

# Hummersknott Academy



## **34 - Supporting Young Women of School Age Who Become Pregnant and Young Men Who Become Fathers Policy**

**Review Date: March 2023**

Adopted/V1	V2	V3					
Mar 2014	May 2017	May 2020					

Hummersknott Academy Trust incorporates Hummersknott Academy and Skerne Park Academy and unless otherwise stated this policy applies to all Academies equally. This policy relates to Hummersknott Academy only.

## **PURPOSE**

- To ensure that young women are given support to stay in education if they become pregnant
- To address the needs of young men if it is known that they are or are about to become fathers
- To ensure processes are in place for joint working between the agencies involved with young parents
- To ensure that confidentiality, safeguarding and the Fraser Guidelines are followed correctly in relation to the rights of the young woman
- To ensure the pregnancy decision-making package is followed for good practice in order to support young people

## **SCOPE**

### **Local Authority Responsibilities**

1. **Statutory duties** – to provide suitable education for all students for whom they are responsible, including students of compulsory school age who become parents.
2. **Students with an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)**– students with an EHCP who become pregnant will be treated in the same way as other young persons under the teenage pregnancy strategy.
3. **Data collection** – all LAs have a responsibility to collect data on participation and achievement of all students out of school including teenage parents who are out of school. It is good practice to collect data on the attainment of those parents attending school, who transition to further education and who enter employment. This responsibility for data collection continues with the Raising of the Participation Age.

### **The Academy's Responsibility**

The Academy has a statutory responsibility to ensure that young people of compulsory school age who are pregnant or young parents are supported to continue with their education. This responsibility includes ensuring that a young person or young parent is supported to continue learning for as long as possible and may dis-apply the national curriculum to allow concentration on fewer subjects. The School Designated Teenage Pregnancy Lead (Alternative Education, Attendance and Welfare Manager) shall apply this guidance at the most appropriate time and teaching staff will be informed of the pregnancy on a 'need to know' basis.

The designated lead will then ensure the young woman's College Manager takes on the responsibility to oversee the young woman's needs in school. When a young woman is identified as pregnant, the designated lead must ensure that the school nurse is notified within 48 hours for an immediate response so that the young woman clearly understands the options available to her in a timely and appropriate manner.

The College Manager is responsible for ensuring the young woman receives full information about services in her local area. It is good practice to encourage the young woman to make contact with the school nurse, family planning service or GP for confidential counselling and support with her pregnancy. The College Manager will also encourage the young woman to discuss the pregnancy her parents or carers.

If the young woman decides to continue the pregnancy, the College Manager will be responsible for overseeing a pastoral support plan or Early Help Assessment. At this stage a multi-agency planning meeting will be called to invite all the professionals who will have a role in supporting the young woman and her family through the pregnancy. These professionals could include: the Academy designated lead, the school nurse, the Family Support Officer attached to the Academy, the personal advisor for teen parents, Family Nurse Partnership or Parental Engagement Officer. The young woman and her parents/carers (if appropriate) are key to this meeting; the prospective father and his parents (if appropriate) are also to be invited if the young

woman and her family wish. This list of professionals is not exhaustive and will depend on which agencies are needed to support each young woman.

The purpose of this meeting is to plan how the 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 school lead will notify the Manager of the Home and Hospital Teaching Service (HHTS) of the expected date of delivery for information only purposes. The expectation is that all young women will continue her learning in school and will be supported by her school.

This support plan will include:

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

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

- The expected date of delivery
- The maternity pathway
- Examination times
- The 29 week maternity grant
- Support from 'Educated other than at School' (if appropriate)
- Other issues such as housing, health and well-being, e.g.: mental health, nutrition and lifestyle need to be addressed by members of the planning group

A young woman with an EHCP will need a review of their statement. Information will be shared as appropriate between meetings and delivered through a person-centred approach.

If a young woman of compulsory school age is absent for spells during pregnancy for ill health or has a history of non-school attendance, the designated school teenage pregnancy lead has a responsibility to provide academic work, refer the matter to the Family Support Officer and provide an early referral to 'Education other than at School' (if appropriate).

If the young woman attends an off-site facility or takes entitled authorised absence, the College Manager will keep contact with her progress and, where appropriate, oversee her education including arranging for the setting and marking of work while she is away. Absence for antenatal classes, and if the baby is ill, will be classified as 'authorised'. The named lead will meet with the young woman regularly to ensure that her needs are being met appropriately and to offer pastoral support.

### **Statutory School Aged Pre- and Post-Birth Maternity Leave**

In line with best practice, the point at which a young woman ceases to attend school will usually be around the 29<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Variation from this will need to be recorded in the Support Plan. HHTS can provide additional support if the student is medically unfit to attend school or is a school refuser. However, these circumstances will be considered as exceptional. If this does occur, then the Family Support Officer will liaise weekly or as defined in the plan with the appropriate HHTS member of staff who will be the main link between the School Designated Teenage Pregnancy Lead and young woman to ensure that appropriate work is set. Family support and counselling support may be negotiated during this period and will continue on return to school, if necessary.

