



Republic of Namibia
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
2012

TRAINING MANUAL

**FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE EDUCATION SECTOR
POLICY ON THE PREVENTION
AND MANAGEMENT OF
LEARNER PREGNANCY**



*Assisting teachers and
support persons to implement
the Education Sector Policy on
the Prevention and Management
of Learner Pregnancy*

Introduction to the manual

The purpose of this manual is to train teachers and support staff on how to implement the *Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*. Some schools have pregnancy-awareness weeks. This is a good way to focus the learners' attention on preventing pregnancy. But this should not be the only activity. For the policy to be most effective, schools should integrate sections of the policy into all activities. Implementation should be cross-curricular. For example during a biology class the teacher can make reference to the policy. Even in the mathematics class the teacher could use the policy to develop case studies for the students to use whilst practising concepts. By integrating the policy into the school system, the topic of sex will not be taboo and learners can be empowered to prevent pregnancy. The implementation of the policy should also be multi-sectorial, its implementation does not sit with the Ministry of Education. The target audience for the implementation of this manual is Ministry of Education staff. But trainers can also invite other people to participate in the training such as social workers from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, healthcare providers, school board members and even parents and community members.

The main focus of the *Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy* is the prevention of learner pregnancy. This includes the encouragement of abstinence and the communication of values such as gender equality and respect for individual autonomy. The Ministry of Education trusts that over time, fewer and fewer learner pregnancies will occur. This training manual explains how teachers and support persons should promote the prevention of learner pregnancy.

The policy also covers how a school will deal with a case of learner pregnancy if the situation occurs. The policy outlines the conditions under which pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents can continue their education, if they choose. Learners in these situations are encouraged to continue their education because a child will have a far better chance in life if both parents are able to complete their education. This training manual also explains how teachers and the family should support a pregnant learner and learner parents.

The policy provides a list of information that schools should provide to pregnant learners and learner-parents to help them to meet the challenges they will experience. This information is contained in the accompanying *Information Package for the Management of Learner Pregnancy: Key information to accompany the Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*. The training manual refers to the Information Package many times. The training manual and the information package should be used together. The ultimate goal of the *Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy* is to decrease the number of learner pregnancies and increase the number of learner-parents who complete their education. This training manual explains how to put this goal into action.

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Agenda

The Ministry of Education recommends that this training session is conducted over 4 days. The session could be conducted over a longer period of time if available – for example the contents of the manual could be facilitated in phases over a period of months. This would allow the training to spend more time on each section. Alternatively, if less time is available, the trainer can select the most important sections according to the needs of the group. A suggested agenda for a 4-day training session is given below. The training session has been divided into three sections; (1) introduction and background information; (2) prevention of learner pregnancy; and (3) management of learner pregnancy. The training manual consists of information to discuss with the participants and activities to help the participants to better understand the contents of the policy. A PowerPoint presentation has been developed to accompany this manual. The information to discuss with each slide is explained in this manual. If you do not have access to a projector you can facilitate the session without using the slides. For example you can write up the key points on flipchart paper in advance or you can explain the key points as you go.

DAY 1	
Time	Topic
INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY	
8.00	Introduction to the training session
8.30	Goal of the policy Teachers' experiences of learner pregnancy
9.15	How common is learner pregnancy in Namibia? Why do learners become pregnant?
10.15	Why should schools encourage pregnant learners and learner parents to complete their education?
10.30	Break
11.00	National and international framework Addressing learner pregnancy in primary school and secondary schools Guiding principles of the policy
12.00	<i>Activity: Read through the policy</i>
PREVENTION OF LEARNER PREGNANCY	
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Introduction to the prevention of learner pregnancy Reproductive and sexual health <i>Activity: Who can help educate learners about reproductive and sexual health? (Mapping exercise)</i>
15.00	Life skills and supplementary programmes
15.15	Break
15.30	Promoting safe leisure activities <i>Activity: A calendar of ideas (listing exercise)</i>
16.10	Gender-specific support and mentoring for learners <i>Activity: Monitoring the progress of teachers by gender (pair work)</i>
17.00	Close

DAY 2	
Time	Topic
8.00	Review of previous day and homework questions
8.30	Counselling Possible partners <i>Activity: Complete the list (completion exercise)</i>
9.30	Safe environment <i>Activity: Relationships with teachers (question and answer)</i>
10.15	Break
10.45	Hostel and school safety audit
11.15	Exemplary behaviour by education staff <i>Activity: Someone I admire (newspaper clippings)</i>
MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER PREGNANCY	
12.00	Introduction <i>Activity: Agree or disagree</i>
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Promotion of openness <i>Activity: Telling the teacher; telling the parents (role play)</i> Promotion of openness continued
15.30	Break
15.45	Information, counselling and support Information, counselling and support continued: Who is the father? <i>Activity: Supporting a learner to lay a criminal charge</i>
16.45	Information, counselling and support continued: Providing false information
17.00	Close

DAY 3	
Time	Topic
8.00	Review of previous day and homework questions
8.30	Implementing child protection proceedings
8.50	The role of the family <i>Activity: Involving the family (role play)</i> The role of the family continued <i>Activity: Information the support person should tell the family about (role play)</i>
11.00	Break
11.30	Health Education before giving birth <i>Activity: What would you advise (discussion)</i>
12.30	Education before giving birth continued Flexibility
13.00	Lunch
14.00	<i>Activity: How flexible can the school be?</i>
14.30	School assignments
14.45	Education after birth
15.15	Break
15.30	<i>Activity: The story of the lion and the springbok (writing activity)</i>
16.15	Special circumstances <i>Activity: Adoption and foster care (reading activity)</i>
17.00	Close

DAY 4
Topic
Review of previous day and homework questions
Breastfeeding and expressing breast milk <i>Activity: What are the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months? (Debate)</i>
Examinations and boarding at shelters Boarders
Summarising the role of the family Summarising the role of the school <i>Activity: Summarising the role of the school (listing exercise)</i>
Break
The role of partner ministries <i>Activity: Write a letter(writing exercise)</i>
Grievance procedure Monitoring and evaluation Supporting teachers
Conclusion <i>Activity: The way forward (writing exercise)</i>
Evaluation
Lunch

Acknowledgements

This manual was developed by the Diagnostic, Advisory and Training Services (DATS) division of the Programmes and Quality Assurance Directorate within the Ministry of Education. The Legal Assistance Centre facilitated the production of the manual and the HIV and AIDS Management Unit (HAMU) supported the printing of the manual.

Ice-breakers

Ideas for ice-breakers are given below. These can be used at the start of each day, after breaks or whenever the facilitator feels that the participants need revitalising.

- Ask the group to sit in silence and listen for 2-5 minutes. First to the sounds furthest way outside the room, then to the sounds inside the room, finally to the sound inside themselves. Ask them how they feel (calm, centred, peaceful). Encourage people to use this exercise to calm down and refocus.
- Ask participants to stand on one side of the room. Draw a line across the floor and walk across it to the other side. Challenge each participant to find a different way to cross the line (e.g. hopping, crawling, walking backwards, rolling, etc).
- Start by having participants form a line. Then, without talking, ask them to arrange themselves in a line from shortest to tallest. You can divide them in two groups to make it even more interesting.
- Ask participants to form two equal lines. Starting at the same end, asked the people at the front of the line to walk around the room in opposite directions and come back to their initial places. The person who walks the fastest and comes back first gives the opportunity to the next person to do the same. The line that completes the task first wins.
- Ask five participants at a time to come to the front and each one must compare themselves to an animal. They must give reasons why they have chosen this animal. Ask them to make the sound of the animal, if they can. Choose another five people until the whole group has spoken.
- Show funny clips of animals or people to the audience for 2-3 minutes.

SECTION ONE:
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction to the training session (30 minutes)

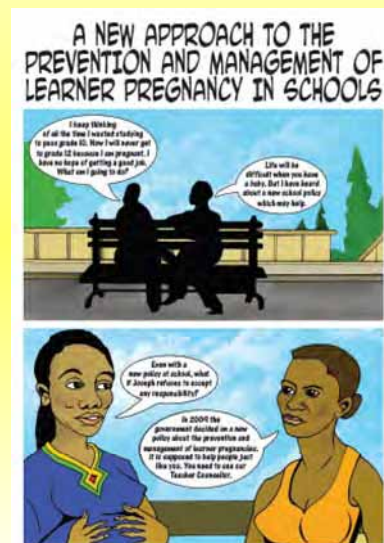
Start the session by asking the participants to introduce themselves. You may want to use an ice-breaker to start the session.

Every year over one thousand learners drop out of school due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related reasons. In order to address this worrying trend, the Ministry of Education has developed a new policy on the prevention and management of learner pregnancy.

The main focus of the policy is the prevention of learner pregnancy. This includes the encouragement of abstinence and the communication of values such as gender equality and respect for individual autonomy. The Ministry of Education trusts that over time, fewer and fewer learner pregnancies will occur.

Introduction

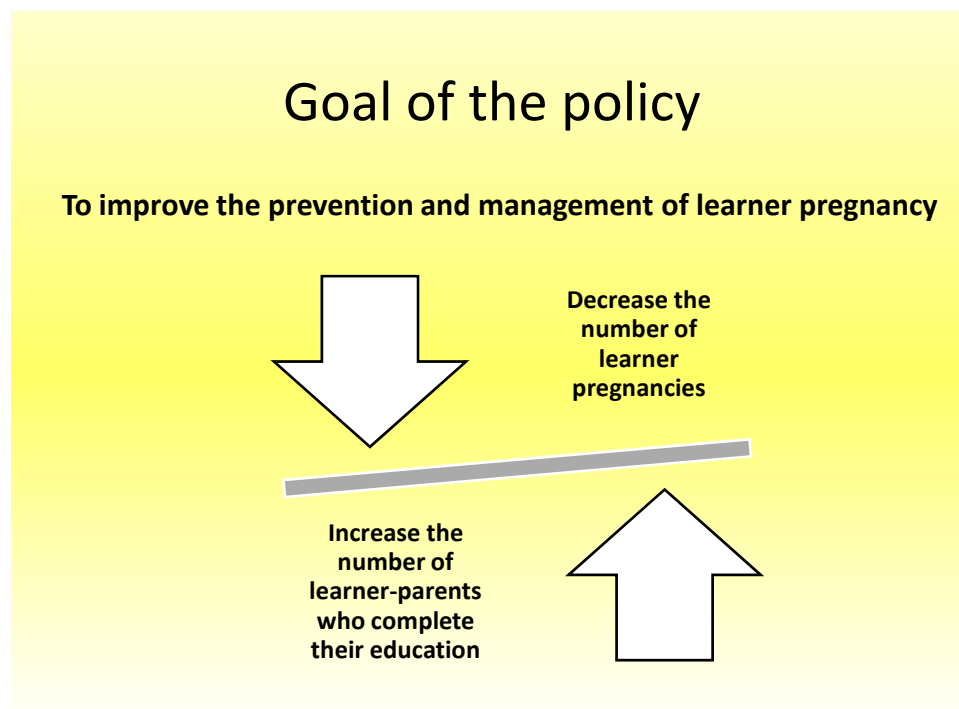
- Namibia has a high incidence of learner pregnancy
- The Ministry of Education has implemented a new policy to address the problem
- The main focus of the policy is on the prevention of learner pregnancy



Goal of the policy (10 minutes)

The goal of this policy is to improve the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in Namibia, with the ultimate aim of decreasing the number of learner pregnancies and increasing the number of learner-parents who complete their education.

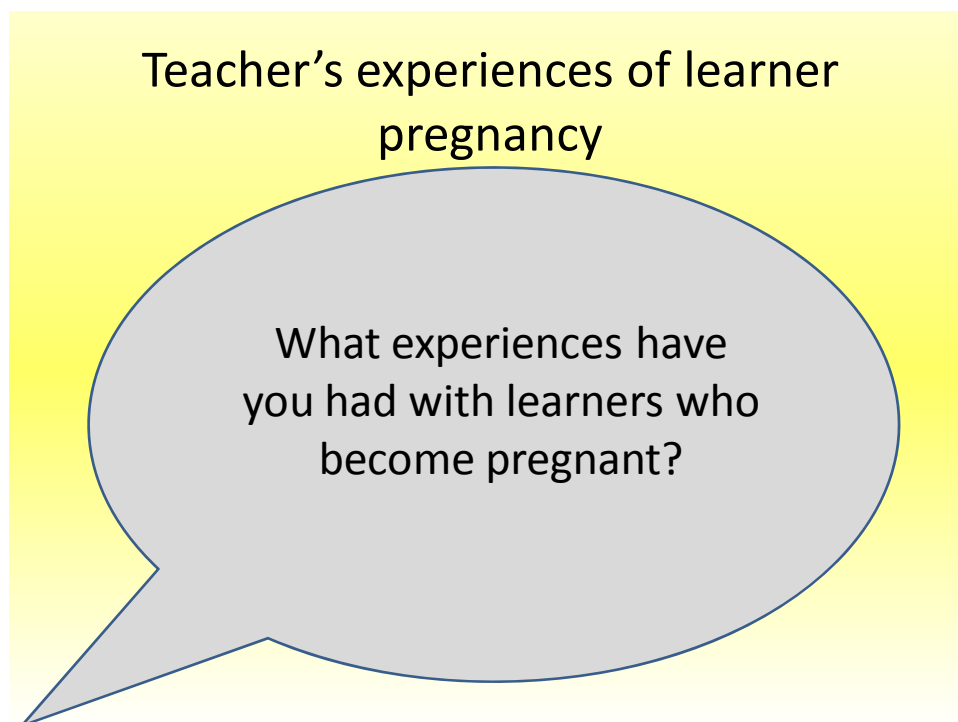
Key training point: You should ensure that the participants understand that the main focus of the policy is on the prevention of learner pregnancy.



Teacher's experiences of learner pregnancy (35 minutes)

People react in many different ways when they learn that a learner is pregnant. They may feel frustration, anger, pity or sadness. Some people may think that a pregnant learner and the learner father should be punished.

Ask the participants to discuss experiences they have had with learners who are pregnant.



Key teaching point: It is important to give the participants a chance to discuss their feelings about learner pregnancy. You may find that the participants are unhappy that the new Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management says that schools must provide a supportive not punitive environment for a pregnant learner. But as the participants discuss the issue, you may find that although they are frustrated about the idea of supporting a learner, they will give you examples of cases where learners became pregnant in unfortunate circumstances, such as through rape or being impregnated by a relative. In these cases the participants may agree that the learner should be supported. They may also give examples of cases where they or the school helped a learner who was pregnant, regardless of the circumstances of how she became pregnant. You may wish to use the following questions to direct the discussion:

1. Why did the learner get pregnant?
2. What might have happened if the school had not been involved?

3. *How did other learners react to the pregnancy?*
4. *What was the outcome? (Did the learner continue her education? Did she go to university? Who cared for the baby?)*
5. *How did the teacher feel about situation?*

The purpose of the session is to allow the participants to “offload” their feelings about learner pregnancy. You should use the discussion to explain to the participants that although they may feel frustrated by the concept of supporting and not punishing a pregnant learner, in reality many pregnant learners should be supported because they became pregnant through abuse, lack of information or some for other reason that meant they did not make an informed decision to become pregnant. You will discuss in more detail the reasons why learners become pregnant later in the session.

Additional information

You do not need to discuss the following information with the group. However some participants may want to discuss this information.

Question: How many people were consulted about the policy?

Answer:

- *Three regional consultations in 9 regions with teachers, other stakeholders and learners*
- *One national consultative stakeholder meeting*
- *Reports in the media intended to allow the public and schools to provide comment (discussed on radio, television and in newspaper and magazine articles)*

How common is learner pregnancy in Namibia? (15 minutes)

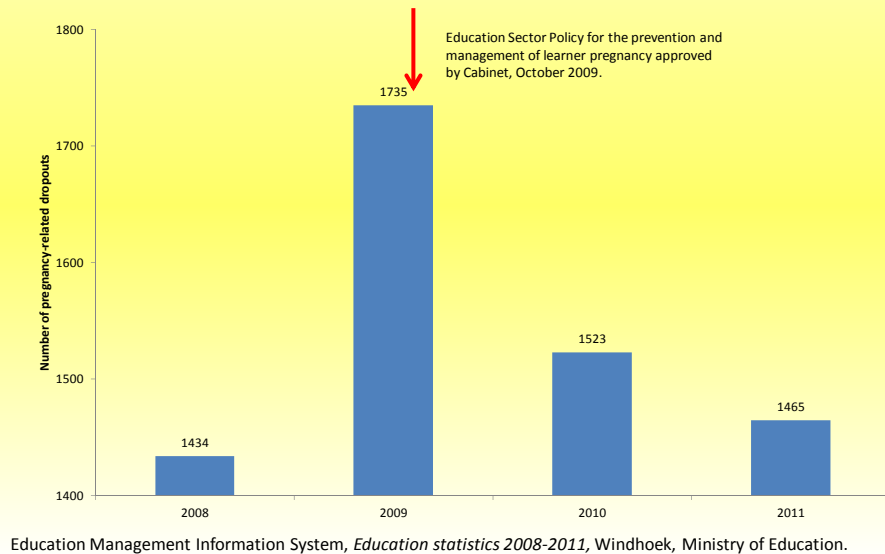
The problem of pregnancy amongst learners is a major concern in many countries. Namibia is one of the many countries to experience this problem. Discuss the graph below which shows the number of pregnancy-related dropouts for 2008-2011¹ (*for training conducted after 2012 update the graph with the latest figures from the Ministry of Education*). Discuss the following points with the group:

- The new policy was approved by Cabinet in October 2009 and has only slowly started to come into effect. The shows that the number of pregnancy-related drop outs from school has remained largely unchanged in recent years. This is because the provisions in the new policy have not yet been fully-implemented. Therefore the data is showing that the government's previous guidelines to address learner pregnancy, which do not focus on preventing or managing learner pregnancy, are not very effective at addressing the problem.
- The data shows the number of reported incidences of learner pregnancy. However, many cases go unreported.² Learners also drop out of school for unknown reasons or for reasons that may be related to learner pregnancy. For example, in 2011 2042 learners dropped out for unknown reasons and 167 learners dropped out of school due to marriage. Some of these learners may have been pregnant.

¹ Education Management Information System, *Education statistics 2008-2011*, Windhoek, Ministry of Education.

² For further information on unreported cases see Chapter 2 of the following report for examples of anecdotal reports of the prevalence of learner pregnancy: Legal Assistance Centre, *School policy on learner pregnancy: Background to reform*, Windhoek, prepared for the Ministry of Education by Gender Research & Advocacy Project Legal Assistance Centre, 2008.

Pregnancy-related dropouts from school between 2008-2011



Additional activity: Is the incidence of learner pregnancy in Namibia increasing?

You may want to use this activity if the participants argue that the new policy is causing the number of learner pregnancies to increase. This is not true. This activity should help the participants understand that the incidence of learner pregnancy has not dramatically increased since the policy was approved by Cabinet.

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: Newspaper article on following page

Print the following page as a handout and give it to the participants. Ask them to discuss whether they think the incidence of learner pregnancy is increasing.

Points to discuss:

- Data for different regions is sometimes more variable, showing increases or decreases over time.
- Overall the incidence of learner pregnancy is not increasing.
- As of 2012, the Education Sector policy for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy has not been fully implemented. Therefore there has not yet been sufficient time for this policy to influence the number of learner pregnancies.

Is the incidence of learner pregnancy in Namibia increasing?



FULL STORY

12.10.2011

Student pregnancy on the rise in Karas

By: LUQMAN CLOETE

THE number of school learners, aged between 15 and 18, who have fallen pregnant in Karas Region has risen considerably, statistics show.

Karas regional school counsellor, Maree Smit, revealed that there were 31 girls reported pregnant by the end of the current academic year's second term compared to 19 in 2010. Critics blamed the sharp rise on the a draft School Policy on Learner Pregnancy allowing a pregnant school girl to continue with her education at school until four weeks before her expected date of delivery.

In the past, girls who have fallen pregnant were slapped with a 12-month suspension from the school.

In defence of the pregnancy policy, Smit said it improves the educational rights of those who become pregnant and gives guidance on how to manage the pregnancy in the interests of both young parents and the newborn child.

"It (learner pregnancy policy) does not encourage learners to become pregnant. Reasons for learner pregnancy differ from one learner to another," Smit added.

Peer pressure, poverty and lack of parental guidance are some of the root causes leading to student pregnancy, Smit argued.

She added the draft policy allowed students to voluntarily report their pregnancies.

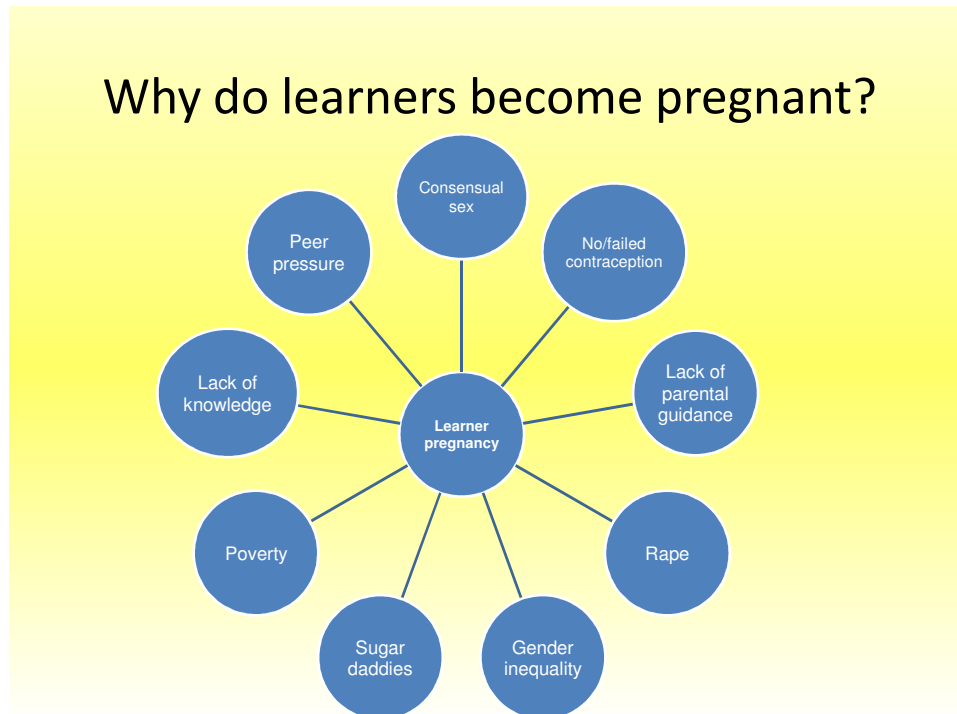
"Nowadays there are more reported learner pregnancies than in the past," Smit added.

Smit has also indicated that the number of school drop-outs by the end of the current academic year second-trimesters has risen from 245 in 2010 to 312.

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Why do learners become pregnant? (20 minutes)

There are many reasons why a learner may become pregnant.



However, data shows that many pregnancies may be the result of forced sex rather than free choice or risky sexual behaviour.

