

Administrative Procedures for Pregnant/Parenting/Married Students (Attachment for Policy No. 234)

Purpose

A student who is eligible to attend School District of Philadelphia (District) schools and who is married and/or pregnant/parenting shall not be denied admission to the District or access to an educational program solely because of marriage, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, or potential or actual parenthood.[1][2][3][4][5] The District prohibits employees from applying any rule or taking any action which treats an applicant for admission or student differently on the basis of current, potential, or past parental, family, or marital status.

The District recognizes that young parents who leave school early face greater hardship and poverty than young people who complete their education. The District is committed to supporting the retention of pregnant and parenting students in schools and acknowledges that one of the most effective ways to minimize the risk of negative outcomes in terms of health, welfare and educational achievement is to support pregnant and parenting students to remain connected to learning.

Definitions

Pregnancy, as defined in state regulations, shall include the use of assisted reproductive technology, the state of being in gestation, childbirth, breastfeeding, the postpartum period after childbirth and medical conditions related to pregnancy.

Pregnant student: A student who is pregnant.

Parenting student: Any student who is the biological parent or legal guardian of a child. May also be referred to as a school-age parent, teen parent or adolescent parent. Parenting student does not include any person whose parental rights have been terminated.

Biological Parent: A parent who has conceived or sired rather than adopted a child and whose genes are therefore transmitted to the child.

Parent/Guardian: For purposes of this policy parent/guardian shall include a biological or adoptive parent of a child; a foster parent, unless prohibited by state law or regulations; a guardian authorized to act as the child's parent, in accordance with law or regulations; an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent, including a grandparent or other relative, with whom the child lives, or an individual legally responsible for the child's welfare; a surrogate parent who has been appointed, in accordance with law and regulations; or a court appointed educational decision maker or guardian.

ELECT Program: Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) is a comprehensive, school-based, community-linked program that provides a broad array of academic and social service supports designed to help expectant and parenting students stay in

school, earn a high school diploma or GED, and achieve the self-sufficiency required to make a successful transition to employment.

Approved Documentation of Parenting Status: The following documents of evidence include: (1) birth certificate, (2) ultrasound, (3) letter from physician, (4) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) paperwork, and/or (5) child's medical card.

False Pregnancy or Pseudocyesis: A condition when a student believes they are pregnant, yet conception hasn't taken place and no baby is forming inside.

Reasonable Adjustments: Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. For example, a larger desk, elevator access, or allowing you to make frequent trips to the restroom, when necessary because of your pregnancy.

Teen Parent Leave: The approved period of time of excused absences for post-partum recovery.

Procedures

The Superintendent designates the Office of Student Support Services as responsible for implementing and maintaining the requirements of this policy and its procedures.

Responsibility

The Office of Student Support Services is responsible for ensuring that pregnant and parenting students are informed of their rights under policy 234. Each school within the District also has the responsibility to post and share this information with students and must:

- Disseminate this policy among all school staff and administration, and must inform school staff students, and parents about the policy at the beginning of each school year, to ensure all parties are made aware of their student rights and responsibilities set forth in this policy to help students stay on track toward graduation.
- Identify a Teen Parent Student Liaison to counsel students and to interface with internal and external resources. This individual may be a counselor, school nurse or member of the school administration. The Teen Parent Student Liaison shall:
 - Provide pregnant and/or parenting students with information about Title IX rights and how to report suspected Title IX violations.
 - With consent of the student make referrals to the ELECT program.
 - With consent, enter data regarding students' pregnant/parenting status in the student information system.
 - Before, during and after Teen Parent Leave, link the student to academic and social support within the District and outside of the school (child care, health care, etc.).
- Protect student privacy, by only sharing information about a student's pregnancy, marriage, or parenting status with consent or only as outlined below in the section labeled "Confidentiality and Disclosure of Pregnancy and Parenting Status."

If a student discloses their pregnant and parenting status to school personnel, it is the duty of the school personnel to inform the student of support for pregnant and parenting students available through the District and, if the student consents, refer the student to ELECT and/or the Teen Parent Student Liaison.

