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**SCHOOL POLICY: PREGNANT STUDENTS POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

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**CONTACT:** Focus Programs

**1 CONTEXT**

1.1 The purpose of this statement is:

- to provide information which may assist schools in developing their own procedures concerning pregnant students.
- to outline policy and suggested procedures regarding pregnant students.

1.2 The ACT Department of Training & Education seeks to provide equality of educational opportunity for all persons attending or seeking to attend its educational institutions.

1.3 There is no obligation on the part of a student, parent or medical practitioner to notify the school of a pregnancy. Should a parent or a student choose not to notify the school of a pregnancy, the school has no right to seek access to such information.

1.4 The *Sex Discrimination Act*, No.4 of 1984 guarantees the rights of pregnant students to attend school. In particular, section 21, parts (1) and (2) state:

EDUCATION:

[Section] 21.

1. "It is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's sex, marital status or pregnancy:
  - (a) by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student, or
  - (b) in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student.
2. It is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a student on the ground of the student's sex, marital status or pregnancy:
  - (a) educational authority.
  - (b) by expelling the student.
  - (c) by subjecting the student to any other detriment."

**2 POLICY**

2.1 All students attending or seeking to attend ACT government schools, including pregnant students, should have equal access to educational programs.

**3 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

3.1 The system philosophy of the ACT Department of Education & Training has general principles which state that within system guidelines each school should deal with those matters which concern its own students. Schools should establish procedures to deal with pregnant students.

3.2 Each case should be approached by taking into account any special circumstances, including the nature of the institution and any special requirements of the student.

3.3 Students who are pregnant should be encouraged to remain in the school setting for as long as possible so as to maximise their educational opportunities and enhance their life choices. The last day of attendance should be negotiated between the principal and the family, taking account of individual circumstances. Special arrangements should be made where necessary to ensure that the student's education continues.

3.4 The matter of confidentiality should be discussed with the student and parents when the school is notified of the pregnancy. If confidentiality is requested this request should be obtained in writing. Should the situation arise where it seems advisable to involve others, then the issue of confidentiality should be renegotiated.

3.5 Students should be encouraged to return to school as soon as this is considered appropriate by a medical practitioner.