**Just over
one-third
of all victims of
rape and
attempted
rape
are under 18**



National NamPol statistics for 2003-05, as reported in Legal Assistance Centre, *Rape in Namibia: Full Report*, 2007 at page 8

Even where there is no overt coercion, learners may face many challenges that mean that they feel powerless either to refuse sex or to negotiate sexual behaviour or contraceptive use.

I'm a 15-year-old girl and I lost my virginity at the age of 13, for money. My first experience was with my uncle, who offered me N\$20. I was very much in need of money because my toothpaste was finished and there was a show at school on Friday. I just want to advise girls not to do what I did, sleeping with a person whom you don't love, just for money. I regret it, and I feel like a piece of rubbish.

OYO, Vol 6, No5, October 2007

The majority of learners who become pregnant do so by choice

Time: 25 minutes

Resources: None

Divide the participants into two groups. One group must agree with the statement above. The other group must disagree with the statement. Ask them to debate the issue.

Why should schools encourage pregnant learners and learner parents to complete their education? (15 minutes)

There are many practical reasons to encourage pregnant learners and learner parents to complete their education. Learner pregnancy has been cited as a constraint in the elimination of gender disparities in education and in the achievement of the two Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education and gender equality in education by 2015. Encouraging learner parents to complete their education will benefit their child, themselves and society.

Why encourage pregnant learners and learner parents to complete their education?

Impact on the child	Impact on the pregnant learner/learner mother	Impact on society
Children of uneducated mothers are more likely to be malnourished	Learners in school are less likely to get pregnant ; the fertility rate for educated women is lower than for un-educated women	If people are able to support themselves and do not require government support, resources can be used for other things such as the improvement of schools and hospitals
Children of educated mothers are more likely to go to school themselves	Learners who complete their education will be able to get better paid employment or be more productive if they make a living through subsistence farming	The more people there are in employment, the greater the gross domestic product of the country. This means the government has more money to use on improving services such as schools and hospitals

Homework: The impact of learner pregnancy

The policy provides a list of information that the school shall provide to the learner. This information is included in the publication *Information package for the management of learner pregnancy*. Sections from this guide are used throughout this training session. You can ask the participants to read the relevant information in this package during the training session. But there are many topics to cover in the training session and you are unlikely to have time to cover all of them. Therefore this activity can be converted to homework. You can ask the participants questions tomorrow about the information they are asked to read.



Refer the participants to the page entitled *Should a learner-parent continue his or her education* or give them the handout on the following page. Ask them to read these pages this evening.

Question:

- Give three reasons discussed in the article that explain why learner-parents should continue their education



Should a learner-parent continue his or her education?

Education empowers learners, giving them a greater chance of success in life, and better preparing them to look after their own children. **Completing your education means giving yourself and your child a better chance of having a happy, healthy and successful life.**

Learners with more education are usually better able to keep themselves healthy and look after themselves if they do get sick. Learners who stay in school longer also usually have more knowledge about how to take care of their children, so they have healthier children who are better nourished and less likely to get sick, and better cared for when they do get sick. **Continuing your education makes it more likely that both you and your child will have a long and healthy life.** Girls who return to school after giving birth are more likely to delay subsequent pregnancies, and girls who receive more education generally have fewer children, spaced further apart. These children in turn are likely to be healthier and better educated. Babies are significantly healthier when their mothers take more time between having children.

A MESSAGE TO FEMALE LEARNERS: To protect your health and your baby's health, you should wait at least 2 years before becoming pregnant again. Your body needs to fully recover from the birth. You may also choose to breastfeed for up to 2 years. By delaying having another child, you also give yourself time to complete your education. By doing so, you give yourself and your baby a better chance of having a long and healthy life.

Learners who complete their education are more likely to get a good job. A good job helps people to take care of themselves and their family. A good job helps girls in particular to be more independent. Girls and women who earn more money usually have more say in how that money is spent. Women spend a much higher proportion of their income than men do on taking care of their family. Because women with more education tend to have fewer children, they also tend to have more money to spend on each child. **When you increase your education by returning to school, you increase your chances of finding a good job and being financially able to take care of yourself, your baby and other children you may have in the future.**

Learners with more education are more likely to send their own children to school, and to spend more time helping their children to learn outside school. Because better-educated parents generally have higher incomes and fewer children, they are more able to ensure that each child gets an education. They are more able to cover the costs associated with schooling, and to ensure that their children are healthy and well-fed enough to benefit from school. **If you complete your education after becoming a learner-parent, you make it more likely that your child will also have a good education. Education matters!**



National and international framework (25 minutes)

The policy also sits within a national and international legal framework that requires Namibia to encourage pregnant learners and learner parents to complete their education.

The Namibian Constitution provides for the right to education and prohibits discrimination between male and female learners. This is one reason why it does not make sense to ask a pregnant learner to leave school - it is not right to punish the pregnant learner but permit the learner-father to remain in school.

Namibian Constitution



“All persons shall have the right to education”

Article 20(1)

“All persons shall be equal before the law”

“No persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status”

Article 10

Additional information

You do not need to discuss the following information with the group. However some participants may want to discuss this information.

The Namibian Constitution also states that, as far as possible, children have a right to “know and be cared for by their parents”. Some people may argue that this means learner mothers should remain out of school to care for their children, particularly at first. But the “care” referred to describes ongoing parental contact, involvement and responsibility, not day-to-day care. Furthermore, adult women return to work and are still able to care for their children.

The Education Act states that schools should provide facilities that are suitable for all learners- this includes the provision of amenities for pregnant learners and learner-parents.

Education Act



The Ministry of Education must:

“establish and maintain hostels, teachers' resource centres, school clinics and other facilities which may be necessary for the benefit of learners and teachers in attendance at state schools and classes”

Namibia also has commitments under international agreements that it has signed that are relevant to addressing learner pregnancy. Namibia is obliged to honour its international commitments as Article 144 of the Namibian Constitution says that unless otherwise stated, international agreements signed by Namibia shall form part of the law of Namibia.

Note: You do not need to go through all of the details in this slide, the information is provided to illustrate the number of agreements that apply to learner pregnancy.

International commitments	
Agreement	Relevant content
UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women	This Convention requires the government to take all appropriate measures for “the reduction of female learner drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely”.
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	The Committee which monitors this Convention has emphasised the need to provide support for adolescent parents, noting that if support is lacking, young mothers may be prone to depression and anxiety, compromising their ability to care for their children. It has urged governments which are party to the Convention “to develop policies that will allow adolescent mothers to continue their education”.
Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child	This Charter requires governments to “take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates”. Governments must also ensure that “children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability”.
Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa	This Protocol commits states to the elimination of a range of barriers to girls' education and requires governments to “promote the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions and the organisation of programmes for women who leave school prematurely”.
Education for All	“Education for All” refers to an international commitment adopted at a World Conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 which includes the goal of “eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education”. In Namibia, one of the national strategic objectives to advance this goal is to decrease the rate of dropouts due to pregnancy and motherhood amongst schoolgirls.

Addressing learner pregnancy in primary school and secondary schools (20 minutes)

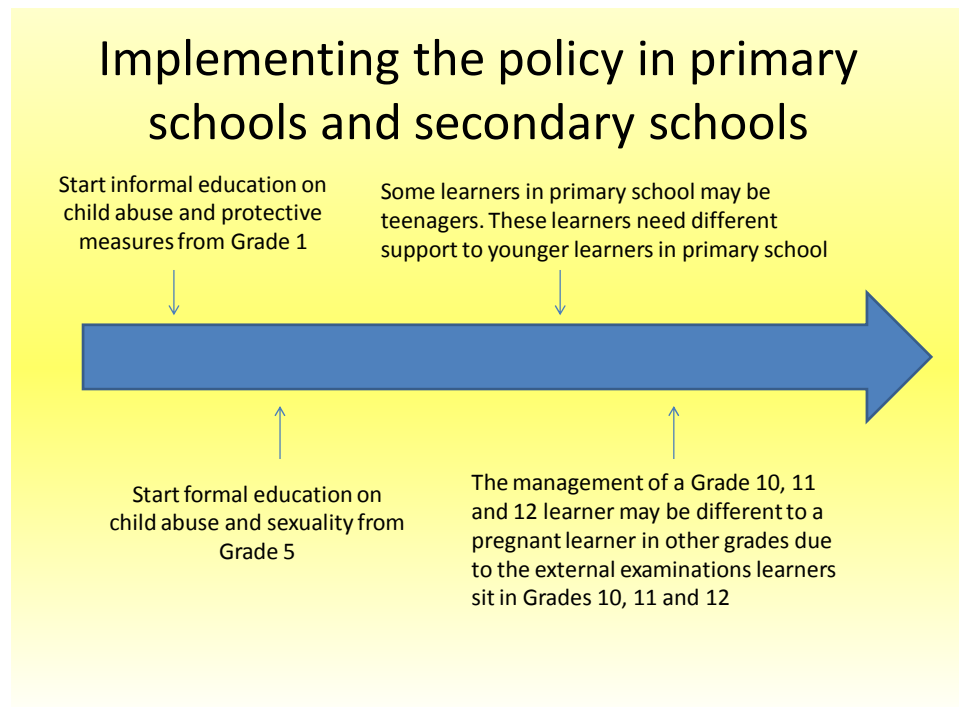
The policy serves the needs of all learners of school-going age, including learners over 18 years of age who are still attending secondary school. This means that the policy is applicable to all primary and secondary schools in Namibia, including both government and government-subsidised private schools. However, all schools, whether subsidised by government or not, are morally and ethically obliged to consider the best interests of pregnant learners, learner-parents and the infants of learners. Tertiary and other educational institutions are encouraged to develop responsive policies for pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents.

Who does the policy apply to?

- All government and government-subsidised primary and secondary schools
- All learners enrolled in the school regardless of age
- Tertiary education institutions encouraged to implement a similar policy



Although the policy applies to all schools in Namibia, the implementation of the policy will differ between primary and secondary schools. The slide below summarises some of the ways the implementation of the policy will differ between the two levels.



Background information: Child development and pregnancy

You do not need to discuss the following information with the group. However some participants may want to discuss this information.

When can a girl get pregnant?

Answer: A girl can become pregnant when she goes through puberty. This is when her body starts to change. For example, her breasts will start to grow and her reproductive organs will start to develop. One change will be that she will menstruate each month (have a period). Once a girl starts to have a period, she can become pregnant.

When can a boy make a girl pregnant?

Answer: A boy can make a girl pregnant when he goes through puberty. This is when his body starts to change. For example, his voice will become deeper and he will grow hair on his face and on parts of his body, such as under his arms.

When does puberty start?

Answer: Girls usually start puberty earlier than boys. Puberty in girls can start at around ten years old. Some girls may start puberty earlier than this. Other girls may start later. Boys usually start puberty later than girls. Puberty in boys may start around eleven years old. Some boys may start puberty earlier than this. Other boys may start later.

If a ten-year-old learner becomes pregnant, will she be able to carry the baby to term?

Answer: If a girl has become pregnant, she should be able to carry the baby to term. But babies born to adolescent mothers may have more health challenges than babies born to adult mothers. There may also be more risks for the mother. The learner, her family and the school if relevant should ensure that they discuss all of the risks and options with a doctor.

Homework: Questions and answers

The Ministry of Education published an article about the policy in the May 2010 edition of the Ministry of Education newsletter. The article addresses some of the concerns that teachers may have. You can give the participants a copy of this article if the participants have similar questions.

THE NEW EDUCATION SECTOR POLICY ON PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER PREGNANCY: SUMMARY AND GUIDELINES.



Mr. Mzingisi Gqwede, Chief School Counsellor

The Ministry of Education should applaud itself for numerous measures undertaken to ensure that all children of school going age have access to formal Education. One of those measures is the new 'Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy' which came into effect on 25 January 2010. Cabinet approved the Education Sector Policy for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy and directed the Ministry of Education to implement the policy. This policy is applicable to all primary and secondary schools in Namibia, including both government and including both government and government-subsidised private schools.

The goals of the new policy are as follows:

- To increase learner education about sexual responsibility and sexual health to help prevent learner pregnancies;
- To create a policy of inclusion and support for learners in cases where pregnancy has occurred;
- To promote the continued education of pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents;
- To promote shared responsibility for the pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents between themselves, the extended family, the school and other line ministries;
- To promote participatory decision-making amongst all stakeholders.
- It should be underlined that the new policy, Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of the Learner Pregnancy, is not punitive to female learners and addresses key concerns, such as the following:

Does the policy respect differing cultural and family values?

The government's role is to provide a flexible policy which maximises educational opportunities for pregnant learners and learner-parents. However, the policy allows space for different family and cultural values to determine the timing and manner in which learners take advantage of the opportunities offered and emphasises ongoing communication between the school and the family. Therefore, if it is not with one family's culture for their child to attend school while pregnant, then the family takes a decision to keep the pregnant child at home un-



til such time that she gives birth. What the policy does not allow is for one family's or community's set of values to be imposed on other families and communities throughout the nation.

When should a pregnant learner stop attending school?

The girl may choose to continue with her education at school until 4 weeks before her expected due date, as certified by a health care provider, or take a leave of absence from an earlier date if this is advised by a health care provider on medical grounds, or if she feels unable or unwilling to continue attending school during any stage of pregnancy. The viewpoints of the parents/primary caregiver of the learner and the school should be considered in deciding how long it is advisable for the learner to continue at school if appropriate.

Should a pregnant learner be allowed to attend school until she is ready to leave / medically advised to leave?

The policy allows pregnant girls to remain in school until four weeks before the due date, but it does not require that they do so. If no medical certificate is provided, the school may require the pregnant learner to leave school at an earlier date. If a girl and her family would not be comfortable for her to remain in school once the pregnancy becomes visible, she may leave at that stage. The policy considers family values. Also, the girl must have a clean bill of health for her to remain at school until four weeks before the due date.

Should a learner be allowed to return to school as soon as specified criteria have been met?

The decision is dependent on learner, family and service providers. The learner must meet four (4) requirements:

- A social worker (or the Principal if no social worker is readily available) is satisfied that the infant will be cared for by a responsible adult
- A health care provider provides a statement that the learner-parent is in a

suitable state of health and wellbeing

- Health care provider provides a statement that the infant is in a suitable state of health and wellbeing;
- The learner-parent and her parents, primary caretaker or guardian provide a signed statement with an exposition on how the infant will be cared for and an undertaking to maintain open communication with the school. [It shall be appropriate for the school or a social worker to assist the family with the preparation of this statement if necessary.]
Place for a pregnant learner is reserved for a maximum of one (1) calendar year (at same school only) provided that she maintains communication. The learner also has the right to transfer to a different school within the one-year period, provided that space is available.

How long after giving birth should the learner-mother return to school?

The policy allows learner-mothers to return to school shortly after giving birth, it does not require that they do so.

Can a pregnant-learner or learner-parent sit for examinations?

A girl who has left school because of pregnancy may write her examinations if she has met the examination requirements and if she feels that she is ready, after consultation with the school, regardless of whether or not she is attending school at the time of the examinations. If she does not feel comfortable to write in the same room as other candidates, the school may arrange for a separate venue and invigilator, but she or her family will have to carry any additional costs which the school incurs.

What happens to the male learner who shares the responsibility for pregnancy with the female learner?

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the female

learner who becomes pregnant and the male learner who shares responsibility for the pregnancy are treated as equally and fairly as possible. Due to the biological differences between learner-mothers and learner-fathers, the learner-mother will be excused from school for a period based on her health needs and the needs of the infant while the learner-father will not be excused from school. The differential treatment of mothers and fathers in this policy is modelled on the similar approach taken in Namibia's labour laws. It must be noted that the leave of absence provided for the pregnant learner/learner-mother is not in the nature of punishment and therefore need not be applied in the same way to the learner-father. It should also be noted that allowing the learner-father to remain in school does not mean that his role in parenting is being ignored. Schools should help both the mother and the father understand their different roles and responsibilities during this time.

What happens if the male learner impregnates a girl attending another school?

If a learner impregnates a girl attending another school, or a girl who is not attending school, the school should provide information, counselling and support to this learner in accordance with the guiding principles of this policy if requested to do so by the learner or his parents.

Prevention of learner pregnancy

The implementation of measures to prevent and reduce the number of learner pregnancies is a critical component of this policy. Schools shall provide education on sexual and reproductive health, as well as holistic life skills programmes. It is essential to engage support for preventative measures from families, the community and non-governmental organisations such as churches and voluntary groups, as learner pregnancy affects the entire community and cannot be successfully managed by the school alone.

Management of learner pregnancy

In cases where prevention measures fail and learners become pregnant, the school shall endeavour to manage the situation by supporting pregnant

learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents to combine continuation of their education with the responsibilities of parenthood without compromising the best interests of the infant or the learner. This process should be collaborative between the school, the pregnant learner, the expectant father and their families, and should involve participatory decision making.

Each situation shall be assessed and evaluated individually, with sensitivity to the learner's health, financial situation, options for child care, family support or lack of support, the timing of the delivery in relation to the school calendar and the needs of the newborn child. The school shall respect each learner's right to confidentiality. To ensure that the best interests of the infant and pregnant learner/expectant father/learner-parents are met, the school should encourage efficient co-ordination amongst service providers.

The school shall be tolerant of occasional absences by pregnant learners and learner-parents, to give them every opportunity to complete their courses without neglecting their health or parenting responsibilities. This policy supersedes any other rules on absence. The existing rule which mandates that learners are removed from the school register after any period of absence greater than 30 days would otherwise conflict with this policy provision.

Prior to approval of this policy, the role of school principals was simply to show the door to the pregnant learner and to remind the learner to remain home for 12 calendar months after giving birth. That has changed as school principals and schools are expected to provide support to the pregnant learners, expectant learner-fathers and learner-parents to assist them to shoulder their extra burden of responsibilities in the following ways:

- strongly encourage learners to continue with their education prior to and after the delivery of the baby and shall provide educational support to the learners, insofar as the school's resources allow;
- request the support person to monitor the pregnant learner and follow-up on her progress to encourage her return to school after her infant is born;

- request the support person or another designated person to initiate monitoring and follow-up with the expectant learner-father, if known, to ensure that he understands the importance of responsible fatherhood and is discouraged from fathering more children while still in school (if he is a learner);
- ensure class teachers shall provide curriculum packages for use during leave of absence and upon re-entry to school if requested by the pregnant learner/learner-mother, to help her keep up with the syllabus;
- support and guide the parents/primary caregivers and the pregnant learner/learner-parents in the investigation of options for additional tutoring if necessary to complete the curriculum of the year in which the learner takes leave of absence, particularly in the preparation for the grade 10 and 12 external examinations. Volunteers, non-governmental organisations, churches or retired teachers might be able to assist with this function.
- see to it that the school excuse pregnant learners and learner-parents from extra-curricular activities and physical training for practical or medical reasons, if required. The learner must provide a letter or certificate from her parents/primary caregiver or health care provider.
- see to it that the school is tolerant of occasional absences by pregnant learners and learner-parents, to give them every opportunity to complete their courses without neglecting their health or parenting responsibilities.
- see to it that the teacher-counsellor shall target learner-parents for contraceptive information to help prevent subsequent pregnancies. Information shall also be provided on HIV;
- see to it that if learner-parents are unwill

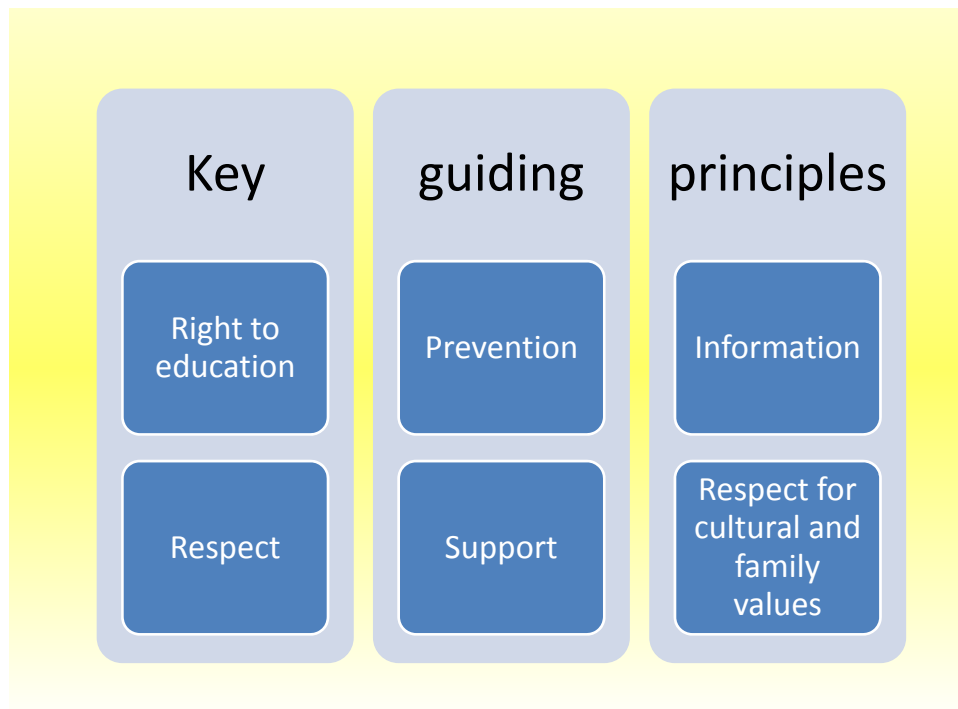
ing or unable to return to formal schooling, then they shall be supported to locate other suitable options for completing their education or for locating training which could increase their future employment prospects;

- where possible and if available, the principal to see to it that school include pregnant learners, learner-mothers and breast feeding mothers in school feeding programmes to ensure proper nutrition for the health of both mother and infant;
- ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff are expected to ensure that the school is a safe and non-discriminatory environment for pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents;
- ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff should strive to ensure the existence of a climate of understanding and respect in connection with unplanned pregnancies. Schools shall put in place appropriate mechanisms for complaints about discrimination, hate speech or harassment in respect of pregnancy or parenthood.



Guiding principles of the policy (15 minutes)

The policy is based on six guiding principles:



Read through the policy

Time: 1 hour (20 minutes reading, 10 minute summaries of each section, 10 minutes writing questions)

Materials: A copy of the policy

Give the participants a copy of the policy. Split the participants into groups. Ask them to read a section of the policy as follows:

- Group 1: Prevention of learner pregnancy
- Group 2: Management of learner pregnancy
- Group 3: Grievance procedure, implementation dissemination and awareness, planning, budget, monitoring and evaluation.

Ask the groups to summarise what they have read to the other groups. Each group have five minutes to explain the key points that they have read. Participants should write down any questions they may have about the policy. You should revisit these questions at the end of the session to see if they are able to answer the questions that they had.

SECTION TWO

THE PREVENTION OF LEARNER PREGNANCY

Introduction to the prevention of learner pregnancy (10 minutes)

The policy contains many steps that schools should follow to prevent the incidence of learner pregnancy. Some of the policy areas describe actions that the school is already taking, such as teaching life skills. Other sections of the policy describe actions that may be new for the school, such as involving the community to help address learner pregnancy. The section of prevention covers nine main areas of intervention.