Regulatory Guidance

A student who is eligible to attend District schools and who is married and/or pregnant/parenting shall not be denied an educational program solely because of marriage, pregnancy, pregnancy-related disabilities, or potential or actual parenthood. Under applicable federal and state law, the District does not:

- Treat students differently on the basis of sex.
- Treat pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery different from any other temporary disability.
- Discriminate against or exclude from education programming or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, a student on the basis of such student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or recovery there-from.
- Require student participation in a program or activity for pregnant students, participation must be completely voluntary and the separate program or activity must be comparable to that offered to non-pregnant students.

Reasonable Adjustments To Facilitate Full Education Participation

District schools shall make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the equal access and full participation of pregnant and parenting students in all school programs and activities. Such accommodations, implemented on a case-by-case basis, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Providing schedule flexibility (later start times, changes to academic roster) whenever possible to enable full participation and reduce school tardiness and absences due to medical, childcare or other pregnancy or parenting related concerns;
- Permitting additional time to the pregnant or parenting student for class changes;
- Permitting the pregnant student the use of elevators when this need is supported by the student's physician and when it is possible to do so;
- Permitting the pregnant and parenting student to engage in alternative activities that satisfy physical education requirements when requested by the pregnant or parenting student and their physician;
- Providing hall passes for bathroom use; and
- Providing pregnant and parenting students with class and homework assignments missed during any short term, excused period of absence (i.e., longer than one week but less than four weeks) to enable the student to complete the assignments and receive credit for them if they are satisfactorily completed by the student within a reasonable amount of time. Tests may also be made up within a reasonable amount of time, and the teacher has discretion to determine if the same or reasonably equivalent test shall be administered.

- Intermittent absences to attend medical appointments, in accordance with Board policy.
- Allowing the student flexibility in sitting and standing, and changes in physical space or supplies, including carrying water.
- Extensions of time for coursework or rescheduling of tests and examinations.
- The student may continue attending school in the regular classroom or continuation education setting (such as ACE), or may request to enroll in Philadelphia Virtual Academy during an open enrollment period.

Some requests for reasonable adjustments may require supporting documentation from a medical provider regarding medical necessity.

Breastfeeding Students

The school shall provide reasonable accommodations to any lactating student to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, or address other needs related to breastfeeding. A student shall not incur an academic penalty for using any of these reasonable accommodations, and shall be provided the opportunity to make up any work missed due to such use. Reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to:

1. Access to a private and secure room, other than a restroom, to express breast milk or breastfeed an infant child;
2. Permission to bring onto a school campus a breast pump and any other equipment used to express breast milk;
3. Access to a power source for a breast pump or any other equipment used to express breast milk; and
4. Access to a place to store expressed breast milk safely. A reasonable amount of time to accommodate the student's need to express breast milk or breastfeed an infant child.

School Uniforms

Pregnant students will not be denied attendance at school or otherwise denied an education for failing to wear clothing that complies with the District-wide or school specific uniform code, if such failure is due to pregnancy. Issuing a suspension to a student or taking any punitive disciplinary action against a student not in uniform (such as sending the student home or not allowing the student to attend class) is prohibited and a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and District policy. Pregnant students are allowed to wear appropriate maternity tops and bottoms that are the same colors designated for the school's uniform.

Attendance and Tardiness

Every child between the ages of 6 and 21 has the right to attend school. For students between the age of six (6) to eighteen (18) attendance is required under state law. Pregnant and parenting students have the same rights and obligations under compulsory school attendance laws. These attendance rights and obligations apply to students regardless of their marital or parental status. All schools shall maintain an attendance policy that: (1) provides thirty (30) days of excused absences for a student who provides documentation of the birth of the student's child; and (2)

provides excused absences for a student who provides appropriate documentation of pregnancy or that the student is the parent of a child needing care.

All efforts should be made to ensure that the pregnant student is enrolled and attending school.-If complications arise during pregnancy such that attendance at school would be harmful to the physical or mental health of the pregnant student or infant, the student should submit a statement from the attending physician specifically supporting the absence and requesting homebound instruction for a specific period of time.