## Fathers

The Academy acknowledges the additional needs that school-age fathers and fathers to be may have. If a member of staff finds that a student is a father or father to be, the same process will be followed as when the young woman finds she is pregnant. A pastoral member of staff will be identified to take responsibility for addressing his needs. The young man will be encouraged to speak to his parents or carers. The Academy will encourage young men to see the Academy counsellor. Where a pastoral multi-agency or an Early Help Assessment meeting is convened, the father will be invited to attend.

It may be appropriate to allow young fathers or fathers to be to accompany partners to antenatal and post-natal health checks and permit a father to take up to 2 weeks paternity leave if he so wishes. External examinations can be attended even if paternity leave falls at this time. Absence for antenatal classes, and if the baby is ill will be classified as 'authorised'.

## Health and Safety, Sports and School Trips

Health and safety must not be used as a reason to prevent a pregnant student attending school. A risk assessment will be put in place which is regularly updated during the young woman's pregnancy. Wherever possible, pregnant students will be encouraged to take a full part in all curricular activities; arrangements for school trips, outings and sporting activities will be made in consultation with the young woman. The Academy will be flexible in its considerations and endeavour to include the young woman in all aspects of the curriculum.

## Bullying

The Academy has an effective anti-bullying policy in place and adheres to it, but staff will need to be sensitive to a young woman when she discovers she is pregnant and when she returns to school following a termination or the birth of her baby.

## Affects on Others

There is no evidence to suggest that keeping a pregnant young woman or school age mother in school will encourage others to become pregnant. The Academy's effective PSHE sessions alert young people to the risks and realities of early parenthood and are used to encourage understanding of young parents' situation amongst other students, taking care not to reinforce negative stereotypes.

## Re-Integration

A re-integration part of the Support Plan will be drawn up on consultation with the young woman, her parents/carers and the College Manager supporting her. The level of support at the time may be crucial to determining whether the young woman remains in learning. The Academy will be flexible in understanding the individual needs of each young woman.

The maximum time a school-aged parent should be absent from school is 26 weeks in total. If this period is extended, the school will follow normal absence procedures with the Family Support Officer. **At all times the young woman will be encouraged to return to education with minimum disruption.**

If the young woman wishes to return to school before six weeks post-birth, re-integration will take place **if her GP confirms in writing that she is fit enough to attend school.**

Three weeks before the young woman intends to return to school, the designated lead will coordinate the return to education through the Pastoral Support Plan/Early Help Assessment process. The three-week timescale may vary, and, if this is the case, the rationale will be recorded in the young woman's plan. This meeting will be hosted by the Academy at a venue convenient to the young woman. The meeting will consider as appropriate:

- School Timetable
- Childcare and feeding
- Transport
- The young woman's support structures
- Flexible timetable to ensure the emotional welfare of the young woman and baby is a priority

The 12 month re-integration part of the Support Plan will be reviewed each term or at the request of the young woman or a planning group member through the Pastoral Support Plan/Early Help Assessment process.

All absence for health checks for mothers and/or the school-aged father and baby will be authorised by the school.

### **Childcare**

The Academy is aware that care of a new-born baby may be a significant barrier to returning to education. The People and Families Information and Support will be able to offer advice if the young woman cannot find suitable childcare. Young woman may be eligible for financial support. Application for Care to Learn can be made by either parent to enable them to attend full-time education.

### **Family Support Officer (FSO)**

The Family Support Officer, following a referral from the Academy or other agency, will become part of the multi-agency team around the young woman and will take part in developing, with the young woman and other professionals, the Support Plan. The FSO will maintain support and contact with the young woman and her family throughout the pregnancy if there are attendance issues, and will also support the re-integration of the young woman into learning after the baby is born.

### **Home and Hospital Teaching Service**

Home and Hospital Teaching Service will be notified of the expected date of delivery at an early stage in the process. Most pregnant young women continue in their own school throughout their pregnancy and they will be encouraged to do so. If there are issues around refusal or medical conditions additional to their pregnancy, then HHTS can provide support for education provision.

This policy links with values 3 – Nothing but the best for all, 4 – Taking responsibility, 5 – Foundations for Future Success, 6 – Human Spirit, and 7 – Healthy Lives, of Hummersknott Academy Trust's Vision and Values.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

This policy will be reviewed and updated where necessary by the Vice Principal – Student Support, Guidance, Welfare and Progress, and approved for adoption by the Local Governing Body.

### **PUBLICISING THE POLICY**

A copy of this policy will be available on the Academy's website and the X-Drive/intranet. Staff will be advised of amendments to this policy via the Staff Bulletin and are expected to familiarise themselves with the content.

### **POLICY STATUS**

This is a non-statutory policy.