Policy provisions for the prevention of learner pregnancy

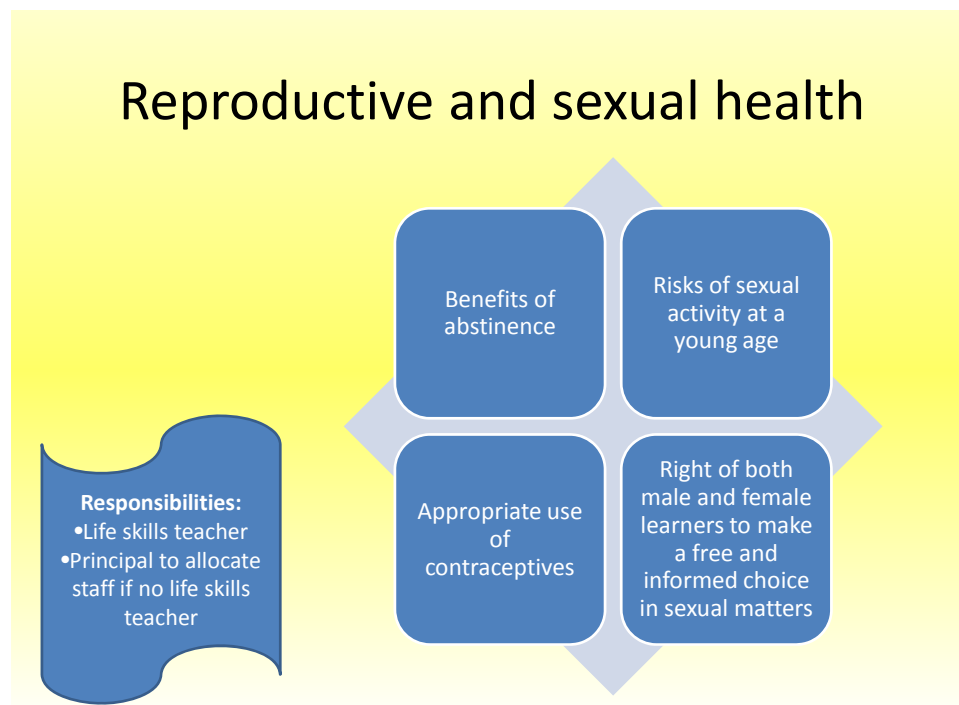
1. Reproductive and sexual health
2. Life Skills and supplementary programmes
3. Promoting safe leisure activities
4. Gender-specific support and mentoring for learners
5. Counselling
6. Possible partners
7. Family and community involvement
8. Safe environment
9. Exemplary behaviour by education staff

Reproductive and sexual health (15 minutes)

The life skills teacher has a duty to educate learners on reproductive and sexual health. The life skills teacher should ensure that learners are educated about the:

- benefits of abstinence
- risks of sexual activity at a young age
- appropriate use of contraceptives
- right of both male and female learners to make a free and informed choice in sexual matters

If there is no lifeskills teacher, the Principal should designate at least two specific teachers and/or teacher-counsellors for this task.



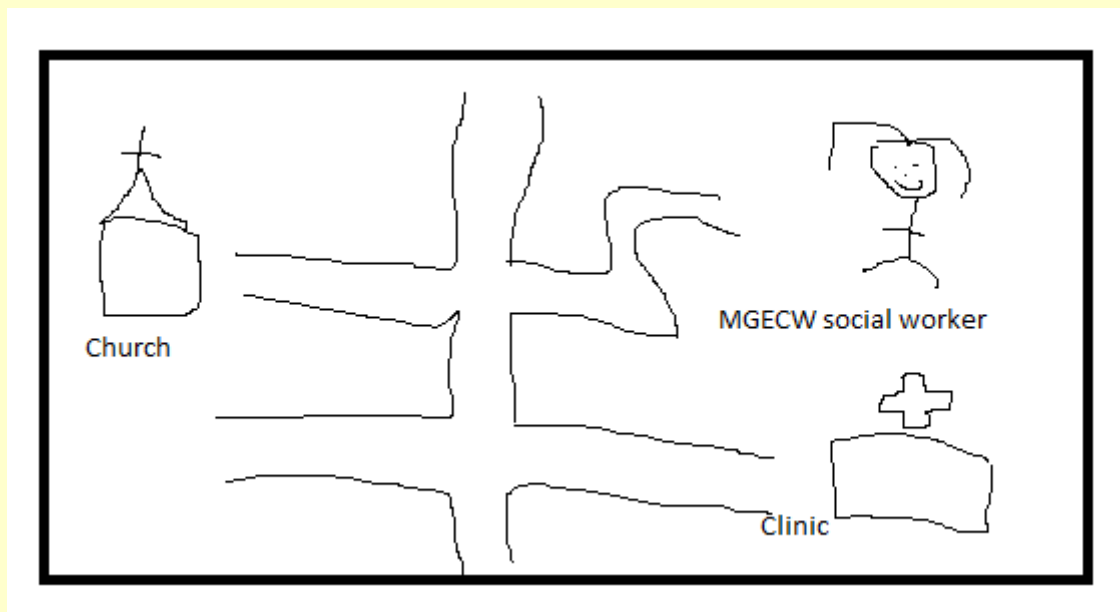
Who can help educate learners about reproductive and sexual health?

Time: 35 minutes (15 minutes drawing, 20 minutes discussion)

Materials: Pen and paper

The policy states that the teacher/s responsible for educating learners about reproductive and sexual health should liaise with local reproductive health facilities to establish mechanisms for providing learners with access to accurate reproductive health information in appropriate forms.

Ask the participants to draw a map of their community showing the places where people access information about reproductive and sexual health. Encourage the participants to contact these places to give presentations at the school.



Some participants may say that there are no places that provide this information. However you may have a community education centre where people are able to access information on the internet. You could ask the person running this centre to give a presentation on how to access information through the internet.

Life skills and supplementary programmes (15 minutes)

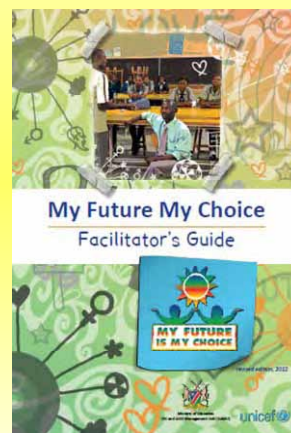
The Principal has a duty to ensure that life skills periods are included in the school timetable and are taught by a trained and full-time life skills teacher where possible.

The lessons should include information on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, mutual respect in relationships, self-esteem, assertiveness, empowerment, interpersonal communication skills, the right to sexual autonomy and alcohol-related issues.

Girls shall be targeted for information on how to avoid placing themselves in situations of sexual vulnerability, such as by accepting gifts from older men. Boys shall be targeted for information on girls' right to refuse sexual activities. Both boys and girls shall be targeted for programmes which will help teach them that healthy relationships should not be based on financial/transactional considerations.

Life Skills

- The Principal has a duty to ensure that Life Skills are taught
- Teaching should be supplemented by extra-curricular programmes such as Window of Hope and My Future My Choice



Schools should supplement the life skills subject with additional life skills and sexual health programmes such as “*Windows of Hope*”, “*My Future My Choice*” and other programmes offered by non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, whenever possible.

The Principal should work with the organisers of these programmes to develop strategies to increase the number of learners reached, with the aim of ensuring that all learners participate in these programmes during their education.

Promoting safe leisure activities (10 minutes)

Schools and school hostels shall endeavour to arrange after-school and evening activities which provide safe entertainment options for learners in an alcohol-free environment.

Promoting safe leisure activities

Schools and school hostels shall endeavour to arrange after-school and evening activities which provide safe entertainment options for learners in an alcohol-free environment.



A calendar of ideas

Time: 30 minutes (15 minutes listing, 15 minutes discussion)

Resources: Paper and pen

Put the participants into groups. Ask them to develop a calendar of safe leisure activities that last for one term.

Ideas for activities include:

- Hold a disco and a movie screening
- Start a drama group and chess club
- Arrange sports competitions and water sports
- Hold a debate
- Start a choir and dance group
- Hold a readathon and spelling bee
- Organise a cook and sell

Gender-specific support and mentoring for learners (10 minutes)

The Principal shall designate one or more male and female teachers to monitor the progress of learners by gender. The gender-monitors should act as support persons and encourage people from the community to address learners about gender issues.

Monitoring gender

- The Principal shall designate one or more male and female teachers to
 - Monitor the progress of male learners compared to female learners to identify and address any problems or concerns;
 - act as support persons for gender issues
 - encourage community organisations to give input



Watch out for inappropriate behaviour

Monitoring the progress of learners by gender

Time: 40 minutes (20 minutes work in pairs, 20 minutes discussion time)

Resources: Handout

Ask the participants to get into pairs of the opposite sex (one man, one woman).

Give the participants the handout on the following page. Ask the participants to complete the table and discuss their answers with their partner. Ask them to discuss challenges they experience based on their sex. This could be in their professional capacity, home life or social life. Ask the participants to give each other ideas about how they can overcome the challenges discussed.

As a group, discuss how teachers can conduct similar exercises with learners. The participants could ask learners to complete a similar table. The teachers may also want to consider whether male learners receive more resource from their families than female children? Do female learners have more opportunities to decide on a career compared to male children? Are male and female learners taught to behave differently in a relationship?

Additional resources

Namibia has a National Gender Policy. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has a duty to popularise this policy. The Ministry has made a pamphlet about the policy for young people. Teachers could get copies of the pamphlet to discuss with learners. Teachers could also ask staff from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to conduct an education session about the policy with learners.



HANDOUT

Have you ever thought about how the work in your family is divided? Why not fill in the chart below to find out.

Time of Day	Jobs done by the man at that time	Total hours spent	Jobs done by the woman at that time	Total hours spent
5-6				
6-7				
7-8				
8-9				
9-10				
10-11				
11-12				
12-1				
13-14				
14-15				
15-16				
16-17				
17-18				
18-19				
20-21				
21-22				
22-23				
23-24				
TOTAL				

If the workload in your family is uneven, are there any changes that you could make?

Counselling (10 minutes)

All female and male learners should be able to access counselling services. The Principal shall designate at least two specific teacher-counsellors to provide counselling services including counselling and information on reproductive health, sexual abuse and relationship issues. The Principal may also refer learners to Regional School Counsellors or appropriate agencies for counselling as needed. The Principal shall also endeavour to introduce peer support programmes on these topics. For example, schools could consider implementing a buddy system where an older learner is assigned to support a younger learner. Grade 12 learners could buddy with Grade 8 learners. A buddy system will work best if the learners paired are the same sex.

Counselling

- All female and male learners should be able to access counselling services.
- The Principal shall designate at least two specific teacher-counsellors to provide counselling services on areas including
 - reproductive health
 - sexual abuse
 - relationship issues
- Learners should also be referred to Regional School Counsellors or other agencies as needed
- Schools should encourage peer support groups



Additional resources and activities

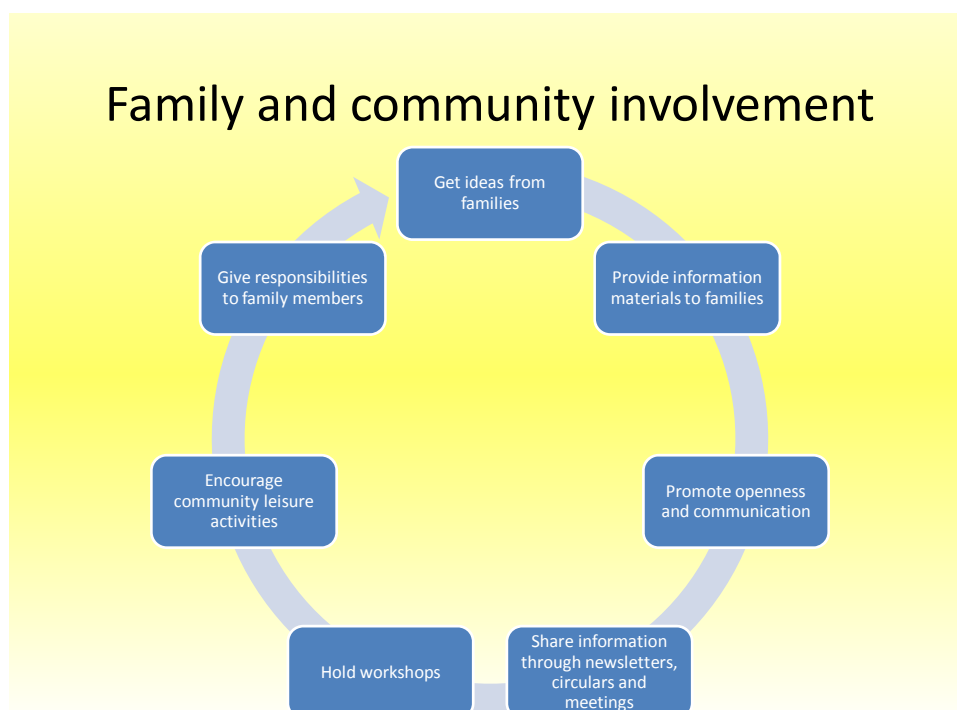
The Ministry of Education has produced a separate training manual on the process of counselling. You should refer to this manual to select information and activities to train on during this session if you would like to conduct further training on this area.

Possible partners (10 minutes)

The school is only one of the roleplayers that influences a child's life. A child's family should have the first and foremost responsibility of providing the child with the values and examples which will guide him or her through childhood and adolescence. The religious community, the wider community, government ministries, the media and society at large also influence the values of Namibia's young people. The school should consider who else can help educate learners about the prevention and management of learner pregnancy.

Schools should use a variety of means to involve families. The policy says that the parents of learner-parents shall be asked whether they would like to assist in the education of other learners about teenage pregnancy.

The policy says that the parents of learner-parents shall be asked whether they would like to assist in the education of other learners about teenage pregnancy.



Complete the list

Time: 35 minutes

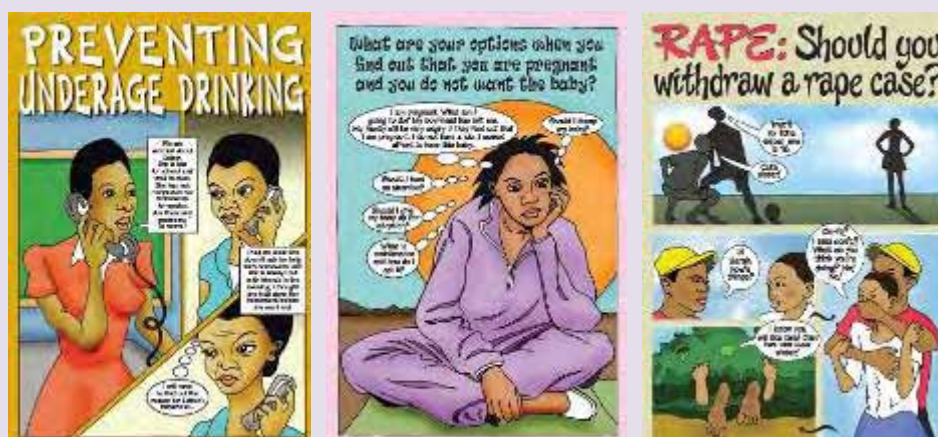
Materials: Telephone directories and first handout

The policy says that the Principal and the head of the Counselling Support Group shall ensure that every school and hostel has a list of relevant resources available in the wider community, including non-governmental organisations and government contacts. Referring back to the mapping exercise, ask the participants to complete the contact list on the following page. If possible provide the participants with one or more telephone directories so that they can complete all the details during this session.

You can give the participants the second handout to take home and read.

Additional resources

The Legal Assistance Centre has produced a wide range of information materials. Get copies for your school and give to families to encourage them to discuss the issues with their children.



HANDOUT

CONTACTS

Regional Education Office

Name

Contact details:

Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare:

Name

Contact details:

Ministry of Health and Social Services:

Name

Contact details:

Women and Child Protection Unit/local police unit

Name

Contact details:

Churches

Name

Contact details:

Civil society and community groups

Name

Contact details:

HANDOUT

The ABC of working with parents

- A: Accept parents as they are
- B: Believe that parents are sincerely concerned about all aspects of their child's growth and development
- C: Compliment parents on their children's attitudes, behaviour and performance
- D: Discuss topics that interest parents
- E: Encourage parents to become involved in their children's education
- F: Familiarise yourself with each family's situation
- G: Give parents opportunities to ask questions and express their opinions
- H: Help parents to develop confidence in their abilities. Parents have much to offer the school
- I: Invite parents to participate in all school activities
- J: Judge not
- K: Know the community resources available to parents
- L: Listen to what parents are saying
- M: Make every effort to involve all parents - telephone call and home visits are helpful
- N: Never say it can't be done
- O: Offer opportunities for parents to develop a better understanding of the school programme
- P: Plan appropriate activities for parent volunteers
- Q: Question in an open-ended way to stimulate more discussion
- R: Recognise that each parent is unique
- S: Show that you are genuinely interest in parents
- T: Thank parents for attending meetings
- U: Understand that parents have a right to their feeling
- V: Vary your approaches to parental involvement
- W: Work together with parents for the success of every learner
- X: X-ray and improve you parent-involvement programme regularly
- Y: You must help parents to feel comfortable and needed
- Z: Zeal on your part is essential to a successful parent-involement programme.

Taken from the *Division: Diagnostic, Advisory and Training Services Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance: Ministry of Education Identification and support of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in Namibia: Training manual for facilitators.*

Safe environment (15 minutes)

Schools shall strive to ensure that the school and the school hostel environment are safe and that learners are free from sexual harassment or sexual abuse by learners, teachers or other staff. Schools has achieve this by:

- Developing a code on learner protection
- Ensuring that learners, teachers and support staff know about and understand the school codes of conduct
- Improving supervision
- Encouraging reporting

Developing a safe environment

- Develop a School Code on Learner Protection
- Ensure learners, teachers and support staff know about and understand the Code of Conducts for teachers and learners and the rules for public servants
- Improve school and hostel supervision
- Encourage reporting



The code on learner protection should include a section on combating sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Learners should be involved in the drafting of the school codes. Teachers could make the creation of a code on learner protection part of a teaching exercise, or make it an after-school activity.

Relationships with teachers

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: None

Ask the participants the following questions:

Do teachers have a duty to report misconduct?

Answer: Yes – the Public Service Act states that teachers have a duty to report misconduct.

Who should teachers report misconduct to?

Answer: The Principal of the school. Should there be some reason why the teacher cannot report to the Principal or if the Principal is not addressing the complaint, the teacher should report to the Regional School Counsellor.

What should the Principal do when someone reports a case of misconduct?

Answer: The Principal has a duty to take appropriate action. This could be to investigate the case, hold disciplinary proceedings, and apply an appropriate remedy including criminal charges where the actions in question constitute a crime.

Background information

Regulation 19 issued under the Public Service Act requires public sector employees to report misconduct.

Regulation 23 gives supervisors such as Principals a legal obligation to act in cases of misconduct. It also states that failure to take appropriate action also constitutes misconduct.

When the Child Care and Protection Act comes into force, it will also state that teachers have a duty to report cases of child abuse. Teachers who fail to report could be subject to a fine of up to N\$20 000, imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both.

Homework: Promoting safer schools through the School Codes of Conduct

Resource: The LAC comic “Promoting safer schools through the School Codes of Conduct”. The comic is available electronically and has been included with the PowerPoint package. If you cannot obtain hard copies print out one or more copies for the participants to share.



As previously, there are many topics to cover in the training session and you are unlikely to have time to cover all of them. Therefore this activity can be converted to homework. You can ask the participants questions the following day about the information they are asked to read.

Give copies of the comic to the participants to read. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- Is bullying common in your school?
- Do learners who are being bullied seek help?
- What does the school codes of conduct say about how schools should address bullying?

Key information:

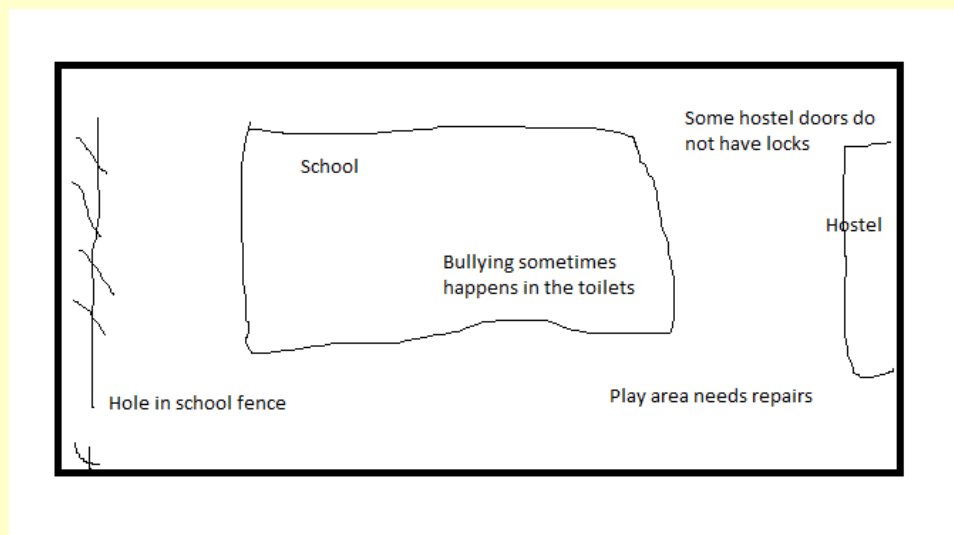
Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct must be dealt with in terms of Namibia's Public Service Act. This means that the misconduct could lead to suspension followed by an enquiry, with the ultimate result being possible dismissal and criminal charges where the actions in question constitute a crime. Because the Code for the Teaching Service may not apply to non-teaching employees such as clerical staff, cleaners, etc, the policy for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy makes it clear that sexual harassment and abuse of learners will not be tolerated by *any* education sector employee. Such behaviour constitutes misconduct and will result in a disciplinary hearing and criminal charges where the actions in question constitute a crime

Hostel and school safety audit

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: Paper and pen

Ask the participants to draw a plan of their school and hostel (where relevant). Ask them to label aspects of the school and hostel that need improvement to increase the level of safety. For example, doors that may need locks or a fence that requires fixing. The participants should consider how to improve protection against physical, sexual and emotional abuse.



Exemplary behaviour by education staff (10 minutes)

Teachers and all school staff should be positive role models regarding alcohol consumption and sexuality.

Exemplary behaviour by education staff

Teachers and all school staff should be positive role models regarding alcohol consumption and sexuality



Someone I admire

Time: 35 minutes (20 minutes reading, 15 minutes discussion)

Resources: Newspapers published that day/recent newspapers



Give the participants copies of recent newspapers. Ask them to flick through the stories and identify people who are positive and negative role models in terms of alcohol consumption and sexuality. Ask the participants to discuss whether they think the teachers and support staff at their school are positive role models in this regard. If the participants feel that there are some teachers or support staff who are not positive role models, the Principal should address the matter individually with the people concerned.

