School Management**

- Inform the parent(s) of the student's condition if student has problem communicating with the parents.
- Offer counselling and guide the student's decision.
- Discuss possible options with the student and her parent(s).
- Prepare the other students/staff members for student's reinstatement.
- Provide support and counselling for the student throughout.

### **4.3 The Student Welfare Unit**

- Offer counselling to student and parent(s).
- Advise parent(s) and student on possible options.
- Make arrangements for student to sit internal/external exams at Ministry's Headquarters if there is a need.
- Process application for re-instatement.
- Assist school management in preparing other students/staff for student's reinstatement.

### **4.4 The Student**

- Inform parents and the school management of her condition
- Attend antenatal clinic regularly
- Discuss possible options for re-instatement
- Attend young parents' program at Youth Health Centre
- Maintain contact with the school for academic support.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

This policy tries to strike a balance between the available financial and human resources of the country at the present time, the need to provide services for all students who become pregnant while they are in a democratic system, the foresight of taking care of future generations, the prevention of social problems, and the sensibilities of the general population.

