



# **HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE**

## **PREGNANCY AND PARENTHOOD POLICY**

**Date/date Reviewed: November 2017**

**Previous: June 2014**

**Next Review due: November 2019**

This policy is available in pdf format from the College website

[www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk](http://www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk)

or on request from the College Office 02890 612293

[info@hunterhouse.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@hunterhouse.belfast.ni.sch.uk)

## **Inclusion & Diversity**

The College aims to establish an inclusive community where all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexuality, gender orientation, appearance and ability.

## **Rationale**

Any student facing pregnancy and parenthood while still of school age will require additional support and resources in order to enable them to continue their education and achieve their potential. Support of school age parents is an extension of the pastoral care responsibilities already undertaken by the College. Within the remit of its Pastoral Care Policy, the College recognises the unique needs of young people as they prepare for and subsequently learn to manage parenthood.

The College recognises that pregnancy and parenthood for any of our students will normally be an unexpected and unplanned event in that student's life and that the student, and their parents/carers, have a right to be supported in a positive way throughout what can be a challenging process for all members of the family. The core principle of child-centered partnership working embedded within the College's Pastoral Care Policy will be important in identifying and implementing an effective support package for all involved. The College also recognizes that, in some areas of the community, school age pregnancy and parenthood can come with a social stigma and the College takes very seriously its duty to ensure that no such stigma or negative judgement is faced by any student in school.

## **Aim**

The aim of the Pregnancy and Parenthood Policy is to outline the procedures the College will follow in any instances of student pregnancy and parenthood and to make clear the roles and responsibilities of key individuals in carrying out these procedures.

## **Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities**

- The first response any member of staff to whom pregnancy is disclosed should be to reassure the student that the Pastoral Team in school will work closely with them, parents/carers and other agencies to ensure that as much support is available to them as possible and that the College will remain committed to ensuring that they achieve their full potential.
- All student pregnancies should be disclosed to the Pastoral Team including the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Ms S Greig who will establish whether or not the student has made their parents/carers aware. If not, she will work with the student to support them in doing this.
- The Pastoral Team, in particular, the Head of Year, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (Mrs S Winnington); the Senior Manager for Student Progress (Miss L Gribbons) and the Vice Principal with responsibility for Pastoral Care (Ms S Greig) will work in partnership with the student, parent/carers and other agencies to identify what support is already available and to ensure that an appropriate support package is in place. This will involve the completion of a Risk Assessment to ensure that any risks to the student or unborn baby are minimized while on the College site. The Pastoral Team will also work with the student and parents/carers to decide at what point the student will make their peers aware. College staff will be made aware on a need to know basis, in line with usual information sharing procedures.
- The Pastoral Team will make referrals to any appropriate external agency they feel has a role to play in supporting the student and their family. This may include Social Services, the Education Welfare Service's School Age Mother Programme and/or the PSNI depending on the age of the student and the individual circumstances.
- The Designated Teacher for Child Protection will comply with any safeguarding and child protection requirements throughout the process.
- A member of the Pastoral Team will be identified as the student's key adult. This is likely to be

their Head of Year or the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. The key adult will meet informally with the student at least once a week and will co-ordinate support as needed on a day-to-day basis, such as adjustments to uniform requirements and ensuring that the student has the opportunity to continue with school work at home as necessary in the event that they are not able to attend College.

- The student may request to attend College only for timetabled lessons and may request to attend only certain lessons in the later stages of pregnancy. Any changes will be discussed and agreed by the student, parents/carers and the key adult. Any absences from College to attend medical or other related appointments will be authorized.
- The relevant SENCO may apply for access arrangements or special consideration if the student is due to sit external exams during the pregnancy or shortly after their child's birth. Any such application will be discussed and agreed with the student, parent/carers and the key adult.
- The College will make every effort to meet the very specific needs of any student who is returning to school following the birth of their child and will endeavour to facilitate their re-integration and ensure that it is as smooth as possible. A student will be welcome to return to school as soon as they feel well enough and has made suitable arrangements for childcare. If the student wishes to return before their six-week post-natal check-up, they will be asked to provide a letter from their GP to confirm that they are well enough to attend College.
- A student may wish to negotiate a phased return to College to facilitate initial childcare arrangements. This will be discussed and agreed as necessary with the student, parents/carers and the key adult. Once a manageable pattern has been established, the level of support required will reduce. However, the key adult will continue to play a key role in supporting the student and will meet with them informally as required to ensure that the student's needs are being met.

### **Linked Documents**

Pastoral Care Policy

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Counselling Policy

Relationships & Sexuality Policy