SECTION THREE

THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER PREGNANCY

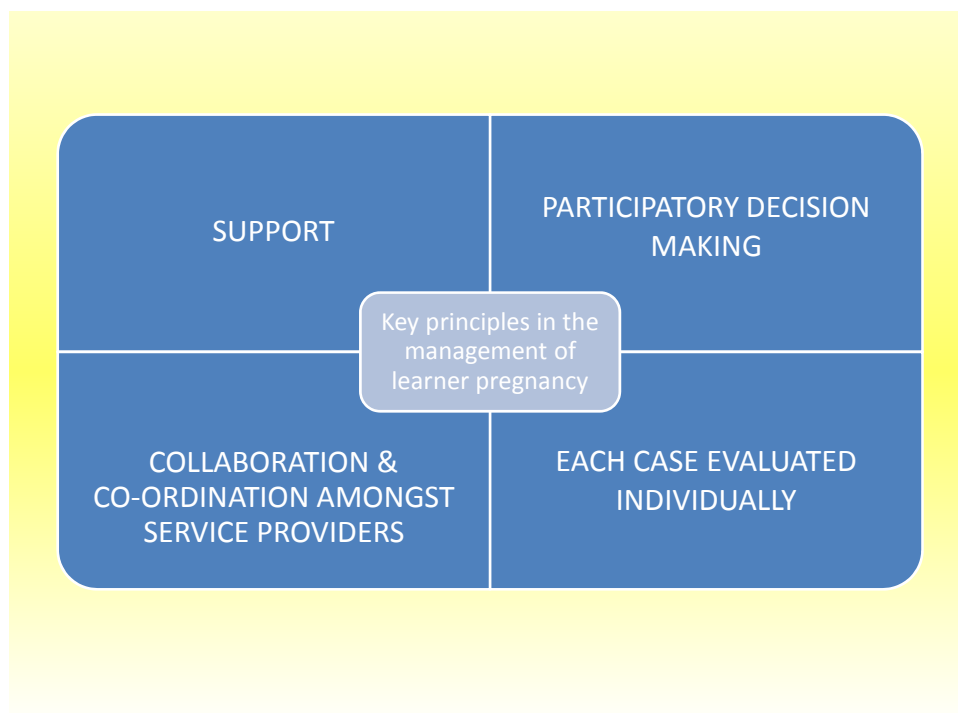
Introduction (30 minutes)

Start the session by giving the participants the handout on the following page. The handout is an extract from the policy. Give the participants five minutes to read it.

The handout summarises four important principles for the management of learner pregnancy:

- (1) Support;
- (2) Participatory decision making;
- (3) Collaboration and co-ordination amongst service providers; and
- (4) Individual evaluation of each case.

Discuss with the participants *how* and *why* these concepts should be applied to the management of learner pregnant.



You can discuss the following points with the participants:

- *Support*: The pregnant learner may feel negative pressure from her family, her friends, the school and/or the community. This pressure might make the learner want to leave school and not continue her education, want to abort the foetus, or want to dump the baby when it is born. The school has a role to provide non-judgemental support for the pregnant learner and the learner father to assist them to make the best decisions for their situation.
- *Participatory decision-making*: The pregnant learner, the learner's family and the school all have a role in decision-making. No single person or group should have the burden of making decisions alone.
- *Collaboration and co-ordination amongst service providers*: The school does not have to implement the provisions in this policy alone. Local staff from the ministry responsible for health and the ministry responsible for child welfare in particular have a role to assist. The role of the different service providers is discussed later in the session.
- *Each case evaluated individually*: Every learner is different, so a "one-size fits all" policy will not work in practice. Remind the participants of the real-life examples of learner pregnancy they discussed on day one.

Agree or disagree

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: None

Read the participants the statement below. If they agree with the statement they should stand on one side of the room. If they disagree with the statement they should stand on the other side of the room. If some participants choose agree and others choose disagree, ask them to discuss their differing opinions.

Babydumping is a problem in Namibia. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare asked people across Namibia why they think mothers dump their babies. The second most common reason was because the mother is a student. The Education Sector policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy says that pregnant learners should be given non-judgemental support. This means that schools can play an important role in reducing the incidence of babydumping.

The management of learner pregnancy

In cases where prevention measures fail and learners become pregnant, the school shall endeavour to manage the situation by **SUPPORTING** pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents to combine continuation of their education with the responsibilities of parenthood without compromising the best interests of the infant or the learner. This process should be **COLLABORATIVE** between the school, the pregnant learner, the expectant father and their families, and should involve **PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING**.

Each situation shall be assessed and **EVALUATED INDIVIDUALLY**, with sensitivity to the learner's health, financial situation, options for child care, family support or lack of support, the timing of the delivery in relation to the school calendar and the needs of the newborn child. The school shall respect each learner's right to confidentiality.¹ To ensure that the best interests of the infant and pregnant learner/expectant father/learner-parents are met, the school should encourage efficient **CO-ORDINATION AMONGST SERVICE PROVIDERS**.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the female learner who becomes pregnant and the male learner who shares responsibility for the pregnancy are treated as equally and fairly as possible. Due to the biological differences between learner-mothers and learner-fathers, the learner-mother will be excused from school for a period based on her health needs and the needs of the infant while the learner-father will not be excused from school. The differential treatment of mothers and fathers in this policy is modelled on the similar approach taken in Namibia's labour laws. It must be noted that the leave of absence provided for the pregnant learner/learner-mother is not in the nature of punishment and therefore need not be applied in the same way to the learner-father. It should also be noted that allowing the learner-father to remain in school does not mean that his role in parenting is being ignored. Schools should help both the mother and the father understand their different roles and responsibilities during this time.

¹

Through counselling, the learner shall be strongly encouraged to disclose the pregnancy to the parents or primary caregiver. Should the learner be reluctant to disclose, the school should offer to support her during the disclosure process.

Promotion of openness (5 minutes)

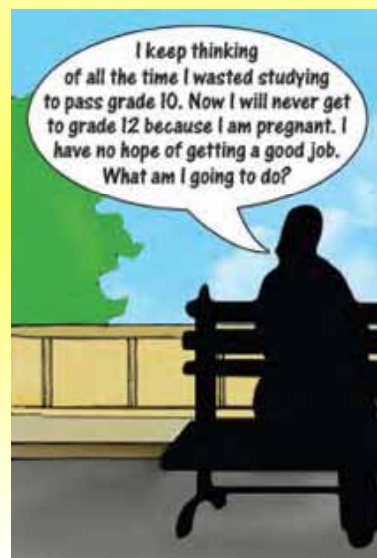
From Grade one, the Principal and teacher-counsellors shall take steps to encourage a culture of openness between learners and teachers.

Learners shall be encouraged to inform a trusted adult, such as a teacher, teacher-counsellor, social worker or healthcare provider in cases where a learner is pregnant or a learner has fathered a child. Learners shall be assured that learner pregnancy shall not be treated as grounds for punishment. In cases of orphans and vulnerable children, cases should be referred to a social worker at the earliest possible date.

To support early disclosure of pregnancies, all learners of child-bearing/reproductive age shall be informed of the importance of ante-natal care and of the importance of the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. Information about ante-natal care and the role of the father is discussed later in the session. One reason to encourage openness is to help the school put measures in place that will help the pregnant learner and learner father to continue their education. For example the school might need to make special arrangements for a pregnant learner during the examination period.

Promotion of openness

- Learners should feel able to tell someone about their pregnancy
- The policy highlights 2 key reasons to be open:
 - Female learners should understand the importance of antenatal care
 - Male learners should understand the importance of the involvement of the father in a child's life



Telling the teacher; telling the parents

Time: 55 hour (15 minutes to prepare, 30 minutes to perform (5 minutes per scenario), 10 minutes to discuss)

Materials: Cards

Split the participants into pairs. Give them one of the cards below. Ask them to prepare a role play. Ask some of the participants to perform their role play to the group. You will probably not have time for everyone to perform so try to pick one of each of the scenarios. Discuss with the group how teachers can encourage openness.

A pregnant learner tells a teacher that she is pregnant. The teacher does not encourage openness and gives her a negative response.	A pregnant learner tells a teacher that she is pregnant. The teacher encourages openness and gives her a supportive, non-judgemental response.
A learner tells a teacher that he has fathered a child. The teacher does not encourage openness and gives him a negative response.	A learner tells a teacher that he has fathered a child. The teacher encourages openness and gives him a supportive, non-judgemental response.
A learner tells a teacher that her friend is pregnant. The teacher does not encourage openness and gives her a negative response.	A learner tells a teacher that his friend has fathered a child. The teacher encourages openness and gives him a supportive, non-judgemental response.

Promotion of openness continued (30 minutes)

Whilst a learner may find it hard to tell a teacher about the pregnancy, the learner might find it even harder to tell her family. The school may need to help the learner to tell her family. For example the school could offer to accompany the learner when she tells her parents. The learner might also ask the school to talk to her parents on the telephone before she speaks to them. Schools can ask the Regional School Counsellor for support in difficult situations.

Discuss the following case studies with the participants. The case studies illustrate why it is important for schools to encourage openness. The participants may have examples of their own to share.

Encouraging communication

Jane and Joan are Grade 10 learners at two different schools. Jane's school has encouraged communication between parents and the school. Joan's school has not taken steps to encourage communication.

Jane's parents learnt that their daughter was pregnant during the May holiday. They telephoned the School Principal immediately. The Principal met with them to discuss the options. Jane attended school until September and gave birth in October. Jane continued with her assignments whilst out of school and sat her final exams at the end of the year. Jane passed her exams and returned to school the following year in Grade 11.

Joan's parents also learnt that their daughter was pregnant during the May holiday. They did not inform the school. The school did not find out that Joan was pregnant until her pregnancy started to show in September. Joan dropped out of school and has not returned. Joan currently does not have any means of employment.



Information, counselling and support (10 minutes)

All pregnant learners and learner fathers should have a designated support person. The staff member could be the same for the pregnant learner and the learner father or a different person for each learner parent. The support person could be a teacher-counsellor, any other staff member with whom the learner feels comfortable or someone from outside the school system. Any staff member who is uncomfortable with being asked to act as a support person should discuss the issue with the Principal. The staff member should be identified by the individual learner or by the Principal if the learner has no preference.

As the title suggests, the role of the support person is to provide the learner with support. The support person should discuss the pregnancy empathically and non-judgmentally, and either provide counselling or direct the learner to someone else who will provide counselling. If the learner is very upset by the situation, the school should consider involving a professional counsellor as some learners may feel suicidal when confronted with an unplanned pregnancy.

The school should also refer the learners' parents (or primary caregiver or legal guardian) to a teacher-counsellor, social worker or community organisation for counselling about the situation. The school should keep in touch with the family to monitor the situation.

It is important to note that the school does not have to provide the family with counselling but should help the family to *access* counselling from another source. By assisting the family to access counselling, the family will be better able to emotionally and practically assist the pregnant learner/learner father.

Information, counselling and support

- The pregnant learner and learner father should be assigned a support person
 - Could be a teacher/teacher counsellor/community member
- The support person should provide support and provide/facilitate access to counselling
- The learner's parents/caregivers should also be referred for counselling
 - The school does not have to provide the counselling for the parents but the school should maintain contact with the parents



Homework

As previously noted there are many topics to cover in the training session and you are unlikely to have time to cover all of them. Therefore this activity can be converted to homework. You can ask the participants questions tomorrow about the information they are asked to read.



What to expect if you are a learner father

The support person should encourage the learner father to take full responsibility for his actions and to play a full and active role in parenthood. The information package contains a section entitled *What to expect if you are a learner father*. Refer the participants to these pages or give them the handouts on the following pages. Ask them to read these pages this evening.

Questions

1. Name 3 duties a father has towards his child
2. Does a learner-father have a duty to provide maintenance for his child?

Why do pregnant women need ante-natal care?

The support person also has a duty to provide information about ante-natal care. The package also contains information about this. Refer the participants to these pages or give them the handouts on the following pages. Ask them to read these pages this evening.

Question

1. Ask one participant to explain the information to the group as though he/she was talking to a learner. The rest of the group should give feedback on whether the presentation was correct and clear and add any information they think was missing.



Healthcare during pregnancy and after the birth of your child

It is very important to take care of your health when you are pregnant to protect yourself and your unborn child. After giving birth, you must continue to take care of your health and the health of your baby. Paying good attention to health issues will give you the best chance of having an uncomplicated pregnancy and a healthy baby.

You may be nervous about telling people that you are pregnant, but it is very important that you do speak to a trusted adult. This adult can help you to get the immediate healthcare that you need, and can help you to feel more comfortable about telling other people, such as your teachers and friends, that you are pregnant.

Healthcare during pregnancy

It is very important to see a trained healthcare provider during pregnancy to make sure that you and your unborn baby are healthy. There are many health risks associated with pregnancy and giving birth. For example, some pregnant women develop high blood pressure. This can be dangerous for you and your unborn baby. Seeing a trained healthcare provider will help you understand how to stay healthy and how to look out for the signs of labour and serious problems. The World Health Organisation recommends that you see a trained healthcare provider at least four times during your pregnancy. Your first visit should be as early as possible during your pregnancy – preferably during the first three months.



During pregnancy you should eat more nutritious food, and you should also eat an increased quantity of food. You should research what food is locally available that is most nutritious for you. You should get more rest than usual. You should also take vitamin and nutrient supplements, such as iron and folic acid or a single supplement with these and other ingredients. If you do not get enough of the correct nutrients, your baby may not develop properly. You should also be careful about what you expose your body to. Smoking, drugs and alcohol can harm your unborn child.

Your healthcare provider should explain the changes that will happen to your body, discuss your plan for the birth, and talk to you about how you will care for the baby. Your healthcare provider should make sure that you have a tetanus injection, and talk to you about treatment for sexually transmitted infections and preventative treatment for malaria if these are relevant to your situation.

Your emotional health is also important. You may be experiencing many different emotions. You may be feeling frightened about the pregnancy, or you may be shy about telling people that you are pregnant. You should talk to a healthcare provider or social worker about your feelings. They can help you to deal with your emotions and to mentally prepare for the birth of your child.

Giving birth

There are risks associated with giving birth. You should have a skilled birth attendant such as a midwife, doctor or nurse to assist you during childbirth. This will help to avoid dangers, illness or even death that can occur when a woman gives birth without medical support.



Healthcare after the birth

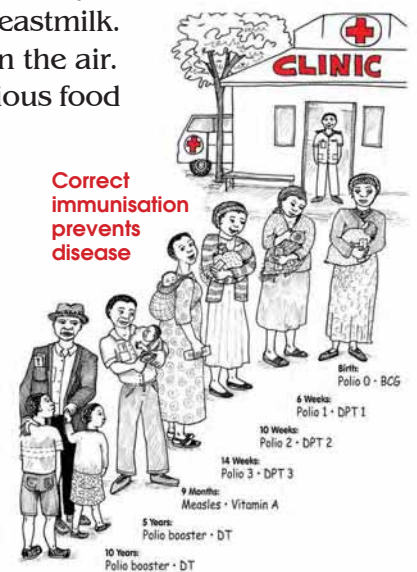
Your baby is particularly vulnerable during the first month of his or her life. You should see a healthcare provider during the first 24 hours after the birth, one week later and six weeks after the birth to make sure that you and your baby are healthy. This will help to give your baby a healthy start in life. You may need to see a healthcare provider more often if your baby was born early or has a low birth weight, or if there are other complications.



You and your baby need to live in a safe, clean and healthy environment. You should be careful about what you expose your body and your baby to. Smoking, drugs and alcohol can harm your baby through your breastmilk. Smoking is also bad for babies who are exposed to the smoke in the air. If you are breastfeeding, you need to continue to eat more nutritious food and an increased quantity of food.

Immunisations for your baby

Your baby will need to have immunisations. These will protect your child from serious illnesses that can cause disability or death. Your healthcare provider will explain to you when you need to bring your baby to the clinic for the immunisations. It is important that you follow the time schedule for the immunisations as closely as possible. The immunisations that your baby will receive in the first and second year of life are very important, so you should not delay getting these immunisations.



You can contact the nearest hospital, clinic or office of the Ministry of Health and Social Services for more information on healthcare during pregnancy, birth and after a baby is born. You can also talk to a family member or friend, a community focal point or someone at your nearest multipurpose youth centre. You can also contact NAPPA (Namibia Planned Parenthood Association) for more information. You can also get more information from a useful international publication called *Facts of Life: Fourth Edition*, available at www.factsforlifeglobal.org.



Information, counselling and support continued: Who is the father? (20 minutes)

The policy says that the learner should be *encouraged* to reveal the father's identity, but care should be taken not to place pressure on her to do so, remembering that the pregnancy may be in a context which makes her feel unsafe. For example, the father could be a family member, an influential person in the community or even a teacher.

What happens if a teacher impregnates a learner?

The Code of Conduct for the Teaching Service states that a teacher “*may not become involved in any form of romance or sexual relations with a learner or sexual harassment or abuse of a learner*”. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct constituted misconduct and must be dealt with in terms of Namibia's Public Service Act. This means that the misconduct could lead to suspension followed by an enquiry, with the ultimate result being reprimand, a fine, transfer to another post, a reduction in salary or rank, and possible dismissal, depending on the recommendation of the disciplinary committee which considers the case. Depending on the seriousness of the infringement of the Code of Conduct, the teacher in question may also “*be given the necessary counselling and advice and opportunity to correct his or her behaviour*”.

Because the Code for the Teaching Service may not apply to non-teaching employees such as clerical staff, cleaners, the Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy also states that “*no education sector employee shall engage in sexual activity with, harassment of, or any other abuse of a learner. Such behaviour on the part of an education sector employee constitutes misconduct and will result in a disciplinary hearing and criminal charges where the actions in question constitute a crime*””. This makes it clear that sexual harassment and abuse of learners will not be tolerated by any education sector employee.

Who is the father?

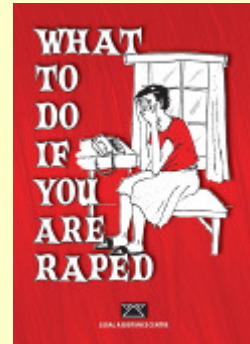
- The learner should be encouraged to reveal the father's identity
- The learner should not be forced to reveal the father's identity
 - Remember, the pregnancy could be a result of rape or sexual abuse



Supporting a learner to lay a criminal charge

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: The LAC comic pamphlet What to do if you are raped. The pamphlet is available electronically and has been included with the PowerPoint package. If you cannot obtain hard copies print out one or more copies for the participants to share.



The Legal Assistance Centre has produced a pamphlet entitled *What to do if you are raped*. Give copies to the participants to read. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

What are the first steps that you should take if a learner tells you that he or she has been raped?

Answer: (1) Seek medical help; 2) Report the incident to the police. In some situations you can report to the police and they will facilitate getting medical help.

How soon after a rape should you report it?

Answer: You should report the rape as soon as possible so that the investigating officer from the Woman and Child Protection Unit can collect the best evidence to catch and convict the

person who raped you. Evidence is information and things that can later be used in court to show that you were raped. It can be things that you or other people say, photographs, medical reports or actual items like clothing. It can also be things like hair or bodily fluids that have been left on your body by the rapist.

True or false: If the learner tells you that he or she has been raped immediately after it happens, you should tell the learner to take a shower or bath before you take the learner to the police?

Answer: False – this might wash away important evidence. A person who has been raped should not take a shower or bath before the rape examination. To help save the best evidence, the person who has been raped should (1) not wash herself; (2) not change her clothes; (3) not tidy up the place where the rape happened and (4) not eat or drink anything.

True or false: If the learner reports the rape to you one week after it happened, there is no point reporting it to the police.

Answer: False – the police may still be able to find enough evidence to take the case to court. Reporting a rape is also a form of catharsis for the learner and may be an important step to help the learner come to terms with what has happened.

What happens during a rape examination?

Answer: The doctor will examine the rape survivor to see if there is any medical evidence. The doctor will look at her entire body, including her mouth and genital area. The doctor will use a swab to collect substances that may be left on her body and take clippings of her fingernails and hair. The doctor will also take a sample of her blood. The examination may be a little uncomfortable, but it is very important for the doctor to collect these items and make a note of everything that may be important. This examination will take 1½ to 2 hours. The doctor examining her and a nurse are the only people who need to be present for the examination. She may have a support person there as well if she wishes. The police officer who is investigating the case does not need to be present.

What is PEP?

Answer: The rape survivor may have been exposed to HIV as a result of the rape. There is medicine that can reduce the chance of becoming infected with HIV. It is called post-exposure prophylaxis. It will work only if it is taken very soon after the rape. It is best to start

taking PEP within 72 hours after the rape if possible. It works best if started even sooner. The rape survivor must take PEP for 28 days. If she stops taking it too soon, it will not work. Government will provide PEP for free if someone cannot pay. If the hospital or clinic where you are treated does not have a full course of PEP on hand, they should have a starter pack with enough pills for 3-7 days.

What role does a teacher have in supporting a learner to lay a criminal charge compared to the role of the family?

Answer: We hope that when a learner reports a situation of abuse, the family will support him or her through the process. However this will not be the reality for some children. Teachers have a duty to report cases of abuse. Supporting the learner during the reporting process is a moral duty that accompanies this.

When the Child Care and Protection Bill comes into force it will require teachers to report cases of abuse. Failure to do so will be an offence that could result in a short prison sentence or fine. It will also clarify who can give permission for a child to be examined in cases of abuse. The bill states that a medical practitioner or health care provider may conduct an assessment or examination of a child who is suspected of having been abused or deliberately neglected for medical and/or forensic purposes without the consent of the child's parent or guardian, regardless of the child's age. This person may also provide any reasonable medical interventions required to respond to the suspected abuse or neglect. Therefore the teacher does not have to give consent. However the teacher may be the child's support person and may need to support the child during the examination.

Furthermore, the Code of Conduct for the Teaching Service states that "a teacher, in relation to learners must take the place of parents when a learner is officially at school and when he or she participates in official school programmes and activities in and outside school". This means that if a teacher failed to do what is reasonably expected of him or her, the teacher could be held civilly liable. This means that the parents could sue the teacher for damages where the damages were caused by the teacher not doing something that was needed to protect the learner when in his or her care.

Teachers can use the following protective measures to help ensure clarity in such situations:

- 1) Always act in good faith*

- 2) *Ensure that parents and caregivers are aware of the laws and regulations that bind teachers*
- 3) *Network with service providers to ensure that you have support*
- 4) *Ensure that parents sign a Consent and Waiver form at the start of every school year. This form should give the school permission to take action in the best interest of the child in medical and/or psychosocial emergencies.*
- 5) *Keep records of all actions*
- 6) *Write referral letters*
- 7) *When conducting interviews and investigations, have at least two staff members involved.*

Background information: Criminal responsibility

If a learner or another man has sex with a girl who is under the age of 14 and he is more than three years older than that person, he could be accused of rape even if no force or threats were involved. He could also be accused of committing a sexual offence if he had sexual contact with a girl under the age of 16 and he is more than three years older than that person, even if no force or threats were involved.

