

Date: 2 December 2003
My Ref: z/cc/ke/0304/CKL002
Your Ref:

Contact: Kate East
Direct dial: 01934 888 829



Headteachers of North Somerset Secondary and Special Schools;
Managers of other Secondary Education Providers

Dear Colleague

Guidance on the Education of School-age Parents

I am writing to update you on the current LEA procedures for the notification of and support for the above group of students. We remain committed to keeping pregnant students in school for as long as possible but acknowledge that they may need to access alternative provision in the later stages of pregnancy.

As of September 1st 2003, pregnant students and teenage mothers who are no longer able to attend school, are entitled to and will be offered a minimum of 10 hours tuition a week. To access this support a referral form to the Education Other Than At School Service (EOTAS) needs to be completed in conjunction with your Education Welfare Officer. You will be pleased to know that the additional hours will not result in an increased charge to schools. A support package, including access to assistance with childcare and a named Connexions Personal Advisor, can also be put in place in order to encourage teenage mothers to return to mainstream education.

As this group is one of the government's target groups for social inclusion, we are required to monitor and track all teenage pregnancies (carried to full term) and teenage mothers. I am therefore, taking this opportunity to remind you of the need for you or a member of your senior staff to complete the notification form for all such cases in your school and return it to the Principal Education Welfare Officer. You will see from the form in Appendix 2 of the enclosed guidance that:

- If the young woman is happy for her information to be shared and/or support sought, full information should be given on the form
- Where the young woman wants confidentiality maintained, just the mandatory information of school, year group, education and child care details needs to be completed.

For your information I am enclosing the North Somerset guidance on The Education of Pregnant Teenagers and School Age Parents. If you have any queries or need any further clarification please contact Jan Harper Shea, Senior Education Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely

Kate East
Head of Inclusion



NORTH SOMERSET LEA GUIDANCE ON THE EDUCATION OF PREGNANT TEENAGERS AND SCHOOL AGE PARENTS

Introduction

1. This guidance is issued for Secondary School Headteachers, Teachers and the Governing Bodies of all North Somerset Maintained Schools and is based on the following principles:
 - Britain has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe
 - North Somerset's teenage conception rate is 43.2% per 1000 girls aged 15-17 years of age – this is higher than the average for England
 - The government aims to get 60% of teenage parents into education, training or/and employment by 2006, this is to reduce their risk of long term social exclusion
 - Pregnancy is **NOT** an excuse for exclusion from school and health and safety should not be used as a reason to prevent a pregnant pupil attending school.
 - LEA's have a statutory duty to provide suitable education for the pupils for whom they are responsible, including pupils of compulsory school age who become parents.
2. This guidance should be read alongside the DfES Circular (0629/2001) which explains the responsibilities of the Local Education Authority in relation to the education of school age parents ([www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/users.nsf/Guidance and Publications, Guidance on the Education of Teenage Parents](http://www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/users.nsf/Guidance%20and%20Publications/Guidance%20on%20the%20Education%20of%20Teenage%20Parents))
3. Under the guidance, any pupil who is pregnant and will give birth before the end of year 11, or is a school-age mother, is entitled to continue her education. This should wherever possible be at the school site is already attending, or alternatively she may be referred to the Education Other Than At School Service (EOTAS), the Meriton centre in Bristol or she may be eligible for some home tuition before the birth of the baby.
4. The latest statistics for North Somerset show that in 2001, 22% of our conceptions were to young girls aged 16 and under. This equates to approx. 31 conceptions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Sex and Relationships Guidance (DfEE 0116/2000), states that 'schools should have a clear and explicit confidentiality policy'. Teachers are **not** legally bound to inform

parents or the Headteacher of any disclosures by pupils. They may however be required to do so if the school's confidentiality policy requests them to do so or there are child protection issues. Teachers should seek consent from the pupil for any disclosure and should make it clear that they cannot offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality. Any issues regarding child protection should be reported to the designated child protection teacher in the school.

REFERRAL OF PREGNANT SCHOOL GIRLS

A referral form needs to be completed for every school age girl who has decided to go ahead with her pregnancy (referral forms were sent to schools last year, see appendix 2 at the back of this summary). Once the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has received the referral they will either:

act as the main support agency for a pupil who is not attending any educational provision on a regular basis

or the school, in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service, will refer to Connexions West of England and will work in partnership to support a pupil who is accessing educational provision on a regular basis. Connexions West of England will provide a named Personal Advisor (PA) to work with and on behalf of the pupil.

It should be made clear to the school, the pupil and her parent(s)/carer(s) who the lead support worker will be and how they can be contacted. In most cases, the Connexions PA assigned to the pupil will act as the co-ordinator of appropriate support.

ANTE-NATAL ARRANGEMENTS

Either a Connexions P.A or an Education Welfare Officer (support worker) will visit the pupil and her parent(s)/carer(s) to discuss arrangements and with the schools support devise an individual pregnancy learning plan.

The pupil should stay at school for as long as possible before the birth of the baby. This should however be in accordance with medical advice and the school should obtain a medical note if there are any health concerns before the birth.

It is the schools responsibility to provide teaching for pregnant pupils up until the birth of the baby. When a pupil commences maternity leave before the birth of the baby, the school has a statutory duty to provide alternative education provision, which can be co-ordinated by the EDTAS Service. If you feel the pupil will need to access this service it would be helpful if the support worker could inform them of the pupil so that a referral can be made as efficiently as possible.

When a girl is dual registered in a PRU and a school, the school cannot take her off the school roll without the permission of the LEA (Education Regulations, 1995).

POST NATAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is unlikely that the pupil will be able to return to school for six weeks after the birth, which is when a doctor carries out a post natal check.

The support worker for the pupil will inform the school of the birth of the baby. A home visit will be made by the support worker to discuss the pupils return plan and arrange a date for her to recommence her education. The support worker will discuss this plan with the pupil's school and where necessary invite all parties to a meeting to discuss the arrangements.

A pupil is entitled to no more than 18 calendar weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child (4.5 DfES/0629/2001).

SCHOOL AGE FATHERS

Schools should acknowledge the needs of school age fathers and fathers to be. Boys should have access to support and counselling from appropriate/relevant agencies, such as Connexions. The school may find it appropriate to be flexible with timetables and curriculum, so that the father can have the opportunity to attend appointments and the birth.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Education Act requires parents to secure education of their children of compulsory school age either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.





STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

To: Colin Tincknell, Principal Education Welfare Officer
Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1ZZ

NB: Mandatory information in **bold type**

Name of Young Woman			
Dob		Year Group	
Home Address			
Current Address <i>(if different from above)</i>		Tel. No.	
School			
School Contact			
Parent / Carer			
Is Parent / Carer aware of pregnancy?			
Estimated Date of Delivery			
Name and Address of GP			
Name and Address of Health Visitor / Clinic			
Name and address of any other professionals involved			
Attendance at school prior to pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 90%	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 – 90%	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 60%
Does the young woman want to stay in school?			
If not, what arrangements are there for her continuing education?			
What are the child care arrangements?			
Signed (<i>young woman</i>)			
Signed (<i>school contact</i>)			
Date			

Please see overleaf for any specific support required by the young woman

Specific support required:	Details:
<input type="checkbox"/> Teenage Pregnancy Midwife	
<input type="checkbox"/> Connexions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Services	
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