If a pregnant student has a medical reason to limit their participation in their regular school program, it is the responsibility of the student/parent to provide the school with appropriate documentation from their medical provider. The principal or designee, working alongside school counselors, nurses, and the Office of Student Support Services, shall establish procedures to develop an educational plan consistent with the health care provider's instructions. Schools should make reasonable adjustments when provided with such information in the same manner as provided to any other student with a health condition.

Short Term Excused Absences and Late Arrival / Early Dismissal

A student who is the parent of a child shall be considered excused when their absence, for a whole or part of the day, is due to the illness or the medical appointment of their child, or to comply with court orders, including custody orders, and documentation of the medical appointment or court order is provided.

A student who is the parent of a child shall not be penalized if they must leave school due to an emergency related to their child (e.g. need to pick up their child from child care, medical emergency, etc.) if the parent/guardian of the parenting student has provided permission or if the parenting student provides a supporting note from their licensed medical provider.

A student who is the parent of a child shall also be considered excused due to lack of child care when the student has made a reasonable effort to secure and maintain reliable child care.

A school may require verification of appointments from pregnant students' licensed healthcare providers or the licensed healthcare providers for students' children only if such verification is also required from students for other medically related absences.

Long Term Excused Absences and Pregnancy / Teen Parent Leave

Students may request an extended absence or voluntary leave of absence for reasons of pregnancy and related medical conditions, including pregnancy-related illness, false pregnancy, or other health condition, childbirth, and recovery. The Teen Parent Leave for childbirth recovery shall be for at least thirty (30) weekdays and/or the duration deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider to recuperate from child birth and arrange for child care. The student should submit a statement from the attending physician stating the birth date of the infant. Upon the parenting student's return, they shall follow District policies for absences.

A school’s administration may excuse absences due to pregnancy or childbirth for as long as the student’s licensed medical provider says it is necessary.

Students will be allowed to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before medical leave began, which should include giving students the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests missed, or a reasonable equivalent of the work missed during their absence within a reasonable time period. Teachers may not refuse to allow pregnant or parenting students to submit work after a deadline was missed because of pregnancy or childbirth. If teachers’ grading is based in part on class participation or attendance in which students’ missed class because of pregnancy or childbirth, they should be allowed to make up participation credits they didn’t have the chance to earn.

Teachers shall follow federal and state regulations related to excused absences/medical leave. Schools will support the continuation of learning during excused absence and leave, as medically appropriate. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide homework and make-up work to remain current with assignments and to avoid losing academic time.

Post-Partum

After delivery, the school must permit a birthing parent’s absence from school for a period not to exceed thirty (30) week days for the physical recovery and/or adjustment to parenting, unless an extension of time is medically necessary. After delivery, the school must permit the student parent with physical guardianship to be absent from school for a period not to exceed thirty (30) weekdays until that parent has obtained childcare, unless an extension of time is medically necessary. It shall be necessary for the student to present a medical certification in the form of a note from their licensed medical provider explaining that the student is unable to attend school and the note must also specify the beginning and end dates of the leave of absence deemed necessary by the licensed medical provider. All non-birthing guardian/parent students shall be permitted to be absent from school for a period of 10 days.

Pregnant and parenting students also may request exemption from attendance because of a related physical or mental condition. Absences of students who are parent/guardians shall be considered excused when absent due to the illness or medical appointment of their child, or to comply with court orders, including custody orders. Schools may require verification for illness absences in accordance with policies applicable to all students.

Absence Codes

General absence codes:

Absence Code	Absence Reason	Excuse Code	Status Code
1	Other Urgent Reasons (Principal’s Approval)	Absent	Excused
4	Excused Early Dismissal	Early Release	Excused

5	Illness	Absent	Excused
13	Excused Lateness	Tardy	Excused

After birth of child absence codes:

Absence Code	Individual	Absence Type	Duration
5	Birthing Parent	Teen Parent Leave (Childbirth Recovery)	30 weekdays (6 weeks)
5	Birthing Parent	Teen Parent Leave Extended Childbirth Recovery (e.g. Cesarean Section)	Period deemed medically necessary by physician
1	Non-birthing Parent	Parental Leave	10 Days
1	Non-birthing Parent	Sole physical guardianship seeking child care and/or to address medical needs of the infant	Up to 30 weekdays (6 weeks)