Sometimes a very young learner will commit a sexual offence. The law in Namibia states that children under the age of 7 cannot be held responsible for a crime. Children between the age of 7 and 14 may be held responsible for a crime if the prosecutor can prove that they were able to understand the difference between right and wrong. Children over the age of 14 are considered to be fully responsible for their actions, although the minimum sentences prescribed for rape do not apply to perpetrators under age 18.

Here are some examples. (The law is gender-neutral, so the examples would be the same even if the sexes of the individuals involved were reversed.)

- If a 6-year-old boy raped a 12-year-old girl he would not be guilty of a crime. However he it is likely that he would need counseling, as very young children who engage in sexual abuse are often sexually abused themselves.

- If a 12 year old boy used some form of coercion to rape a 12-year-old girl and the court found that he understood that he was doing something wrong, he could be convicted of rape. The court would decide what punishment was appropriate depending on the circumstances of the case. (It would not be rape if two 12-year-olds engage in a sexual act if there was no coercion, because there is no three-year age gap between them, so it would not be possible to say that one of them was exploiting the immaturity of the other.)
- If a 16-year-old boy committed a sexual act with a 12-year-old girl, this would be rape even if there was no force or coercion, because there is an age gap of more than three years between them. The court would decide what punishment was appropriate depending on the circumstances of the case.
- If an 18-year-old boy were convicted of rape, he would get the same punishment as an adult.

Homework:

The law on abortion

There are many topics to cover in the training session and you are unlikely to have time to cover all of them. Therefore this activity can be converted to homework.

You can ask the participants questions the following day about the information they are asked to read.

Refer the participants to the page on abortion in the information package or give them the handout on the following page. You can ask them the following questions tomorrow:

Questions

- In what circumstances can a person have an abortion?
- How many doctors must give permission for an abortion?





Abortion

What is an abortion?

An abortion is a procedure to end a pregnancy in its early stages. The embryo or foetus is removed from the body. An abortion is usually done through surgery or with medication. Only a licenced medical practitioner should perform an abortion. It can be very dangerous to perform an abortion by yourself. You could kill or damage yourself, or permanently damage but not remove the embryo or fetus.

When is abortion allowed?

Abortions are permitted in limited circumstances in Namibia. You can have a legal abortion if:

- your life is in danger;
- the pregnancy may cause serious harm to your physical or mental health;
- there is a strong risk that the child will have a serious mental or physical problem;
- the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest (incest is sexual intercourse with a very close relative such as a father or brother); or
- the pregnancy is the result of sexual intercourse with someone who has a mental disorder so severe that she did not understand what she was doing.

How can I get an abortion?

The steps for getting permission for a legal abortion depend on the reason for the abortion. The first step is to see a doctor. Any doctor should be able to help you follow the other steps.

You will need certificates from two doctors for the abortion to be granted. One of the doctors must work for the state. If the woman's mental health is involved, one of the doctors must be a state psychiatrist. The doctors who give the certificates cannot perform the abortion.

If the abortion is because of rape or incest, you will also need a certificate from a magistrate. You do not have to lay a charge of rape or incest with the police in order to get permission for an abortion if you have a good reason why you have not gone to the police. However if you have not laid a charge with the police, it will be more difficult to get permission for the abortion.

Can I get an abortion any other way?

If an abortion is performed without permission, both the doctor and the woman can be found guilty of a crime. Illegal abortions that are done secretly can be very dangerous. Legal abortions are more widely available in South Africa. Some people travel to South Africa to have an abortion.

If you are considering an abortion, you should speak to a doctor for more information. You may also want to speak to a social worker, pastor or another person who can give you information.

Information, counselling and support continued: Providing false information (15 minutes)

There may be situations where the pregnant learner or the learner father try to lie about who is the father of the child. The support person has a duty to make sure that the learners are aware of the potential consequences of providing false information about paternity.

What if the learner provides false information?

<i>Denying paternity</i>	<p>The court will assume paternity if there is evidence that the male learner had sexual intercourse with the pregnant learner at the time of conception</p> <p>The mother could ask the court to order a paternity test to prove who the father is</p>
<i>Providing false information</i>	<p>If the mother falsely names a man as the father, she could be accused of defamation, particularly if she is under the age of consent* as the purported father could then be accused of committing a criminal offence</p> <p>If the mother makes a sworn statement which falsely names a man as the father, she could be charged with the crime of perjury **</p>

* The age of consent for sex is 16 years old.

** Perjury is the unlawful and intentional making of a false statement in the course of a judicial proceeding

Background information

What happens to the male learner who shares the responsibility for pregnancy with the female learner?

Answer: The aim of this policy is to ensure that the female learner who becomes pregnant and the male learner who shares responsibility for the pregnancy are treated as equally and fairly as possible. Due to the biological differences between learner-mothers and learner-fathers, the learner-mother will be excused from school for a period based on her health needs and the needs of the infant while the learner-father will not be excused from school. The differential treatment of mothers and fathers in this policy is modelled on the similar approach taken in Namibia's labour laws. It must be noted that the leave of absence provided for the pregnant learner/learner-mother is not in the nature of punishment and therefore need not be applied in the same way to the learner-father. It should also be noted that allowing the learner-father to remain in school does not mean that his role in parenting is being ignored. Schools should help both the mother and the father understand their different roles and responsibilities during this time.

What if the learner father impregnates a girl who is not attending school?

Answer: The school should provide information, counselling and support to the girl in accordance with the guiding principles of this policy if requested to do so by the learner or his parents. The school would not have to provide information to an adult woman but might assist with referring the adult woman to counselling and healthcare support if needed.

What if the learner father impregnates a girl who is attending another school?

Answer: The two schools should work together to support the learners and their families.

What if the learner father keeps impregnating learners?

Answer: The school should ensure that the learner has been given sufficient information about the prevention of pregnancy. The school may also want to involve a social worker from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to monitor the case. The Regional School Counsellor can also be asked to assist.

What if the learner father has committed rape?

Answer: The steps in the policy apply to cases that do not involve a father who has committed rape or other illegal sexual assault. In cases where a criminal offence has occurred, the learner involved should be referred to the Woman and Child Protection Unit or a social worker.

What if the learner-father refuses to participate in support sessions that are provided to him?

Answer: If the school feels that the behaviour of the learner-father constitutes misconduct, the General Rules of Conduct for Learners say that he can be disciplined by the school after a disciplinary hearing. Possible punishment includes a reprimand, additional tasks relating to the contravention, a consultation with the learner's parents, written warnings, suspension and expulsion.

What should the school do if it feels the learner-mother's attitude is encouraging other learners to get pregnant?

The school should discuss their concerns with the learner and explain that her behaviour is not appropriate.

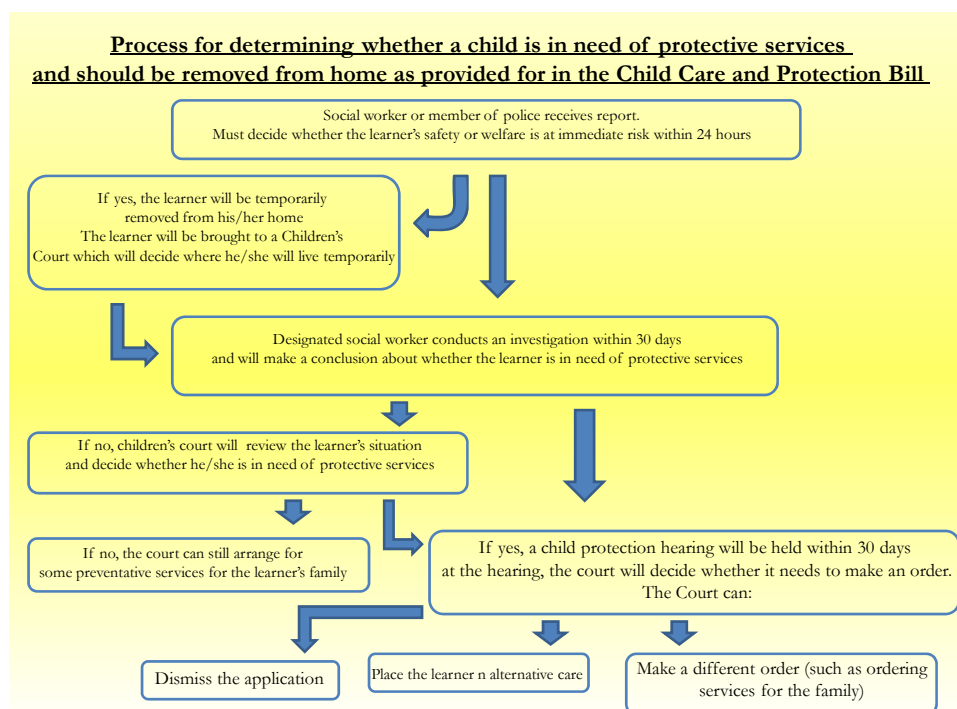
Implementing child protection proceedings (20 minutes)

In some cases, the school may need to implement child protection proceedings. This might be if the child has been abused by a family member and is still at risk, or if the child is an orphan or vulnerable child and does not have someone to adequately care for her.

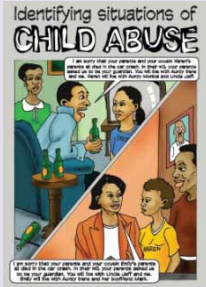
If a teacher thinks that a child has been abused, the teacher should report the case to a social worker or the police. When the Child Care and Protection Act comes into force, the teacher must report a suspicion of abuse to the police. Failure to report could result in a prison sentence or fine.

When a case of suspected child abuse is reported, a social worker will investigate the case. If the social worker finds evidence of child abuse, he or she may decide to remove the child from the home and put the child in a place of safety until alternative arrangements are made. Alternatively the social worker may arrange for the abuser to be ordered to leave. Or the social worker may make other arrangements according to the best interests of the child.

The slide illustrates the process for determining whether a child is in need of protective services. You do not need to teach the participants the details of this process but the information is the participants would like to know more.



Additional resources



The Legal Assistance Centre has produced a comic on identifying situations of child abuse. You could give the participants a copy of these materials if possible.

The role of the family (15 minutes)

The school should encourage the family of both learner-parents to be involved in assisting the learner-parents with their new responsibilities.

- Where the family seems willing to help, the school should advise them on how they can best support the learner-parents. We will review the type of information to share with the family on the next slide.
- Where the family seems unwilling to help, the Principal should attempt to discuss the situation with them and try to convince them to be more supportive.

There are many orphans and vulnerable children in Namibia. This could mean that in some cases, a pregnant learner does not have family who can help her. In this situation the school should ensure that a social worker from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is closely involved with the child. The social worker should take on many of the roles the family would play in such a situation. The school may also need to provide a greater level of support in such cases.

Role of the family

- The school should encourage the learner's family to support the learner.
 - The school should advise how the family can best help the learner
 - If the family is not being supportive, the Principal should attempt to discuss the situation with the family



Involving the family

Time: 40 minutes (15 minutes to prepare, 15 (5 minutes per scenario), 10 minutes to discuss)

Materials: None

Split the participants into groups. Ask them to prepare a role play on how the school can encourage family members who are unwilling to be involved in supporting a pregnant learner and learner father. Ask three groups to perform their role play.

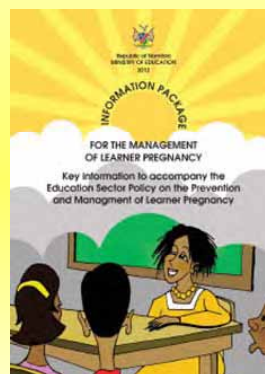
The role of the family continued (15 minutes)

The support person should discuss with the family options for child care. The support person should also provide information on: how to obtain maintenance from the child's father; state maintenance grants; and school fee exemptions.

The Principal shall ensure, with the support and assistance of a social worker if possible, that the family member/s are provided with information on the laws on rape, immoral practices, incest and indecent assault and on how to support a learner who wants to lay a charge with the police, if relevant. The process of legal abortion or legal adoption shall also be discussed if required. All of this information is in the *Information package for the management of learner pregnancy*.

Information to discuss with the family

- Child care options
- How to claim maintenance
- State maintenance grants
- How to get an exemption from the school development fund
- The law on rape, immoral practices, incest and indecent assault
- How to support a learner who wants to lay a charge with the police
- The process of legal abortion
- Adoption



All of this information is in the *Information package for the management of learner pregnancy*.

Information the support person should tell the family amount

Time: 1 hour (15 minutes to read and prepare; 5 minutes to perform on each topic; 10 minutes to discuss)

Materials: Information package

The *Information package for the management of learner pregnancy* contains sections on:

1. Basic facts on the Maintenance Act
2. Basic facts on the Child Maintenance Grant and the Special Maintenance Grant
3. What to do if you can't pay the School Development Fund contribution
4. Basic facts on the Combating of Rape Act
5. What to do if you have been sexually assaulted
6. Abortion
7. Adoption and foster care



Divide the participants into seven groups. Ask each group to read through one of the sections. The groups should perform a role play to illustrate how they would discuss this information with the learner parents.

BASIC FACTS ON THE MAINTENANCE ACT



FACT SHEET

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

What is maintenance?

- Maintenance is money or goods that a person has a legal duty to provide for the basic living expenses of his or her dependants.
- Maintenance is used for basic living expenses such as housing, water, electricity, food, clothes, transport, medical expenses and school fees. Maintenance may also be provided for pregnancy and birth-related expenses.
- All children have a right to maintenance.
- All children are treated equally before the law.
- Both parents are responsible for their children, even if a child is being cared for by someone else.
- The amount of money each parent must pay will depend on how much money they have and how much money they earn.
- The payment of maintenance must come before anything else except for payments parents make to support themselves.



What to do if maintenance is not paid

If you do not receive a maintenance payment 10 days after it should have been paid, you should contact the Clerk of the Court. The court can take the money directly from the defendant's wages, or sell some of his or her property.



Who can claim maintenance?

A parent, the person who looks after the child (such as the grandmother) or any other person who is worried about the child (such as a teacher) can apply for maintenance. A child can also claim maintenance from a parent without assistance from an adult.

How long must a parent pay maintenance for a child?

A maintenance order generally ends when a child is able to look after him- or herself. This is usually when the child reaches 18. But if a child marries or starts work before the age of 18, a maintenance order will stop. If a child goes to university, maintenance may need to be paid for longer.

Let us sit together and discuss everyone's income and expenses. Maybe then you will be able to agree on how to share the costs of the things your children need.



How to claim maintenance

Go to the Magistrate's Court

- The Clerk of the Court will help you to fill in the forms. The entire process should be private and you do not need a lawyer.

Meeting with the Maintenance Officer

- Both parents will be asked to attend an informal meeting. Most cases are settled at this meeting. The maintenance officer will try to help the parents come to an agreement. If the parents cannot agree, a Magistrate will have to decide the case.

Enquiry by the Magistrate

- If the Magistrate has to decide the case, both parents must come back on another day to explain their position to the Magistrate.

- It is a crime to lie to the Magistrate or Maintenance Officer or to delay the process.
- It is a crime to threaten or intimidate the complainant.
- It is a crime to ignore a maintenance order or to misuse maintenance money.
- It is a crime for the Magistrate or Maintenance Officer to tell anyone about the details of the case.

For more information, see the
**Legal Assistance Centre's Guide to
the Maintenance Act 9 of 2003.**

Digital versions (PDFs) of LAC publications
are posted on the LAC website:
www.lac.org.na



Legal Assistance Centre
P.O. Box 604, Windhoek
Telephone 061-223356



BASIC FACTS ON THE CHILD MAINTENANCE GRANT AND THE SPECIAL MAINTENANCE GRANT



FACT SHEET

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

What is the child maintenance grant?

Some parents who have children under age 18 may be able to get a small amount of money for maintenance of their children from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. This is called a "child maintenance grant". The child maintenance grant is only paid to parents with very small incomes who meet the requirements listed below.

What is the special maintenance grant?

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare also provides a "special maintenance grant". This grant is paid to parents who have a child under the age of 16 with a disability. (Grants for older children with disabilities are paid by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.)

Who can claim the grants?

The criteria for the child maintenance grant at the beginning of 2012 are as follows:

- The income of the parent who is making the application must not be more than N\$1000 per month.
- One of the following three situations must apply:
 - (1) The other parent was the breadwinner but is now receiving an old age pension or a disability grant.
 - (2) The other parent was the breadwinner but has died.
 - (3) The other parent was the breadwinner but has been sentenced to go to prison for 6 months or more.
- The parent who is making the application OR the child must be a Namibian Citizen or permanent resident.

Any parent who has a child with a disability who is under the age of 16 may apply for the special maintenance grant.

How much is the grant?

The child maintenance grant will be paid for a maximum of six children. At the beginning of 2012 the grant is N\$200 for each child per month.

The special maintenance grant is N\$200 per child per month. You can get both a child maintenance grant and a special maintenance grant if you qualify for both.

What documents do I need?

You must provide the following documents when you make an application for the child maintenance grant:

- Certified copies of the applicant's birth certificate and identity document (ID).
- A certified copy of the child's birth certificate, or written confirmation of the birth, or the child's baptism card.

- A certified copy of the applicant's marriage certificate (if applicable).
- The latest school report if the child is of school-going age (to be submitted each term).
- A certified copy of the other parent's death certificate (if applicable).
- If the other parent is in prison, his/her written confirmation of this as well as a letter from the prison confirming this.
- Proof of the other parent receiving a disability grant or an old-age pension (if applicable).
- If the applicant is employed, a pay slip with the name, phone number and address of the employer.

You must provide the following documents when you make an application for the special maintenance grant:

- A certified copy of the child's full birth certificate.
- Certified copies of at least one parent's ID and birth certificate.
- A medical certificate from a state medical officer or doctor confirming the disability.
- A social background report from a social worker.

We would like to apply for the special maintenance grant. My daughter's baby has a physical disability. I have brought the medical certificate from the doctor.



How do I apply?

You should apply for a grant at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare office closest to your home.

If your application is approved, it can take up to three months from the date you apply to receive the first payment. The money can be paid in cash or into a bank or post office account. If your application is not approved you will be given an explanation why.

What if I do not qualify for the child maintenance grant or the special maintenance grant?

Not all people are eligible for these grants. If the other parent is not helping to support your child, you can apply for a maintenance order from the court saying that the other parent must contribute.

You can contact any office of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for more information on these grants. Some of the rules on child grants will change when the new Child Care and Protection Act comes into force. You can contact any office of the Ministry to find out about this.

If one parent has died, you may be eligible for death benefits from the Social Security Commission. You can ask about this at any office of the Commission. Your child may also be eligible for maintenance from the deceased's estate. You can ask about this at the office of the Master of the High Court in Windhoek (061-2921111), or at the Oshakati regional office (065-2236500), or at your local Magistrate's Court.



What to do if you can't pay the School Development Fund contribution

Raising a child can be expensive. Managing your money will be an important consideration for you and your baby. You might find that the costs of caring for your child will mean that your parents do not have enough money to pay the School Development Fund contribution. But this should not be a reason for you not to return to school. You may be eligible for an exemption.

The Namibian Constitution says that every child has a right to a free primary education. You may also be given an exemption if you are attending secondary school. The Education Act says schools may give exemptions to parents or guardians of learners who cannot afford to pay into the School Development Fund. If you are an orphan, the person caring for you does not have to pay the School Development Fund if there is no provision for your education.

You should not stay away from school because your parents cannot pay the School Development Fund contribution. The law says that all children must go to school from the beginning of the year that they turn 7 until they finish primary school or turn 16 (whichever comes first), unless the Ministry of Education makes an exception for some special reason. If your parents do not send you to school, they can be sent to jail or be made to pay a large fine.

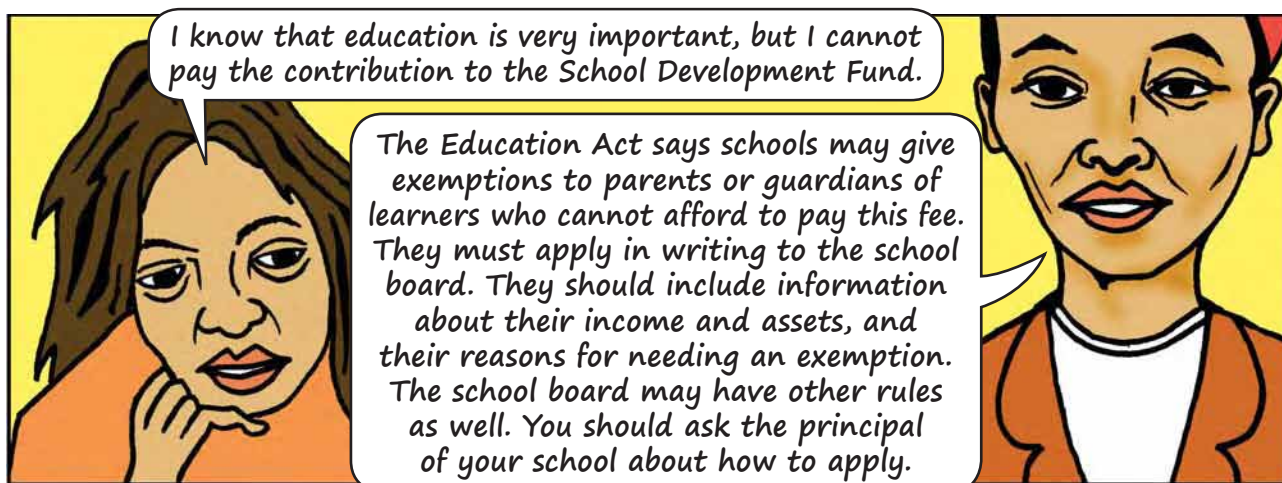


Primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge.

Constitution of Namibia, Article 20(2)

If your parent/s cannot afford to pay the School Development Fund, they can apply for an exemption. They should ask the school board for the application form. They must give the school board the following information:

- your name, grade and date of birth, and the details of any other children they have enrolled at the school;
- the name, grade and date of birth of any other children at other schools, and a sworn statement confirming they are responsible for the School Development Fund contributions and other fees;
- the name, residential address, postal address and alternative contact details of your parent/s;
- the occupation, employer and income of your parent/s;
- proof of income (salary slip or statement made under oath), or a signed statement from a community leader, church leader or any other reliable person who is familiar with the social and financial position of your parent/s;
- information about the assets of your parent/s, including land, vehicles and other belongings;
- whether your parent/s can make a School Development Fund contribution “in kind”, by offering a service instead of payment (for example, your parent/s may be able to do some cleaning or renovation work at the school, or assist with coaching of sports teams); and
- why you need an exemption.



Your school board may also have additional rules about what is required. You can ask your school principal about how to apply.

The school board must inform you of its decision about your application for exemption within 60 days of receiving your application.

If you have problems with the principal or school board when you apply for an exemption, you can ask for help from your village headman, church leader or constituency councillor, or a social worker at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. You can also approach the Regional Director of Education.

BASIC FACTS ON THE COMBATING OF RAPE ACT



FACT SHEET

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

What is rape?

Rape is when a person carries out a “sexual act” under “coercive circumstances.”

Both men and women can be raped.

