



ST GEORGE'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WELFARE OF PREGNANT STUDENTS POLICY

Principles

“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Psalm 139:13

St George’s Catholic School recognises the dignity and worth of every human person and seeks to respond to pregnancy with compassion, sensitivity and practical support for the pupil and her unborn child.

The School will act in accordance with its Catholic mission, its safeguarding responsibilities and its duties under equality legislation. A pupil will not be discriminated against or treated unfavourably because she is pregnant or has given birth.

Rationale

To ensure that girls who become pregnant are dealt with sensitively and appropriately, taking into consideration their best interests and the interests of the unborn child.

The School recognises that pregnancy in a pupil may raise significant pastoral, health and safeguarding issues. Each case will therefore be considered individually and appropriate professional advice sought where necessary.

Aims

The School aims:

- To deal appropriately with any pregnant pupil in accordance with our Mission Statement and Equality Policy, Catholic ethos, and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupil and, where appropriate, consider the welfare and safeguarding needs of the unborn child.
- To facilitate a pregnant pupil to remain in mainstream education for as long as reasonably practicable, minimise disruption to her learning and to take examinations.
- To reintegrate a pupil with appropriate support after the birth.
- Through Religious Education, Relationships and Sex Education and wider pastoral provision, to promote healthy relationships, personal dignity, self-respect, responsibility and respect for others.

Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will take the lead in responding to any disclosure or information indicating that a pupil may be pregnant.

The CEO/Head of School/Deputy Headteacher responsible for pastoral care, relevant Head of Year and other appropriate staff will support the DSL as necessary.

Information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to safeguard and support the pupil and fulfil the School's legal responsibilities.

Procedure

Disclosure of pregnancy

Any member of staff to whom a pupil discloses that she is pregnant, or believes that she may be pregnant, must:

- listen calmly and sensitively;
- avoid making judgements or promises of absolute confidentiality;
- reassure the pupil that she will be supported;
- not attempt to investigate the circumstances themselves; and
- report the matter promptly to the DSL or a Deputy DSL in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The pupil should be encouraged to obtain appropriate medical advice and support.

Safeguarding assessment

Pregnancy in itself does not necessarily mean that a pupil is at risk of significant harm. However, the DSL must consider the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy and whether there are safeguarding concerns, including:

- the age of the pupil;
- the age and identity of the other person involved;
- whether the sexual activity was consensual;
- any significant difference in age, maturity or power;
- possible coercion, exploitation, grooming or abuse;
- domestic abuse or abuse within an intimate relationship;
- concerns about honour-based abuse or the reaction of family members;
- the pupil's emotional and physical wellbeing; and
- any concerns regarding the welfare of the unborn child.

Where appropriate, the DSL will seek advice from or make a referral to Children's Social Care, health professionals, the police or other relevant agencies in accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

Where the pupil is under the age of 13, sexual activity cannot legally be consensual and the matter must be treated as a serious child protection concern and referred appropriately.

Parents and carers

The School will normally encourage and support the pupil to involve her parents or carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

However, there will not be an automatic requirement or arbitrary deadline for a pupil to tell her parents or carers. The DSL will consider the individual circumstances and whether informing parents or carers could place the pupil at increased risk of harm.

Where there is no safeguarding reason not to involve parents or carers, the School will work with the pupil to support her in doing so.

Pastoral and professional support

The School will provide appropriate pastoral support and will assist the pupil in accessing relevant professional services.

Staff must remain within the boundaries of their professional roles. They should not attempt to provide medical advice or counselling for which they are not qualified.

Support may include liaison, where appropriate, with:

- the pupil's parents or carers;
- the pupil's GP or other healthcare professionals;
- maternity services;
- Children's Social Care or family support services;
- educational support services; and
- other appropriate statutory or specialist agencies.

The School's support will be provided in a manner consistent with its Catholic character while respecting its statutory safeguarding, equality and educational responsibilities.

Education during pregnancy

The School will make every reasonable effort to enable the pupil to continue in mainstream education for as long as this is medically appropriate and reasonably practicable.

An individual support plan may be drawn up covering matters such as:

- attendance;
- medical appointments;
- adaptations to the school day where required;
- physical education and other activities;
- health and safety considerations;
- coursework and examinations;
- remote or alternative educational provision where necessary; and
- arrangements for absence immediately before and following the birth.

The pupil should not be excluded from lessons, activities, examinations or other educational opportunities simply because she is pregnant.

Following the birth

The School will work with the pupil, her family where appropriate, and relevant professionals to support her return to education following the birth.

A reintegration plan may include:

- an agreed return date;
- a phased return where appropriate;
- arrangements for catching up missed learning;
- pastoral support;

- examination arrangements;
- consideration of childcare and other practical issues; and
- ongoing liaison with external agencies where appropriate.

The aim will be to enable the pupil to complete her education successfully and participate fully in school life.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Through its Religious Education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education and wider pastoral curriculum, the School will seek to develop in pupils:

- an understanding of the dignity of the human person;
- respect for themselves and others;
- an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships;
 - an understanding of consent, boundaries and personal responsibility;
 - knowledge appropriate to their age and development; and
 - the confidence to seek help where they have concerns.

Provision will be delivered in accordance with the School's Catholic ethos and its Relationships and Sex Education Policy.

Confidentiality and record keeping

Information relating to a pupil's pregnancy will be treated sensitively and confidentially and shared only where there is a legitimate educational, pastoral or safeguarding reason to do so.

Safeguarding records will be maintained by the DSL in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and applicable data protection requirements.

No member of staff should promise a pupil absolute confidentiality where safeguarding concerns may arise.

Equality

Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The School will not discriminate against, disadvantage or treat a pupil unfavourably because she is pregnant, has recently given birth or is receiving pregnancy or maternity-related care.

Reasonable and appropriate arrangements will be made to enable the pupil to continue to access education and school life.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher/Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Equality Policy and Public Sector Equality Duty Statement;
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Behaviour Policy; and
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

This policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier, where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance or diocesan guidance.

Date of this review: 21st September 2026

Date of next review: September 2031

St George's Catholic School is part of The Cardinal Hume Academies Trust.