Homebound

The purpose of homebound instruction is to provide students with some level of instructional services during a temporary period of absence so that, on return to school, they can re-engage successfully with their instructional program. Pregnant and parenting students are expected to abide by the School District of Philadelphia’s homebound and attendance policies. Pregnancy is not considered a medical condition that meets eligibility for homebound instruction on its own. Homebound instruction is not to be granted to the student teen parent due to lack of child care and is not to be granted solely because the pregnant student is in their third trimester. The eligibility criteria for participation in homebound instruction are the same for all students, whether or not they are pregnant or have given birth.

In order for a pregnant or parenting student to be eligible for homebound instruction a physician must certify that the student is under medical care for an illness or injury that is acute, catastrophic or chronic in nature (i.e. placenta previa, placental abruption, preeclampsia, at risk of preterm labor, etc.), and unable to attend school for a period of at least four (4) weeks. The criteria described above would have to be met in order for a student to receive homebound instruction for medical circumstances related to pregnancy.

If assistance is needed in determining the proper procedures for homebound instruction contact School Health Services at 215-400-4920.

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Pregnancy and Parenting Status

Pregnant and parenting students have the right to have their health and personal information regarding their pregnancies and related conditions kept confidential within the boundaries of applicable law.

Personal information students share with school personnel is confidential and should not be discussed with others or appear in the student's academic record without their permission. An exception to this rule of confidentiality includes, but is not limited to, a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, neglect, or a clear and present danger to the health or safety of the student. The child abuse reporting responsibility DOES NOT include notifying students' parents or guardians of a pregnancy or related conditions.

In cases where students' parents or guardians are unaware of a pregnancy, students may be encouraged to involve their parents or guardians but may not be coerced or forced to do so.

Any data collected should be tracked using the student's school ID number and de-identify the parenting status of the student from their academic record. Only a limited number of school staff such as the nurse or counselor should have access to data where the student's name is attached to parenting status. Staff collecting the data should explain that recording the student's parenting status allows the District to learn how many parenting students there are and how best to ensure these students have the support they need to succeed.

Schools shall consult with the school nurse or the District's Medical Director regarding health and medical concerns and medical release related to pregnancy. Every case is different, and school staff are advised to use their judgment and collaborate with their nurse and counseling staff as appropriate to determine what adjustments are necessary.

Recording Pregnant and Parenting Students

The District has an established goal of providing pregnant and parenting students enrolled in its schools with the support and services they need to succeed as successful parents and students. The District, along with its partners and service providers, strive to address the needs of its large urban youth population in the areas of education, social service, health care support, referral to childcare services, and preparation for employment.

In order to make sure all eligible students are being served and ensure adequate resources at each school, a pregnant and parenting tab in the student information system, Infinite Campus (IC), has been implemented to record pregnant and parenting students. All students who disclose their pregnant and/or parenting status must be entered into the tab by appropriate school personnel.

Appropriate school personnel include, but are not limited to, the school principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, and school nurse. Students who would like to be contacted regarding additional support provided by the District must sign a consent form before being contacted. After signing the consent, a member of the pregnant and parenting teen support

program will fully discuss the benefits of the program with a student and answer any questions the student may have.

Consent and Referral

The Teen Parent Student Liaison or other approved school staff such as a school nurse, social-worker or counselor shall make all students aware of the services offered through the ELECT program. If students consent, a referral shall be made to the ELECT program by filling out the [ELECT Student Referral Form](#). The Teen Parent Student Liaison or other approved staff will also enter data pertaining to students' parenting status in the Student Information System only after obtaining consent.

Maintenance Schedule

These administrative procedures shall be reviewed upon the review of the policy, or upon the occurrence of a triggering event.

Related Information:

[Pregnant and Parenting Supports Resource Folder](#)
[SIS Pregnant and Parenting Screen Stepper](#)