A “sexual act” can be:

- the insertion of the penis into the vagina, mouth, or anus of another person
- the insertion of any part of the body of a human or animal into the vagina or anus
- the insertion of any object into the vagina or anus
- oral stimulation of the male or female sexual parts
- any other form of stimulation of the male or female sexual parts.

We were kissing and everything was nice, but then I got angry because she wanted me to stop.



If she says “stop”, then you must stop! Otherwise it will be rape.



“Coercive circumstances” means that a person is forced or threatened by:

- physical force or threats
- threats to cause another type of harm
- being unable to escape from a situation
- being unable to understand or prevent the situation, because of being drunk/drugged/asleep/disabled
- the person pretends to be someone else or pretends that what is happening is not actually a sexual act
- more than one person is used to intimidate the person into having sex
- one person is under the age of 14 and the other person is more than 3 years older.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

You may need to be tested for HIV and you may be given PEP. This medicine can help prevent HIV infection. PEP is free if you cannot afford to pay.

Rape within marriage

Marriage does not prevent rape. If a husband forces his wife or a wife forces her husband, it is rape. Rape is rape whenever a person says no or is coerced into sex.



A rape is a rape ... even within a marriage!

What to do if you are raped

Keep the evidence:

- Do not wash yourself.
- Do not change your clothes.
- Do not tidy up the place where the rape happened.
- Wrap any evidence in paper. Do not put it in a plastic bag.

Go to the police or a Woman and Child Protection Unit

You should report the rape to the police so that the person who raped you can be caught. Your information will be kept private. Even the trial is private.

Go to a doctor, clinic or hospital

You should see a doctor or nurse as soon as possible. The doctor can give you medication to prevent HIV infection and sexually transmitted infections, and medication to prevent you from becoming pregnant from the rape.

If you become pregnant from rape

If you become pregnant from rape, you can get a legal abortion. You should get a pregnancy test right away if your next period is late, and you should tell your doctor if you want an abortion.

You will be able to wash as soon as the doctor has finished examining you. We will also need to keep your clothes and your underwear. They might be good evidence in the rape case. You will get them back when the case is over.

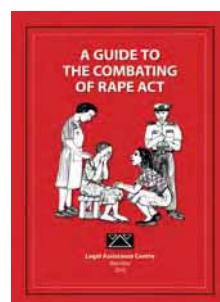


For more information, see the Legal Assistance Centre's Guide to the Combating of Rape Act.

Digital versions (PDFs) of LAC publications are posted on the LAC website:
www.lac.org.na



Legal Assistance Centre
P.O. Box 604, Windhoek
Telephone 061-223356





What to do if you have been sexually assaulted

All of the crimes discussed here can be committed against girls or boys.

Immoral practices

Rape is when a person carries out a “sexual act” under “coercive circumstances”. Rape is committed whenever a sexual act is committed with a boy or a girl under the age of 14 by someone who is more than three years older – even if no force or threats were involved.

It is also a crime (but not necessarily rape) where there is sexual contact with boys and girls under the age of 16 by someone more than three years older – even if no force or threats were involved.

The three-year age gap for these crimes is designed to limit them to situations where one person is taking advantage of another. If two young people of about the same age are engaged in sexual activities, it is not clear that one of them is taking advantage of the other’s immaturity or inexperience.

Incest

Incest is when two people who have a close family relationship, such as father and daughter or brother and sister, have sexual intercourse. If the two people in question are so closely related that they would not be allowed to get married, then sexual intercourse between them would be incest.

Incest is a crime. But some people are forced to have sex with a family member. If this has happened to you, you can seek help by reporting the case to the police, to a social worker or to any other trusted adult. Even if you consented to have sex with the family member, it is still wrong. You should talk to a trusted adult for help and support.

If you are under the age of 16 and the family member is more than three years older than you, then they have committed a crime even if you gave consent. This is because the law says that you are not old enough to give meaningful consent in such circumstances.

Indecent assault

Indecent assault is another kind of sexual assault which is a crime. Indecent assault is when a person touches you without your consent on a private part of your body, such as your breasts or genitals. It can also be an indecent assault if someone touches you *in any way* without



your consent, if the circumstances make you feel that this is part of something indecent. For example, it could be indecent assault to lift up someone's dress or try to pull down someone's pants if this appears to be done with a sexual motive. It is indecent assault if a person *tries* to touch you in an indecent way, even if they do not succeed. It does not matter whether the person who touches you is a family member, a boyfriend or girlfriend or a stranger. The law says that a young child is not able to give meaningful consent to this kind of touching.

Support in laying a charge to the police

Sexual assaults such as rape, incest and indecent assault are serious problems in Namibia. If you have been sexually assaulted, you should receive medical attention immediately to treat any injuries you have. This is the first priority. You should also report the assault at a Woman and Child Protection Unit, or at any police station.

It is a normal reaction after an assault to want to forget about it. But it is important to report it so that you can get the help that you need and so that the person who harmed you can be caught. You can still report a sexual assault to the police even if days, weeks or months have passed.

It takes a lot of courage to report a sexual assault. But if you do not report it, the person cannot be punished. The offender will go free and perhaps harm someone else. Sexual assaults are serious crimes that have serious sentences. For example, the Combating of Rape Act says that the minimum punishment for a rape is 5, 10 or 15 years in prison – depending on the circumstances of the rape. The sentences are even heavier if the same person has previously committed a rape.

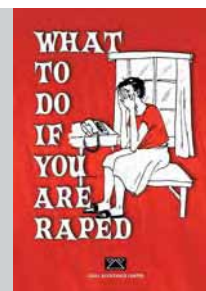
By reporting a sexual assault you are taking control of the situation and sending a message to the perpetrator and society that such behaviour is not acceptable. By reporting the crime, you are taking back control of your life. You are also able to tell your story. You are able to show the abuser that you are not a victim of the crime but a survivor.

The process of making a report to the police can be difficult. You may want to take along a friend or family member to support you. You can ask the police to have a social worker or counsellor there with you. If you are injured or too upset to tell the police your story immediately, ask if you can come back on another day when you are feeling better.

Some people are afraid to report a sexual assault because they do not want people in the community to know about it. If you are under the age of 18, the law protects your privacy. It is illegal for newspapers, radio or television to publish or broadcast information that will reveal your identity. It is also illegal to reveal the identity of anyone who has been raped, no matter what their age.

See the Legal Assistance Centre publication *What to do if you are raped* for more information. You can get a copy from the Legal Assistance Centre. It is also on the Legal Assistance Centre website: www.lac.org.na.

(This publication, and other Legal Assistance Centre publications on rape, are available in English, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and Otjiherero.)





Abortion

What is an abortion?

An abortion is a procedure to end a pregnancy in its early stages. The embryo or foetus is removed from the body. An abortion is usually done through surgery or with medication. Only a licenced medical practitioner should perform an abortion. It can be very dangerous to perform an abortion by yourself. You could kill or damage yourself, or permanently damage but not remove the embryo or fetus.

When is abortion allowed?

Abortions are permitted in limited circumstances in Namibia. You can have a legal abortion if:

- your life is in danger;
- the pregnancy may cause serious harm to your physical or mental health;
- there is a strong risk that the child will have a serious mental or physical problem;
- the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest (incest is sexual intercourse with a very close relative such as a father or brother); or
- the pregnancy is the result of sexual intercourse with someone who has a mental disorder so severe that she did not understand what she was doing.

How can I get an abortion?

The steps for getting permission for a legal abortion depend on the reason for the abortion. The first step is to see a doctor. Any doctor should be able to help you follow the other steps.

You will need certificates from two doctors for the abortion to be granted. One of the doctors must work for the state. If the woman's mental health is involved, one of the doctors must be a state psychiatrist. The doctors who give the certificates cannot perform the abortion.

If the abortion is because of rape or incest, you will also need a certificate from a magistrate. You do not have to lay a charge of rape or incest with the police in order to get permission for an abortion if you have a good reason why you have not gone to the police. However if you have not laid a charge with the police, it will be more difficult to get permission for the abortion.

Can I get an abortion any other way?

If an abortion is performed without permission, both the doctor and the woman can be found guilty of a crime. Illegal abortions that are done secretly can be very dangerous. Legal abortions are more widely available in South Africa. Some people travel to South Africa to have an abortion.

If you are considering an abortion, you should speak to a doctor for more information. You may also want to speak to a social worker, pastor or another person who can give you information.



Adoption and foster care

What is foster care?

Foster care is when a person outside the family takes care of a child for a temporary period until the child can either return home or be placed for adoption. Sometimes a child will live in foster care for many years, possibly even until the child becomes an adult.

When you place your child in foster care, you are still the parent of your child. You still have legal rights and responsibilities towards your child. However you will not make the day-to-day decisions about the care of your child.

If you would like to put your child into foster care you should contact a social worker at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The social worker will give you more information. The social worker will help you decide if foster care is the right option for you and your baby.

If you decide on foster care, the social worker will take your case to a magistrate at the children's court after your child is born. If the magistrate is satisfied that foster care will be in the best interests of your child, the court will make a foster care order. The order will explain how the responsibilities for your child will be divided between you and the foster parents. The order may say when you can visit your child. The order will say how long your child will live with the foster parents before the case is reviewed. Your child will then go to live with the foster parents. The court will re-examine the situation from time to time, so see if the arrangement continues to be in your child's best interests.

If you decide at a later stage that you would like to take care of your child yourself, you can ask the court to cancel the foster care order. The social worker will help decide if you are ready.

If you and the other parent are not married and you want to place your child in foster care, the parent who is the guardian of the child must give permission. The other parent does not have to give permission. If you are married, because married parents have equal guardianship over their children, this means that one parent can give permission on behalf of you both.

Foster parents can apply to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for a grant. This will help them to pay for the care of your child. As of 2012, the foster care grant is N\$200 per child per month.



Foster care is when another family cares for your child on a temporary basis. This may be for just a few weeks or for a longer time. Sometimes foster parents care for a foster child for many years.



What is kinship care?

Kinship care is when a relative or a close family friend takes care of the child for a temporary period until the child can either return home or be placed for adoption. If a relative or close family friend is caring for your child and wants to access the foster care grant, you must go through the same process as for placing your child in foster care with a stranger. This requirement will probably change in future when the Child Care and Protection Act comes into force.

What is adoption?

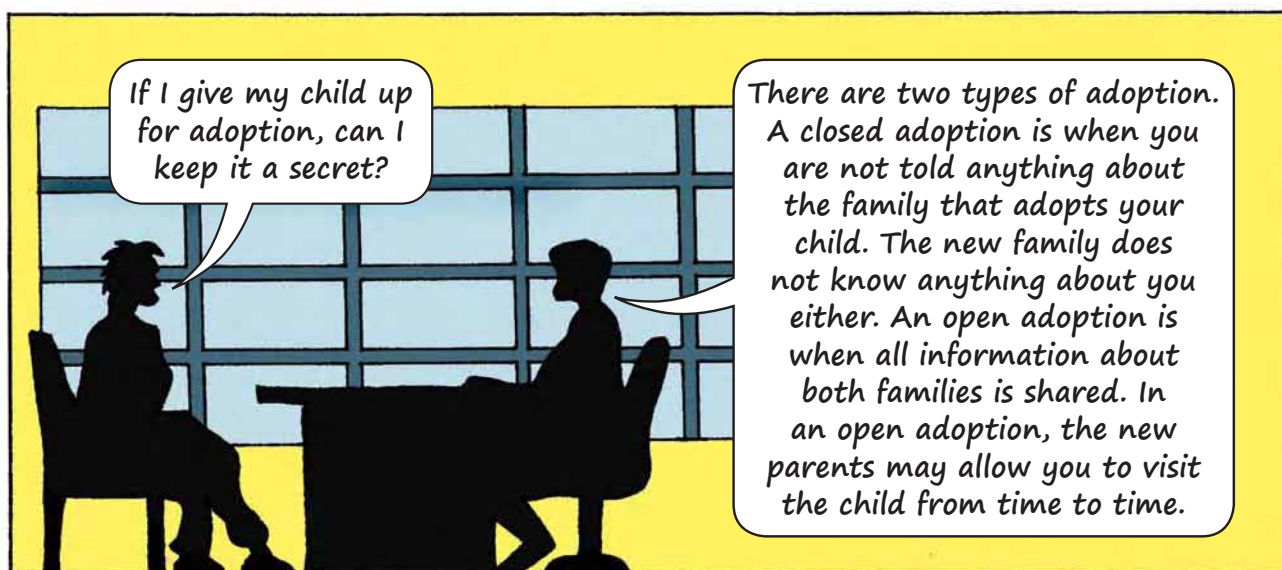
Adoption is when a person takes care of a child on a permanent basis. When you give your child up for adoption, you will no longer be the parent of the child. You will not have any rights or responsibilities towards the child.

If you would like to give your child up for adoption, you should contact a social worker at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The social worker will give you more information. The social worker will talk to you to help you decide if adoption is the right option for you and your baby.

You can give final consent to the adoption only after your baby is born. After your baby is born, the social worker will take your case to a magistrate at the children's court. If the magistrate is satisfied that adoption will be in the best interests of your child, the court will make an order for adoption.

Both parents must normally give permission for their baby to be adopted, even if they are not married. Sometimes the court will say that permission from both parents is not required. This may be if one parent cannot be found or is unreasonably refusing to give permission.

You can contact the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for more information on foster care and adoption. You can also speak to a private social worker about these options.



Health (10 minutes)

The family has the primary duty to monitor the pregnant learner's health. The school should be aware of the status of the child's health. In cases where the family is not supporting the learner, the school should assist the learner to access the healthcare services that she needs.

Healthcare

- The family should:
 - Ensure that the pregnant learner/learner mother & infant regularly visit a healthcare provider
 - Support and monitor the child's health and progress
 - Keep the school informed about the child's health and progress
- The learner can but does not have to provide reports about her health to the Principal



Education before giving birth (15 minutes)

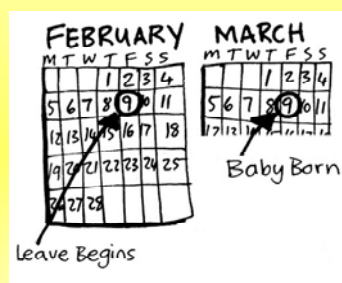
The policy states that a pregnant learner may choose to continue her education at school until 4 weeks before her expected due date or take a leave of absence from an earlier date if this is advised by a health care provider on medical grounds, or if she feels unable or unwilling to continue attending school during any stage of pregnancy.

During the consultations, some teachers were concerned about having a pregnant learner on the school premises. The policy states that if the learner wishes to stay in school beyond 26 weeks (6 months) of pregnancy, she must provide the school with a letter from a healthcare provider confirming that her health does not prevent her from attending school. This provision means that the school does not have the burden of deciding whether or not the pregnant learner is healthy enough to be in school – this is the role of a healthcare provider.

The viewpoints of the parents/primary caregiver of the learner and the school should be considered when deciding how long it is advisable for the learner to continue at school if appropriate. If no medical certificate is provided, the school may require the pregnant learner to leave school at an earlier date. This policy supersedes any other rules on absence. The existing rule which mandates that learners are removed from the school register after any period of absence greater than 30 days would otherwise conflict with this policy provision.

Attending school during pregnancy

- A pregnant learner may attend until 4 weeks before the birth
- A pregnant learner might choose to take leave from school much sooner
- The learner, parents or caregiver and school should discuss how long the learner will attend school
- The learner must provide a health certificate if she stays in school past the 26 week (6 months) of pregnancy
 - The school can request a letter confirming the due date
 - If the learner does not provide this information the school may ask her to take a leave of absence



What would you advise?

Time: 35 minutes (6 minutes per scenario)

Materials: None

Some people think that there should be a set rule for when a pregnant learner should stop attending school and when she can re-enter. But the reality is much more complicated. Ask the participants to discuss what advice they would give to learners in the following situations. The point of this exercise is to illustrate how different learners will have different needs.

What would you advise?

1. A learner due to give birth in December
2. A learner due to give birth in January
3. A Grade 10 learner due to give birth in February
4. A Grade 7 learner due to give birth in September
5. A Grade 12 learner due to give birth in April. She has supportive parents and is in the top 5% of her class
6. A Grade 12 learner due to give birth in April. She is not yet sure who will care for the child and she was struggling with her grades even before she became pregnant.



Education before giving birth continued (15 minutes)

A pregnant learner may be reluctant to go to school because she is afraid of being teased. Teachers should help ensure that the pregnant learner is not bullied or excluded. The General Rules of Conduct for Learners say that all learners must respect the dignity, person and property of teachers and learners, and learners must not harm other learners or behave in a disgraceful, improper or indecent manner towards other learners. Learners who are guilty of misconduct can be disciplined by the school after a disciplinary hearing. Possible punishment includes a reprimand, additional tasks relating to the contravention, a consultation with the learner's parents, written warnings, suspension or expulsion. Teachers should ensure that learners are aware of these rules and the consequences of ignoring them.

Supporting a pregnant learner

- A pregnant learner may be worried about being teased or bullied
- The General Rules of Conduct for Learners prohibit bullying
- Teachers should ensure that learners are aware of these rules and the consequences of ignoring them



Additional resources



The Legal Assistance Centre has produced a comic on the school codes of conduct. You could give the participants a copy of the comic if possible.

Flexibility (15 minutes)

The school shall excuse pregnant learners and learner-parents from extra-curricular activities and physical training for practical or medical reasons, if required. The learner must provide a letter or certificate from his or her parents/primary caregiver or healthcare provider.

The school shall also be tolerant of occasional absences by pregnant learners and learner-parents, to give them every opportunity to complete their courses without neglecting their health or parenting responsibilities. The learner has a responsibility to keep the school informed if a situation arises necessitating repeated absences from school.

If the Principal thinks that the pregnant learner or learner-parent is taking off a disproportionate amount of time, the support teacher should arrange a meeting with the learner, and with the parents and/or primary caregiver if necessary, to discuss whether the learner should be granted a leave of absence until she is ready to return.

Flexibility

- Excuse pregnant learners/learner parents from extra-curricular activities and physical training as appropriate
- Be tolerant of reasonable absences from school
- The learner has a duty to maintain contact with the school and provide relevant supporting information to be excused/to explain absences



How flexible should the school be?

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: None

Ask the participants the following questions and discuss how the policy answers them.

1. What should the pregnant learner wear to school if she cannot fit into her school uniform?

Answer: The policy does not contain any rules about what the learner should wear. The Principal should discuss with the learner and her family the most suitable option according to the situation.

2. What if a pregnant learner has an accident on the school premises and loses the baby?

Answer: The school may only allow a learner to attend school beyond 26 weeks of pregnancy if she has a letter from a healthcare provider confirming that her health does not prevent her from attending school. She may not stay in school beyond 36 weeks of pregnancy. If she has an accident whilst on the school premises, the situation is the same as if any other learner has an accident at school and suffers an injury. As discussed, the pregnant-learner should be excused from any activities that may not be suitable for her, such as strenuous physical activity.

3. What if the learner goes into labour whilst at school?

Answer: The policy states that the pregnant learner may not stay in school beyond 36 weeks of pregnancy (up to 4 weeks before the expected due date). Most pregnant women do not go into labour before this time. If the learner wishes to stay in school beyond 26 weeks (6 months) of pregnancy, she must provide the school with a letter from a healthcare provider confirming that her health does not need to prevent her from attending school. Therefore it is unlikely that the learner will go into labour whilst at school. If she does, this should be handled like any other unexpected medical emergency.

4. The policy says that a pregnant learner can sit her examinations. If the pregnant learner is 38 weeks pregnant, can she still sit her examinations?

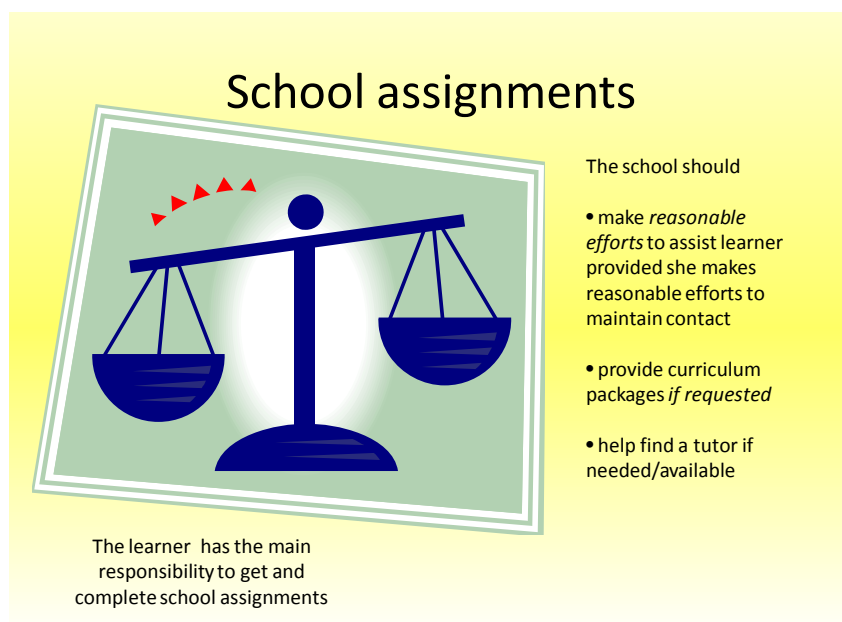
Answer: Yes she can. But the school can ask the learner to provide a letter from a healthcare

provider if they have concerns about her health. The school should also ensure that the learner is aware of her options to retake her examinations so that she does not feel pressurised to take her exams if she is not able to, or if she goes into labour whilst sitting the exams.

School assignments (15 minutes)

The pregnant learner/learner mother should take steps to ensure that she receives her class tasks and assignments during the agreed period of absence from school and that all completed tasks and assignments are returned to the school for assessment.

The learner should also ensure that she follows the curriculum as closely as possible and obtains the necessary information to complete her assignments successfully. The school should make all reasonable efforts to assist in the provision of this information, as long as the learner makes reasonable efforts to regularly collect assignments and return completed work for assessment.



Background information: What if the learner does not want to return to school?

If the learner does not want to return to school, the school should support learner parent to locate other suitable options for completing their education or for locating training which could increase their future employment prospects. For example, the learner could enrol in Namcol or Tucsín.

Namcol switchboard: (061) 320 5111

Tucsín switchboard: (061) 22 48 40

Education after birth (30 minutes)

A learner may return to school once a set of criteria are met. Some learners may choose to return to school fairly soon after giving birth. Other learners may choose to take a longer leave of absence. Teachers should maintain an open mind and remember that each learner is different. It is important that the learner is given the opportunity to decide and try what is best for her, in consultation with her parents/caregiver and the school.

Some teachers think that because a learner has now had a baby she should now act like an adult. Whilst the learner does now have new responsibilities, she is still also a learner. The school should take a supportive role, helping the learner to understand her responsibilities.

