

Pregnancy and parenthood while you are in school or education



Introduction

This leaflet provides basic information about how your school will support you to make decisions about your education during pregnancy or parenthood. This leaflet also provides some information about the support available during pregnancy or parenthood in college.

If you are pregnant or are going to become a parent your school will help support you to continue your education if that is what you would like to do. Pregnancy or parenthood is not a barrier to remaining in school. Everyone has the right to an education and it is against the law to exclude or discriminate against you because of your pregnancy or maternity.

What should I do if I am at school?



Even though it can feel scary, it is important to tell a member of staff at your school (like a guidance teacher) that you are pregnant. They can support you with any help you need.

It is a good idea to think of who you might be most comfortable talking to.

A member of staff at your school will be able to help you talk to people who can offer you support. You should be given the time and space to talk about your needs at your own pace.

There are a number of people and organisations who can support you to make a decision about staying in school after you find out you are pregnant. You should not feel rushed to make a decision, it is important to decide what is best for you.

Your school should not share any information about your pregnancy with anyone else if you do not want them to (even your parents or carers). The only time information may be shared is if there is a serious risk of harm to you or your unborn baby.

There are lots of people who can provide you with support:

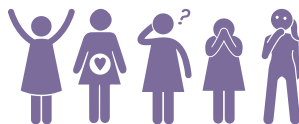
- Your parents, carers or another supportive family member
- Your school, such as your class teacher, guidance teacher or school nurse
- A family nurse (these are specially trained nurses who work with first time young mothers)
- Other relevant professionals or trusted adults (like a GP, midwife or social worker).



How might I feel when I find out that I am pregnant or going to be a parent?

Some things you might be feeling:

- Excited and happy
- Mixed emotions about the pregnancy
- Worried or scared



Some things you might be concerned about:

- Bullying or gossiping by others in school
- Conflict with your partner or disruption at home
- Being able to stay in school.



Young parents' stories

Here are some stories that two young parents had in school:

Kellyanne's story:



When I found out I was pregnant I was so overwhelmed with negative thoughts.

I was really worried about telling my parents and worried about what people would think/say at school and how I would be treated. When I returned to school after giving birth I was given a part-time timetable and was fully involved in this decision.

My advice to another young parent would be to ask for help/support, when and if needed, and take all the help offered.”

Caitlyn's story:



I felt absolutely terrified! My first initial thought, in all honesty, was that I was going to have to leave school and my life was now over as a result of the pregnancy. My teachers just generally cared, which made the biggest difference. There were no hints of judgement, just total compassion and a desire to help. This motivated me to not only do well in my exams for my daughter and I's future; but for my teachers too, as a way to repay them for all the help they had given me.

I would urge any young parents to look after themselves and to be brave enough to ask for help when it is needed, and to accept it with open arms.”



Tips for partners

If your partner is pregnant, this can be an exciting and overwhelming time for both of you. You may feel worried about the pregnancy or the arrival of a new baby. It is normal to be nervous and it will help to talk to your partner, your family, a member of staff within your school, friends, or a healthcare professional such as a midwife, or family nurse. Your school will help support you to continue your education. You can find tips for partners on the Parent Club website:

www.parentclub.scot/articles/tips-partners-and-dads-be



What support should I get when I tell my school I am pregnant?

1

When you tell your school that you are pregnant, or going to be a parent, your school will talk to you about:

- Who can give you advice and support
- What support you need in school
- What support can be given to help how you feel
- What problems might happen and the ways in which the school can prevent, or look at ways to sort them.



2

Around 8-10 weeks before your baby's due date your school will talk to you about:

- The time you may need off from school (known as maternity / parental leave)
- Which member of school staff you should keep in touch with when you are on leave
- Your worries about going back to school, for example, studying for exams.



3

Around 2-3 weeks before you return to school it will be helpful to have a catch up with the member of school staff you agreed to keep in touch with and talk about:

- Your overall wellbeing as a young parent
- The health of your baby
- If you need support from services (housing, welfare, and mental health)
- Your childcare and caring needs for your baby
- A possible phased return to school to help you adjust
- Any support you need with feeding your baby
- If you have access to support from your family nurse
- Access to local groups for young parents .



What should I do if I am in college?

If you have left school and are in college, you do not have to give up your education because you are pregnant. You are allowed to take a break from your course and go back when you are able to do so. You can talk to your college student advisors or student wellbeing team and, where relevant, Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) <https://www.saas.gov.uk/> for more information.

Colleges can provide grants to pay for childcare costs while you are studying if you are a school leaver and aged 16 years or over. You should talk to your college or college student advisors about this.

If you have left education and want to get back to college or training, you can talk to Skills Development Scotland <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>. If you are on work-based learning via a School-College Partnership, you can talk to your school about your next steps.



Where can I get more support and advice?

- Parent Club www.parentclub.scot/expectant-parents has expert guidance and parent-to-parent tips available on a wide range of topics.
- NHS Inform www.nhsinform.scot also have a wealth of resources for parents and families. NHS Inform also includes support on making alternative decisions to parenthood, such as adoption www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/middle-years-around-25-to-50-years/sexual-health-contraception-and-pregnancy-options/your-options-if-youre-pregnant or having an abortion www.nhsinform.scot/tests-and-treatments/surgical-procedures/abortion
- Child Poverty Action Group www.cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/resources/factsheet/financial-help-young-parents has information on financial help available for young parents.
- Young Scot is Scotland's national youth information platform and has information on topics such as relationships www.young.scot/category/relationships/?content_type=1&local_authorities=362 and health and wellbeing www.young.scot/category/health-and-wellbeing/?content_type=1&local_authorities=362



Coping with losing a baby

Losing a baby can be a very difficult experience. Your support network, such as your family and friends, will be able to provide you with some comfort. There are also organisations you can go to for support and advice such as:

- Cruse Bereavement Support www.cruse.org.uk
- Miscarriage Association www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk
- SCIM (Scottish Care and Information on Miscarriage) www.miscarriagesupport.org.uk
- Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity) www.sands.org.uk
- SiMBA www.simbacharity.org.uk
- Scottish Cot Death Trust www.scottishcotdeathtrust.org



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ISBN: 978-1-80525-449-2

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Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1225002 (02/23)