

Policy Poster 6: MANAGEMENT



Ministry of Education
2013



Poster produced by the Legal Assistance Centre for the Ministry of Education, with support from the Ministry's HIV and AIDS Management Unit. Windhoek, Namibia, May 2013

Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy

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 father's involvement in the child's life.

I am glad I told my parents and the school that I am pregnant. They have given me so much support. My parents were angry at first but I could not have got this far without them.



Information, Counselling and Support

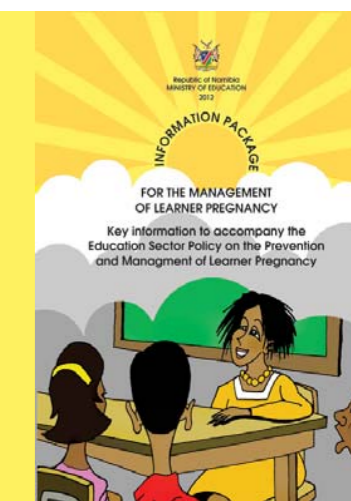
- The pregnant learner and the learner father should be assigned a support person, who could be a teacher, a teacher-counsellor or a community member.
- The support person should provide support, and provide/facilitate access to counselling.
- The learner's parents or caregivers should also be referred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



Information to Discuss with the Family

- Child care options
- How to claim maintenance
- State maintenance grants
- 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", available from the Ministry.



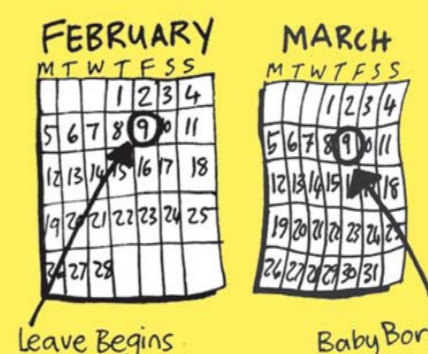
Healthcare

- The family should:
 - ensure that the pregnant learner or learner-mother and infant visit a healthcare provider regularly;
 - support and monitor their health and progress; and
 - keep the school informed about their health and progress.
- The learner can, but does not have to, provide reports about her health to the principal.



Attending School During Pregnancy

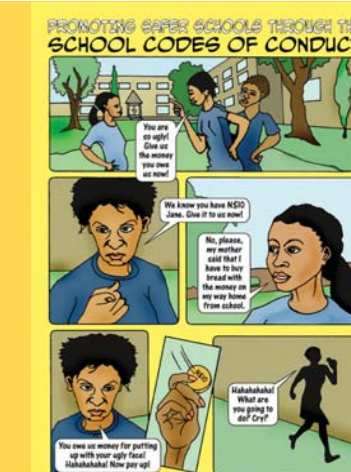
- A pregnant learner may attend until 4 weeks before the birth.
- She might choose to take leave much sooner.
- The learner, her parents or caregiver and the school should discuss how long she will attend school.
- The learner must provide a health certificate if she stays in school past 26 weeks (6 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.



Supporting a Pregnant Learner

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

The General Rules of Conduct for Learners can be found in this comic produced by the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), which is available on the LAC website: www.lac.org



Education After Birth

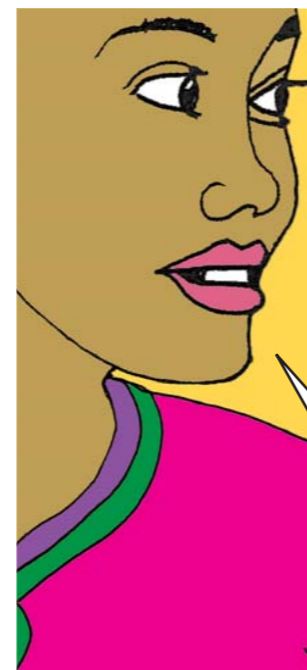
- A learner-mother may return to school if:
- a social worker (or the principal) is satisfied that the infant will be cared for by a responsible adult; *and*
 - a healthcare provider provides a statement that the learner-parent and infant are in a suitable state of health and wellbeing; *and*
 - the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



We are lucky to have this new policy. I can care for the baby when you are at school. But you will have to take over as soon as you get home. Life will not be easy.

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.



Until now I did not realise how much I like school and what a difference it will make to my future and my baby's future. I need an education!

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.
- The learner must maintain clear communication with the school regarding the proposed date of return.
- Her place will be kept open for her. (This does not apply if the learner will change schools.)
- A learner-mother can also choose to take longer leave, but then must re-apply as her place will not be kept open for her.



I didn't realise until now how much work babies are. I love my baby but I wish I had waited until after school to have him. At least the new policy allows me to finish my education!