Returning to school

- Some learners may choose to return to school fairly soon after giving birth
- Other learners may choose to take a longer leave of absence
- Teachers should remember that each learner is different



The criteria that must be met before a learner can return to school are as follows:

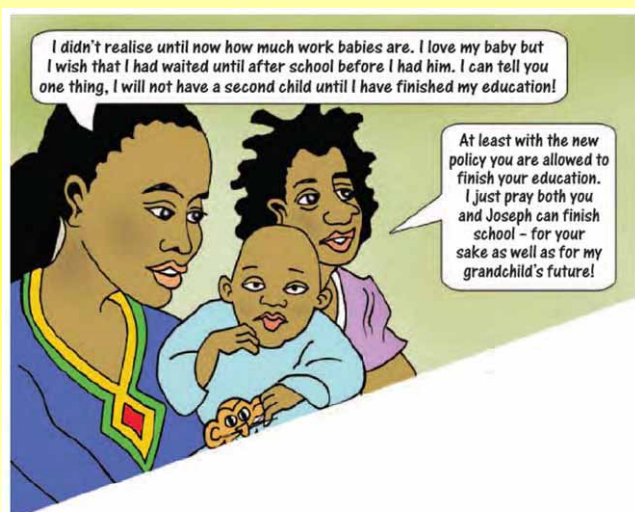
Education after birth



- A learner-mother may return to school if:
 - a social worker (or the Principal) is satisfied that the infant will be cared for by a responsible adult
 - a health care provider provides a statement that the learner-parent is in a suitable state of health and wellbeing
 - a health care provider provides a statement that the infant is in a suitable state of health and wellbeing
 - the learner-parent and her parents, primary caretaker or guardian provide a signed statement on how the infant will be cared for and agree to maintain communication with the school.

A learner may take up to one year's absence from school and the school must keep her place open for her, provided that she maintains contact with the school.

Extended leave



- A learner-mother may choose to take up to one year of leave counted from the date she left school before the birth
- Learner must maintain clear communication with the school regarding the proposed date of return
- Her place will be kept open for her
 - Does not apply if the learner will change schools
- A learner-mother could also choose to take longer leave, but then must re-apply as her place will not be kept open for her

My view your view

Time: 45 minutes (15 minutes group work, 10 minutes to read each story, 10 minutes discussion time)

Materials: Paper and pen

Split the group in half. Give each group their assignment. Do not let the other group hear the assignment.

Ask one group to write a story about a lioness in Etosha National Park. There is a drought and there is very little food. She must catch food to feed her two lion cubs or they will die.

Ask the second group to write a story about a springbok living in Etosha National Park. There is a drought and the lions are very hungry. The springbok must try to avoid being caught by a lioness.

Ask the groups to read out their story. Ask them to discuss how they felt sorry for each animal even though for the lions to survive they must eat the springbok but for the springbok to survive, the lions must starve.

The purpose of this discussion is to illustrate how there can be two very different feelings about the same situation. Teachers may feel very differently about how a learner mother will cope with looking after a child compared to how the learner mother will feel. Pregnancy, birth and returning to school will be very demanding on a learner. However whilst the teachers may realise this, the learner may be confident in her ability to juggle her new responsibilities. Teachers should support and encourage a learner to learn how to deal with her new responsibilities. For example some learners may choose to return to school but then may apply for a leave of absence when they realise that they cannot balance all of the demands in their life. Other learners may surprise the teachers in their ability to meet all of the demands placed on them.

Background information

There is an existing rule which says that learners must be removed from the school register if they are absent for more than 30 days. Does this mean that a learner-mother must be removed from the register if she is absent for more than 30 days?

Answer: No, this policy overrides the 30-day rule. A pregnant learner may stay registered with the school for up to one calendar year from the time that she took a leave of absence provided she maintains contact with the school.

What happens if the learner does not maintain contact with the school and the school does not know when the learner intends to return?

Answer: If the learner does not keep the school informed of her intended date of return, the school is not obliged to reserve her place and she will have to reapply for admission to the school.

What if the learner says that she intends to return three months after the birth but she then changes her mind and says that she will return six months after the birth?

Answer: If the learner or her family have informed the school about this change then the learner is maintaining clear communication with the school. The school should keep a place open for the learner for six months unless it is longer than one year since she began her leave of absence.

If the learner is in the last year of primary school and will be progressing to a new school when she returns, does the new school have to guarantee a place for her?

Answer: No, the requirement that a place will be reserved applies only if the learner will be returning to the same school. For example, if a learner in her final year of primary school has passed her exams and been promoted during her absence, this policy will not require that a place be reserved for her at a secondary school. In such a case, she would be expected to apply to the secondary school when she is ready to resume her studies in the same manner as other learners. However if the learner is attending a combined primary and secondary school, the school will hold her place open regardless of the grade she is in.

Background information:

Maternity leave for adults compared to time away from school for learner parents

An adult who has been working for at least 6 months in a row is entitled to maternity leave and maternity benefits. She is entitled to take 4 weeks of maternity leave before her expected due date and 8 weeks after the delivery of the baby. Every woman must get at least 12 weeks of maternity leave in total. Some people in Namibia think that this is too short. For example the Legal Assistance Centre is lobbying the government to extend maternity leave to 6 months after the birth of the child. However the Legal Assistance Centre also strongly supports the right of the learner to choose when the time is right for her to return to school, rather than to be given a set amount of time off. This is because the needs of adults and learners are very different. Ask the participants if they can think of reasons why this might be.

You can discuss the following points with the participants:

- A learner who has is forced to leave school for an extended period of time may not return. This may mean that she lacks the qualifications to get a job that will allow her to support herself and her child. The employer of an adult who goes on maternity leave must hold her place open. Therefore the time on leave will not affect her ability to support herself and her child.
- Learners who attend school more likely to delay subsequent pregnancies, allowing them to finish their education. This issue does not apply to adult mothers.
- Some pregnant learners may only need to complete a few more months of school before they reach the stage of education that they need. It does not make sense to force a learner to take an extended amount of leave in such scenarios. Again this issue does not affect adult mothers.

Special circumstances (15 minutes)

There may be some special situations that are not addressed in detail by the policy. For example, in rare cases the baby might die. In other cases the baby might be given up for adoption, or there may be some other unusual situation. In such cases the Principal can follow the standard procedure outlined in the policy as appropriate for the situation. The Principal can also refer the matter to the Regional Director for guidance.

Special circumstances

- Special provisions can be made for the learner if the infant is given up for adoption or if the infant dies
- The Principal can refer to the Regional Director for guidance if needed

Adoption and foster care

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: Information package/handouts



The information package contains information about giving a child up for adoption and foster care. Refer the participants to these pages in the booklet or give them the handout on the following page. Discuss the following questions:

Questions

- (1) What is the difference between foster care and adoption?
- (2) Can a learner agree to give her baby up for adoption before the birth?
- (3) If a learner mother gives her baby up for adoption, does she have to give the new parents information about herself?



Adoption and foster care

What is foster care?

Foster care is when a person outside the family takes care of a child for a temporary period until the child can either return home or be placed for adoption. Sometimes a child will live in foster care for many years, possibly even until the child becomes an adult.

When you place your child in foster care, you are still the parent of your child. You still have legal rights and responsibilities towards your child. However you will not make the day-to-day decisions about the care of your child.

If you would like to put your child into foster care you should contact a social worker at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The social worker will give you more information. The social worker will help you decide if foster care is the right option for you and your baby.

If you decide on foster care, the social worker will take your case to a magistrate at the children's court after your child is born. If the magistrate is satisfied that foster care will be in the best interests of your child, the court will make a foster care order. The order will explain how the responsibilities for your child will be divided between you and the foster parents. The order may say when you can visit your child. The order will say how long your child will live with the foster parents before the case is reviewed. Your child will then go to live with the foster parents. The court will re-examine the situation from time to time, so see if the arrangement continues to be in your child's best interests.

If you decide at a later stage that you would like to take care of your child yourself, you can ask the court to cancel the foster care order. The social worker will help decide if you are ready.

If you and the other parent are not married and you want to place your child in foster care, the parent who is the guardian of the child must give permission. The other parent does not have to give permission. If you are married, because married parents have equal guardianship over their children, this means that one parent can give permission on behalf of you both.

Foster parents can apply to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for a grant. This will help them to pay for the care of your child. As of 2012, the foster care grant is N\$200 per child per month.



Foster care is when another family cares for your child on a temporary basis. This may be for just a few weeks or for a longer time. Sometimes foster parents care for a foster child for many years.



What is kinship care?

Kinship care is when a relative or a close family friend takes care of the child for a temporary period until the child can either return home or be placed for adoption. If a relative or close family friend is caring for your child and wants to access the foster care grant, you must go through the same process as for placing your child in foster care with a stranger. This requirement will probably change in future when the Child Care and Protection Act comes into force.

What is adoption?

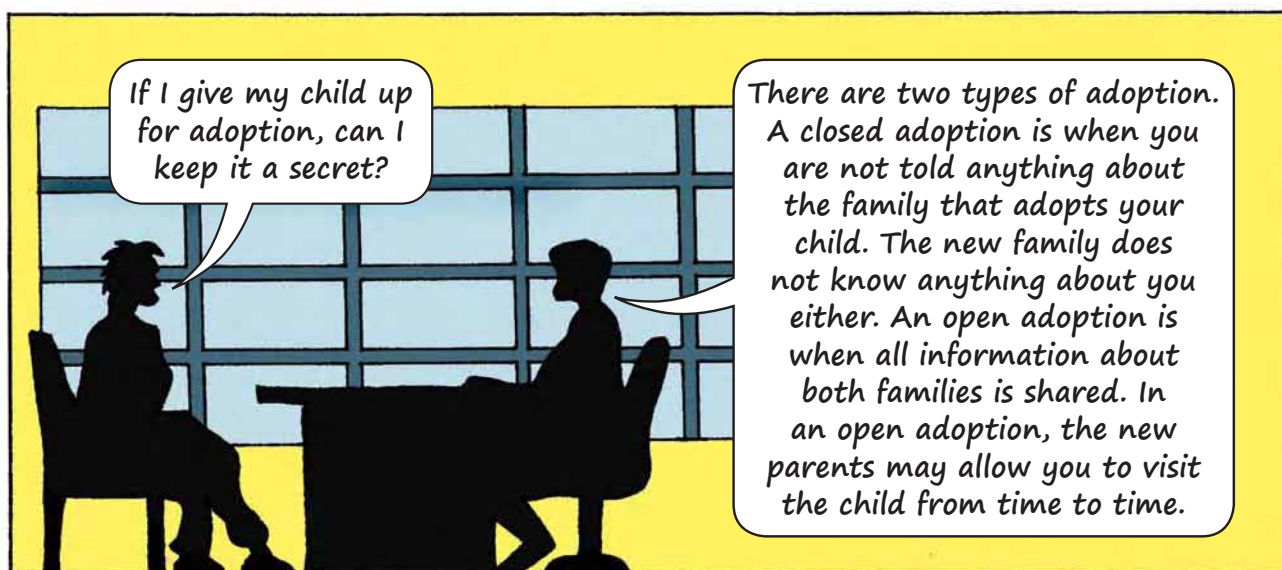
Adoption is when a person takes care of a child on a permanent basis. When you give your child up for adoption, you will no longer be the parent of the child. You will not have any rights or responsibilities towards the child.

If you would like to give your child up for adoption, you should contact a social worker at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The social worker will give you more information. The social worker will talk to you to help you decide if adoption is the right option for you and your baby.

You can give final consent to the adoption only after your baby is born. After your baby is born, the social worker will take your case to a magistrate at the children's court. If the magistrate is satisfied that adoption will be in the best interests of your child, the court will make an order for adoption.

Both parents must normally give permission for their baby to be adopted, even if they are not married. Sometimes the court will say that permission from both parents is not required. This may be if one parent cannot be found or is unreasonably refusing to give permission.

You can contact the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for more information on foster care and adoption. You can also speak to a private social worker about these options.



Background information: Bereavement counselling

The Ministry of Education also has a training manual on bereavement counselling. The trainer should refer to this manual if he/she would like to conduct a session on counselling. Some of the information contained in this manual is given below:

Stage of grief

Kubler-Ross describes five stages that people confronted with death have to face. The stages of mourning are universal and are experienced by people from all walks of life. There are 5 stages of normal grief and we often move between stages before achieving more peaceful acceptance of death. Throughout every stage a common thread of hope emerges.

Stage 1: Denial and isolation

The first reaction we learn about terminal illness or death of a loved one is to deny the reality of the situation. We know what happened but our feelings become shut down and out of reach. We try to deny the impact of the loss in an effort to make it feel less threatening and easiest to manage. *Example: "It can't be true, Not me!"*

Stage 2: Anger

As the effects of denial and isolation begin to wear, reality and its pain returns. We are confused and the intense emotions are expressed as anger, despair or disappointment. Anger could be directed at the doctor, the cause of the accident, the deceased, God etc. These reactions are normal and should be recognised as such.

Stage 3: Bargaining.

The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability is often a need to regain control. Secretly, we make a deal with God in an attempt to protect us from the painful reality. *Example: "If only we had sought medical attention sooner".*

Stage 4: Depression

Two types of depression are associated with mourning: a) It is accompanied by a lot of sadness and regret. We worry about the practical implications related to the loss, like cost of

treatment or burial. Reassurance like a bit of helpful cooperation or a few kind words will make a person feel much better. B) More private depression. Usually what the person will need is a hug or an affectionate touch.

Stage 5: Acceptance

The bereaved person begins accepting the reality of their situation, like seeing beauty in ashes and opportunities in difficulties. We begin to put the loss into perspective and get closer to finding new meaning and purpose in our life. Acceptance brings healing, upliftment and hope for the future. Example “life still has something to offer me”.

The school should also consider the needs of other learners at the school as they may also be emotionally affected by a death or other negative outcome.

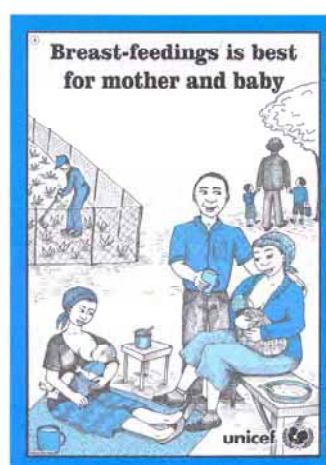
See the Bereavement Counselling manual for more information.

Breastfeeding and expressing breast milk (10 minutes)

The National Agenda for Children states that the government supports six months exclusive breastfeeding. The policy states that the support person should discuss with the learner the advantages and disadvantages of breastfeeding. The school should help the learner to implement the most suitable feeding option. If the learner is willing and able to breastfeed, the school should see how the learner can be supported to exclusively breastfeed for six months. For example in some cases the learner may live close enough to school to return home at break times to feed her baby. In other cases the learner may choose to express milk and she may need a private place to do so.

Breast-feeding and expressing breast milk

- The support person should inform the learner of the advantages and disadvantage of breastfeeding
- The learner-mother may implement the agreed options, as far as home and school facilities permit.



What are the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months?

Time: 30 minutes (15 minutes open discussion, 15 minutes discussion of facts)

Materials: Information package/handouts



Ask the participants to discuss the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for six months. You can find the answers to this on the packages in the information package (included as handouts on the following pages). Give the participant the handout to take home.



Breastfeeding

Babies who are breastfed are generally healthier and grow better than babies who are fed formula milk. The World Health Organisation and the Government of Namibia recommend that babies should be fed exclusively on breast milk for the first six months after birth. Until the age of six months, babies get all the nutrients they need from breast milk. You should continue to give your baby breast milk after this time. Some people feed their baby breast milk for up to two years.

There is a separate factsheet on preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV. It has information on breastfeeding if you are HIV positive.

EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING is when you only give breast milk to your baby. Usually you will not need to give your baby any other milk, food or liquid until your baby is six months old. Sometimes you will need to give a baby under the age of six months medicine – but you should give a baby medicine only after discussing it with your healthcare provider because some medicines are not safe for babies.



A baby under the age of six months does not need water, even if the weather is hot. I know my baby is getting enough liquid because I breastfeed her whenever she wants to feed.

There are many reasons why breast milk is the healthiest option for your baby:

1. **Breast milk contains antibodies.** These are substances produced by the body that will help to protect your baby from illness. If you have a healthy baby you will not have to take so much time off school to care for an ill child. You will also have to visit the clinic less, which will save you money and time.
2. **Breast milk is free.** It is cheaper, safer, cleaner and faster than bottle feeding.
3. Breast milk helps to **prevent the development of allergies.**
4. Babies who are breastfed have a **lower risk of developing health problems** such as obesity, health disease, high blood pressure and some kinds of diabetes later in life.

Some people do not want to breastfeed because they think it will ruin their breasts. This is a myth. Some people do not want to breastfeed because they think it means they will have to stay at home all the time. In the beginning you will need to feed your baby frequently, but as your baby grows, the time between feeds will get longer.

Giving your baby food other than breast milk too soon can make your baby sick or interfere with your baby's growth and development. A baby's body is still developing. If you give solid food to your baby too soon, your baby's stomach will not be able to cope with this new type of food.

Breastfeeding is also better for the mother. Breastfeeding immediately after birth helps to reduce bleeding from your uterus. Breastfeeding also delays the start of ovulation and menstruation, which will help stop you from becoming pregnant again right away – but note that you can still get pregnant if you are breastfeeding. If you are going to have sex you should speak to your healthcare provider about family planning. Breastfeeding also helps you lose weight from the pregnancy and helps protect against breast and ovarian cancer. Breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer affecting women in Namibia.

Starting to breastfeed

You should breastfeed your baby within half an hour of the birth. The sooner you start to feed your baby, the sooner your body will start to produce more milk. In the first few days, the milk you produce is called colostrum. Colostrum will look different from the milk which your body will produce later (it is a yellow colour and thicker). This milk is very rich in nutrients and helps protect your baby from infection. Over time the milk your body produces changes according to the needs of your baby.

Your baby's risk of death will double if you do not start breastfeeding within 24 hours after the birth.

If you stop feeding your baby or give your baby other milk, your body will produce less and less milk. In contrast, the more you feed your baby, the more milk your body will produce. Try to feed your baby whenever he or she wants to feed. This may be up to 8-12 times during the day and night.

How to breastfeed

Nearly all mothers can breastfeed successfully. But it can be difficult at first. Sometimes it hurts, particularly if your baby does not latch on properly. You may want to ask someone to help you at first. Even if it is difficult in the beginning, try not to give up. Breast milk is the best food you can give your child.

If you struggle to breastfeed your baby, ask someone for help. Breastfeeding should not be difficult. Once you know how to do it properly, you should be able to breastfeed your baby successfully.

Allow your baby to feed from one breast until he or she has had enough. Offer your baby the other breast. Feed your baby until he or she looks satisfied. Next time you feed your baby, start with the breast your baby finished on last time.

Is my baby getting enough milk?

If your baby is putting on weight, then your baby is getting enough milk. If you are worried about whether your baby is growing enough, you should see a nurse or doctor. You may need someone to show you how your baby can suckle more effectively. Tiredness, stress and hunger can affect your milk production. It is important that you look after your own health.

Your baby will also have growth spurts. You will have to feed your baby more often during these times. This is normal.

Breastfeeding your baby when you are at school

If you return to school when you are still breastfeeding, you can discuss with the school how you can feed your baby. If you live close by, you may be able to return home to breastfeed your baby during break times. Or a family member may be able to bring your baby to school so that you can breastfeed your baby in a private place during break times. Or you may be able to express milk at school. The policy says you can discuss how you would like to feed your baby and you may implement the agreed options, as far as home and school facilities permit.

My family and friends advised me to give my four-month-old baby solid food. But I know that until the age of six months, babies get all the nutrients they need from breast milk.



Expressing milk

Expressing milk is when you take the milk from your breast and put it into a cup or other container. If you cannot breastfeed your baby, you can express milk and feed your baby your breast milk from a cup or a bottle. Expressing milk is useful if you cannot be with your baby all of the time, for example if you have gone back to school. You may be able to express breast milk whilst you are at school and store it in a safe place and give it to your baby later in the day. Or a family member or friend may be able to collect the milk and take it to your baby. If you are away from your baby for a long time you should express milk even if you are not going to use it. This will mean that your body continues to produce breast milk for when you are with your baby.

If you express milk, you should use a clean container and store it in the fridge or at room temperature for up to eight hours. (Room temperature is 20-23°C but remember that it is often hotter than this in Namibia). You or someone else can give the milk to your baby from a clean cup or a sterilised bottle. You should sterilise bottles because milk can get trapped in the feeding teat and this can be hard to clean; it is easier to clean a cup which is why a cup does not have to be sterilised.

Feeding your baby after six months

When your baby is around six months of age you can start to introduce other foods. You should still continue to give your baby breast milk. The World Health Organisation recommends that babies should be breastfed for up to 2 years. This is because breast milk continues to be an important source of energy, nutrition and protection from illness for your baby. If you are HIV positive it is recommended that you stop breastfeeding around 12 months.

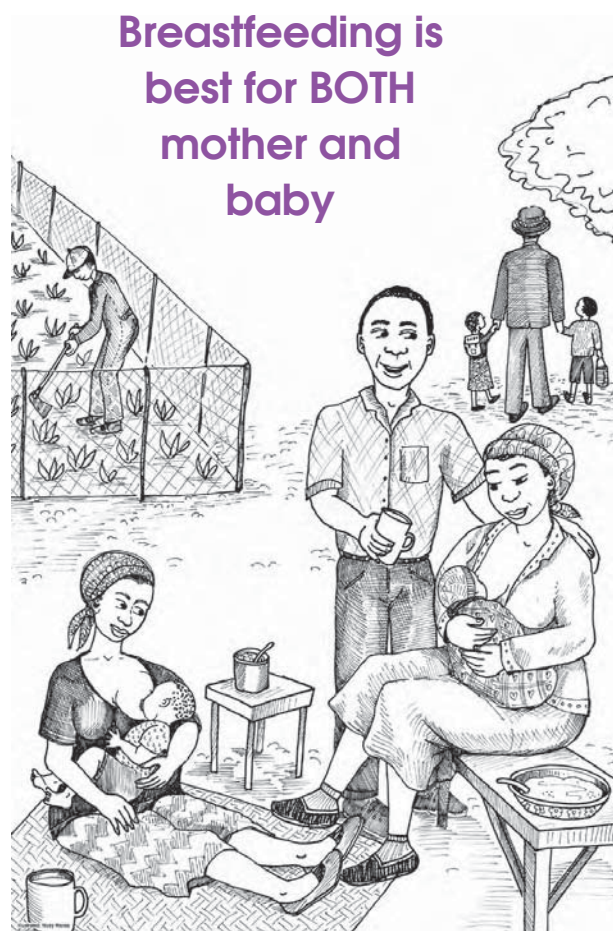
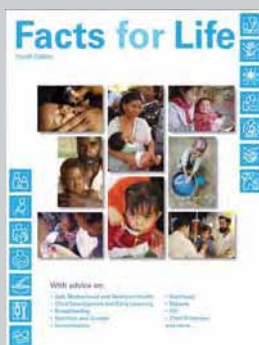
Choosing not to breastfeed

There may be a medical or other reason why you cannot breastfeed your baby straight away, or at all. If you give your baby something other than breast milk, you must make sure that your baby does not get sick. Not all people in Namibia have access to clean water. Dirty water can make your baby sick or get diarrhoea. The main cause of death for children under five is diarrhoea. If you choose to use formula milk it is important that you have access to clean water. You should use cool boiled water for your baby. You must also make sure that you are able to keep all the utensils that you use clean. If you are using bottles you must be sure that they are thoroughly clean. Many people use special sterilising tablets when washing the bottles. If you are not able to sterilise your utensils you can talk to your healthcare provider about how to make sure that you keep everything clean and how to use a cup to feed your baby.

A message for teachers and family members

The World Health Organisation recommends that babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life. The Government of Namibia supports this recommendation. However many women in Namibia do not exclusively breastfeed their baby for six months. A learner-mother may feel pressurised not to breastfeed her baby for six months even though there are many health benefits for her and her baby. School staff and family members should encourage a learner-mother to breastfeed for as long as possible, even if they did not or do not breastfeed their own children for very long.

You can contact your nearest clinic or hospital, or the Ministry of Health and Social Services, for more information on breastfeeding. You can also talk to a family member or friend, a community focal point or someone at your nearest multipurpose youth centre. You can also contact NAPPA (Namibia Planned Parenthood Association) for more information. You can also find useful information in the international publication *Facts of Life: Fourth Edition* available at www.factsforlifeglobal.org. Teachers and other service providers may also want to refer to the Ministry of Health and Social Services *National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding 2011*.



Examinations (10 minutes)

A girl who has left school because of pregnancy may write her examinations if she has met the examination requirements and if she feels that she is ready, after consultation with the school, regardless of whether or not she is attending school at the time of the examinations. If she does not feel comfortable to write in the same room as other candidates, the school may arrange for a separate venue and invigilator, but she or her family will have to carry any additional costs which the school incurs.

Examinations

- A pregnant learner or learner mother may sit her examinations at any time, without the need for letters or review procedures
- A learner may sit her examinations in another room if she feels more comfortable but her family must cover any costs



Background information

You discussed this question with the participants earlier in the session. Remind them of the answer if needed.

The policy says that a pregnant learner can sit her examinations. If the pregnant learner is 38 weeks pregnant, can she still sit her examinations?

Answer: Yes she can. But the school can ask the learner to provide a letter from a healthcare provider if they have concerns about her health. The school should also ensure that the learner is aware of her options to retake her examinations so that she does not feel pressurised to take her exams if she is not able to, or if she goes into labour whilst sitting the exams.

Boarders (10 minutes)

If the girl in question is a boarder in a government school hostel, she shall be entitled to continue in the hostel for the period that she is attending school both before and after giving birth under the same conditions that would have applied had she not become pregnant, as long as she is in good health. However she shall not be allowed to have the baby board with her. The learner shall not be permitted to continue in the hostel if she is in need of medical care which cannot be provided in the hostel. The family should find alternative options for accommodation if staying in the hostel is not possible for health reasons. The support person should assist the learner with any problems arising at the hostel as necessary.

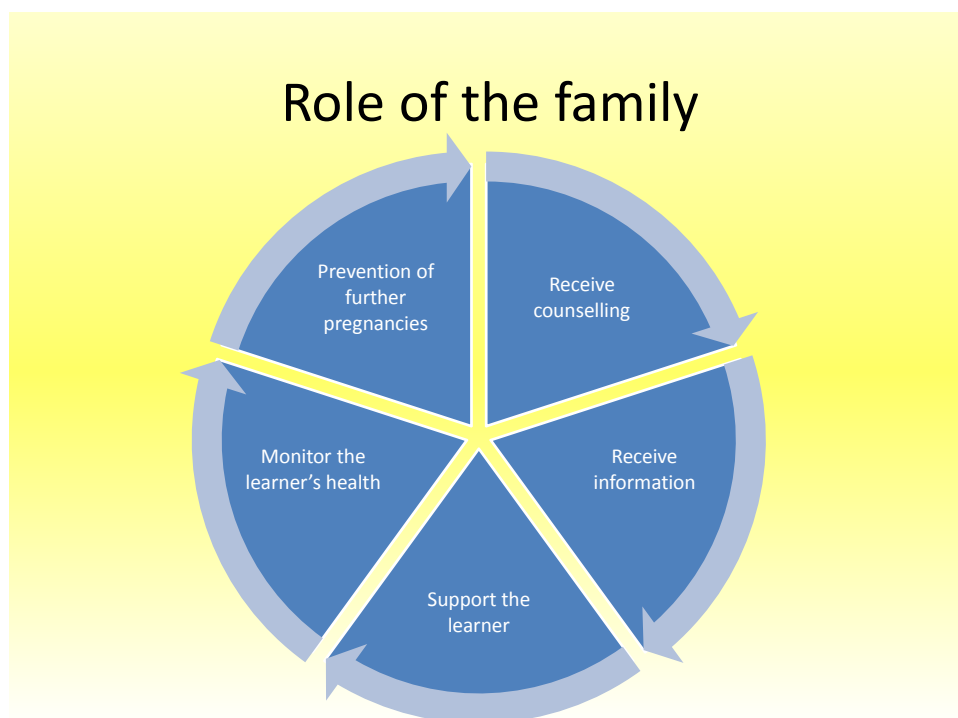
Boarders

- A pregnant learner or learner mother may stay at the school hostel in line with the other rules of attendance in this policy
 - The learner may not stay if she requires special medical attention that the hostel cannot provide
- A learner mother may not have her baby stay at the hostel with her
- The support person should assist if there are any problems

Summarising the role of the family (10 minutes)

The family plays an important role in the management of learner pregnancy. However whilst in some cases the family members may be supportive and want to help the learner complete her education, in other cases the learner may feel isolated from her parents. The school can have to play an important role in helping the family adapt to the situation. There are many ways the school can try to assist the family:

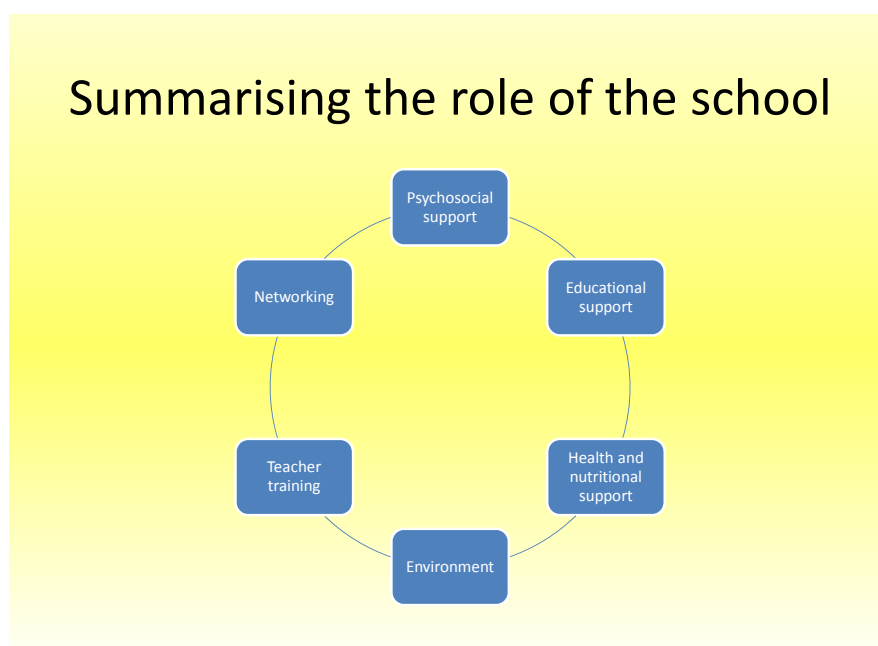
- Family members should be encouraged to *support* the pregnant learner/learner parents
- Family members should be referred for *counselling*
- Family members should be given *information* which they can discuss with the pregnant learner/learner parents
- Family members should be encouraged to *monitor the health and progress* of the pregnant learner/learner mother and infant and ensure that the school is informed about all relevant health issues
- Family members should be asked if they would like to be involved in *prevention efforts* for other learners



Summarising the role of the school (15 minutes)

This training session has shown that the school has an important role in supporting the learner, facilitating access to services and providing information. The policy summarises the role of the school in six areas:

- (1) Psychosocial support
- (2) Educational support
- (3) Health and nutritional support
- (4) Environmental support
- (5) Teacher training
- (6) Networking



Summarising the role of the school

Time: 35 minutes (15 minutes group work, 20 minutes discussion)

Materials: Paper and pen

Divide the participants into six groups. Give each group one of the areas where the school has a role. Ask the participants to list the role of the school in these areas. The participants can refer to section 5.2.1 of the policy or the handout for a summary of the school's responsibilities.

HANDOUT

5.2.4 **Schools** shall be expected to provide support to pregnant learners, expectant learner-fathers and learner-parents to assist them to shoulder their extra burden of responsibilities in the following ways:

a) Psychosocial support

- **Encouragement:** The Principal and support person identified to liaise with the learner under point 5.2.1/5.2.2 shall strongly encourage learners to continue with their education prior to and after the delivery of the baby and shall provide educational support to the learners, insofar as the school's resources allow.
- **Parenting skills:** The support person shall offer advice to learner-parents on parenting skills, or refer them to a teacher-counsellor, Regional School Counsellor, social worker or community organisation who can provide this advice if the learner-parents request assistance. The support person shall explain to the expectant learner-father the importance of being a supportive father and encourage him to have direct and regular involvement with the infant once born and emphasise how important it is for a father to carry a fair share of the financial responsibility for the child.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The Principal shall ask the support person to monitor the pregnant learner and follow-up on her progress to encourage her return to school after her infant is born. The Principal shall also ask the support person or another designated person to initiate monitoring and follow-up with the expectant learner-father, if known, to ensure that he understands the importance of responsible fatherhood and is discouraged from fathering more children while still in school (if he is a learner).

b) Educational support

- **Missed schoolwork:** Class teachers shall provide curriculum packages for use during leave of absence and upon re-entry to school if requested by the pregnant learner/learner-mother, to help her keep up with the syllabus.
- **Tutoring:** The school shall support and guide the parents/primary caregivers and the pregnant learner/learner-parents in the investigation of options for additional tutoring if necessary to complete the curriculum of the year in which the learner takes leave of absence, particularly in the preparation for the grade 10 and 12 external examinations. Volunteers, non-governmental organisations, churches or retired teachers might be able to assist with this function.
- **Extra-curricular activities and physical training:** The school shall excuse pregnant learners and learner-parents from extra-curricular activities and physical training for practical or medical reasons, if required. The learner must provide a letter or certificate from her parents/primary caregiver or health care provider.
- **Attendance:** The school shall be tolerant of occasional absences by pregnant learners and learner-parents, to give them every opportunity to complete their courses without neglecting their health or parenting responsibilities. The learner has a responsibility to keep the school informed if a situation arises necessitating repeated absences from school.

If, in the view of the Principal, the pregnant learner or learner-parent is taking off a disproportionate amount of time, the support teacher should arrange a meeting with the learner, and with the parents and/or primary caregiver if necessary, to discuss whether the learner should be granted a leave of absence until she is ready to return.

- **Contraception information:** The teacher-counsellor shall target learner-parents for contraceptive information to help prevent subsequent pregnancies. Information shall also be provided on HIV.
- **Other education options:** If learner-parents are unwilling or unable to return to formal schooling, then they shall be supported to locate other suitable options for completing their education or for locating training which could increase their future employment prospects.

c) Health and nutritional support

- **Nutrition:** Where possible and if available, schools should include pregnant learners, learner-mothers and breastfeeding mothers in school feeding programmes to ensure proper nutrition for the health of both mother and infant.
- **Childcare and feeding of the infant:** The learner-parents, parents/primary caregiver and support person should discuss the most suitable options for child care and feeding of the infant. The support person may request the assistance of the Principal and/or teacher-counsellor in discussing this issue.

d) Environment

- **Non-discrimination:** All teaching and non-teaching staff are expected to ensure that the school is a safe and non-discriminatory environment for pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents.
- **Tolerance:** All teaching and non-teaching staff should strive to ensure the existence of a climate of understanding and respect in connection with unplanned pregnancies. Schools shall put in place appropriate mechanisms for complaints about discrimination, hate speech or harassment in respect of pregnancy or parenthood.
- **Enforcement of an enabling environment:** It should be noted that the Code of Conduct for the Teaching Service states that a teacher “may not in any form humiliate or abuse a learner (i.e. physically, emotionally or psychologically)” and “must respect the dignity and constitutional rights of every learner without prejudice, including the right to education, equality of culture and the right to privacy”. Teachers must furthermore “refrain from any form of discrimination” including discrimination on the basis of “health reasons”. Such behaviour on the part of a teacher constitutes misconduct and will result in an enquiry and disciplinary action.

It should be further noted that the General Rules of Conduct for Learners state that a learner at a state school “must respect the dignity, person and property of teachers, learners and members of the public”, with possible sanctions including:

- reprimand
- additional tasks relating to the contravention
- a consultation with the learner’s parents
- written warnings
- suspension or expulsion.

Discrimination against or ridicule of a pregnant learner or a learner-parent shall be considered a very serious violation of these Codes and all teachers should take appropriate disciplinary steps if such violations are encountered.

- **Counselling:** Teacher-counsellors should provide or arrange counselling or facilitated discussions for teachers and other learners who are affected by the situation if necessary.

e) Teacher training

- **Counselling and support skills:** The Ministry of Education shall provide pre- and in-service training on supporting and counselling pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents for at least two teacher-counsellors per school. Teachers engaged in counselling around learner pregnancy shall have the same duties and support services as set forth in the Education Sector Policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children for teacher-counsellors.

f) Networking

- **Role of the Counselling Support Group:** Existing Counselling Support Groups at the schools shall be tasked to support the effective implementation of this policy, either in respect of an individual school or for a cluster of schools. The Counselling Support Groups shall be required to network and encourage the uptake and provision of services by the following people: educators, responsible senior learners, families, School Board members, regional officials, health service providers, social workers and other counsellors, police and members of the Woman and Child Protection Unit, and trusted community members.
- **Role of learners:** Learners should be encouraged to form action groups if there is sufficient interest. These action groups could help educate other learners about the importance of obtaining a full education. The action groups could also initiate campaigns such as “how to say no” and how to deal with peer pressure. The action groups should be given support from the teachers and be assisted to develop links with community members and community groups. Pregnant learners, expectant fathers and learner-parents should be encouraged to join these groups to help educate others about the difficulties associated with learner pregnancy.

The role of partner ministries (15 minutes)

The key line ministries which will support the Ministry of Education in the implementation of this policy are the ministries responsible for health and child welfare.

The ministry responsible for safety and security and the ministry responsible for youth also have an important role to play in the prevention and management of learner pregnancy.

The role of partner ministries

Ministry responsible for health	Ministry responsible for child welfare	Ministry responsible for safety and security	Ministry responsible for youth
To assign a nurse to oversee a school/cluster to assist with implementation	To assign a social worker to oversee a school/cluster to assist with implementation	To provide prompt and sensitive social services and investigation of cases where rape or any other crime has occurred	To provide safe entertainment options for learners in an alcohol-free environment.
Additional responsibilities of MoHSS	Provide adolescent-friendly health services, pre- and post-natal medical care, medication, information, counselling on HIV infection and mother-to-child transmission, information and access to legal abortions and other related services, family life empowerment services, the promotion of effective parenting and information on pregnancy prevention		

Write a letter

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: A copy of the draft letter

Give the participants a copy of the draft letter attached. Ask them to edit it according to what they would like to request from the relevant local ministerial representatives. Encourage the participants to send a version of the letter when they return to their school.

HANDOUT

Date

Address

To

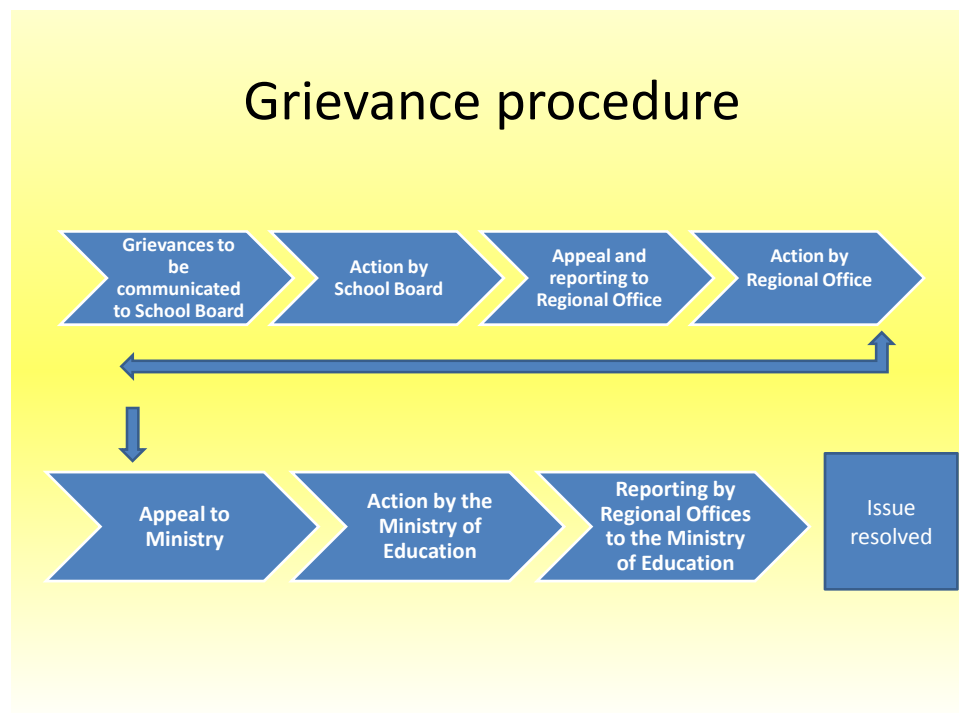
RE: Support for the implementation of the Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy

The _____ School would like to request your Ministry to assist with the implementation of the Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy. The policy states that the Ministry of _____ has the following responsibility:

We would be very grateful for your support in this regard.

Grievance procedure (10 minutes)

Schools should always have positive relationships with the families of their learners. Family members should feel able to communicate freely with the school, including being able to complain if they need to. The process of the grievance procedure is summarised below.



Monitoring and evaluation (10 minutes)

Schools shall keep an accurate record of learner pregnancies and learner-parents. The record should include information about what services the learner received from the school and elsewhere. The record shall also include information about complaints about implementation or application of the policy submitted to the School Board, and the outcome of all such complaints.

Inspectors of Education and Regional School Counsellors shall have access to these records during school visits. School shall submit a record of information to the regional office in a format to be specified by the Directorate responsible for school inspections.

Monitoring and evaluation



- Record-keeping on
 - Number of pregnant learners and learner parents
 - Services received
 - Any complaints relating to the implementation of the policy and the outcome of the complaints
- Information to be available to inspectors of Education and Regional School Counsellors
- Information to be submitted to the regional office on an annual basis

Supporting teachers (10 minutes)

The prevention and management of learner pregnancy can be difficult for teachers, particularly if there are problems with a pregnancy, or if the family find it difficult to come to terms with the situation. Teachers do not have to deal with these problems alone. They can get help from the following places:

- The Regional School Counsellor
- A professional counsellor through a referral from your healthcare provider

Background information: Ideas for self-care

Being a teacher is extremely hard work. The Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy define some of the duties teachers have in this area. However this training session has shown that teachers are not the only people with responsibilities in this area, there are many other role players who also have responsibilities. But it is still important that teachers recognise that they do have number of burdens and they must take time to avoid burnout. You can give the participants the handout on the next page to encourage them to look after themselves as well as others.

Self-Care For Teachers

by Anne Brunette, MSW, Family Therapist

Caring For Yourself So You Can Care For Others

You became a teacher because you want to make a difference; because you love children; because you enjoy seeing the expression on a child's face when he or she finally understands a new concept. It is that passion that makes you a great teacher—the same passion that can also lead to burn-out.

Avoiding burn-out is one reason self-care is important. You cannot care for others if you do not take care of yourself. Another reason self-care is important is to enable you to be an effective teacher. If you are tired, either emotionally or physically, you cannot do your job well. Finally and possibly most important, self-care is important so you can model good balance and healthy boundaries to your students and co-workers. Following are several strategies to help you care for yourself more effectively:

Set healthy boundaries. Say yes when you mean yes and no when you mean no. Recognize your limits, and do what is most important. Trying to be *super-teacher* has consequences (mostly negative ones). No, you cannot leap tall buildings in a single bound!

Take breaks often. You will be amazed at what a five minute break will do. Whether it's spent just relaxing your brain and body, eating a healthy snack, or meditating, you will be rejuvenated so the work you do is more efficient. Set a goal to take a five minute break at least every hour.

Exercise. Research shows that exercise can help increase energy, improve concentration, and decrease stress and depression. It also allows you to focus on yourself and take care of your body. Both are important for reducing burn-out.

Know your own threshold for stress. Recognize the first signs of stress. These may include increased heart rate, change in appetite, fatigue and irritability. Pay attention to what triggers stress for you and either avoid those situations or learn relaxation techniques so you can manage your stress effectively. Modeling these skills for your students will teach them how they can handle their own stress. Focused breathing and deep muscle relaxation have been proven to work.

Find at least three activities that relieve stress for you. Do these things consistently. Planning ahead of time to prevent stress or becoming aware of what you can do when you become stressed will help decrease burn-out.

Start your day on a positive note. Begin your day by doing something that lifts you up and makes you feel good. It may be enjoying quiet time in meditation or prayer, thinking about the positive things that are in store for you that day, taking a walk or conversing with your spouse about positive things. What you do first can set the tone for how you manage your entire day.

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www.dollandassociates.com

Conclusion (25 minutes)

At the start of the workshop, the participants were asked to write down any questions they had about the policy. You should revisit these questions to see if they are able to answer the questions that they had.

The way forward

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: Paper and pen

Ask the participants to get into small groups. Ask them to summarise the next steps for implementing the policy at their school. The list of resolutions should include a timeline.

Evaluation (30 minutes)

You should also ask the participants to summarise what they have learnt from the training. You can do this by asking them the following questions:

- (1) What do you think is the best provision in the new policy?
- (2) What do you think will be the hardest provision to implement?
- (3) Until when can a pregnant learner attend school, provided that she is healthy?
- (4) How soon after the birth of her child can a learner-mother return to school?
- (5) Why should learner-parents continue their education?
- (6) What are the benefits of breast-feeding?
- (7) How long must the school keep the learner-mother's place open for?

You should also ask the participants to complete an evaluation form about the training session.

HANDOUT

Evaluation of the workshop

1. What about the workshop did you find the most valuable/useful and why?

2. What about the workshop did you find the least valuable/useful and why?

3. Will you be able to do what is expected of you? Please explain your answer.

4. Would you make any changes to this training session?

5. Any other comments?

6. Underline your evaluation regarding the following:

Materials	Excellent	Good	Fair	Marginal	Poor
Facilitator	Excellent	Good	Fair	Marginal	Poor
Acquired skills and knowledge	Excellent	Good	Fair	Marginal	Poor