

TIBSHELF COMMUNITY SCHOOL SUPPORTING PREGNANT PUPILS & SCHOOL AGE PARENTS

Ratified: March 23

(Tibshelf Policy)





Statement of intent

Tibshelf Community School is committed to supporting all its pupils, regardless of their circumstances.

The school recognises its responsibilities to ensure high-quality support is available to all pupils as they prepare for later life and, in some cases, becoming parents.

This policy has been created to ensure that school-age parents are supported through pregnancy and can continue their education before, during and after childbirth.

Whilst the school has a duty to ensure pupils' educations are not affected, the school also understands it has a key role to play in safeguarding and helping pupils through what can be an incredibly stressful time.

This policy will be reviewed regularly. Should any staff members, pupils or parents have any queries or a specific question which is not addressed in this document, please contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).



1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2016) School Attendance Advice

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

2. Equality

2.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, a pregnant woman is discriminated against if she is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy, or because of illness suffered because of pregnancy. We are committed to ensuring all females, whether staff members or pupils, can come to school and be treated fairly, regardless of whether or not they are pregnant.

2.2. The school will not exclude expectant mothers or school-age mothers from any lessons and will not consider asking the pupil to learn at home or in alternative provision.

2.3. The pupil can request to learn outside of the classroom, e.g., at home, if they wish.

2.4. School-aged mothers are entitled to up to 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of their baby.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. The Headteacher, on behalf of the school and governing board, is responsible for:

- Ensuring any pupil that falls pregnant, or is soon to become a parent, receives practical and consistent support to allow them to continue their learning.
- Making the relevant staff members aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising from the terms of this document.
- Liaising with the DSL and local careers team to ensure that relevant post-16 options are explored.
- Respecting, understanding, and listening to the decisions, wishes and thoughts of the pupil.
- Supporting the DSL in finding suitable arrangements to ensure expectant mothers can be comfortable at school.
- Monitoring and maintaining the attendance of the pregnant pupil and school-aged parents.
- Ensuring the school makes all reasonable attempts to support the pupil in continuing to access on-site education in line with the school's Attendance Policy.

3.2. The DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring the day-to-day support for parents and expectant parents is readily available.
- Making parents and expectant parents aware of any relevant guidance and support that is available to them.
- Undertaking risk assessments, as soon as a pupil has disclosed their pregnancy, to ensure any health and educational risks can be mitigated.
- If requested, identifying a suitable female member of staff with whom a pregnant pupil can discuss their support needs.

- Considering and, where necessary, acting on any recommendations made by female members of staff in terms of the best methods to support school-age parents and expectant parents.
- Keeping up to date with the latest guidance and news from relevant charities to ensure school-age parents and expectant parents receive the most recent and relevant guidance possible. The DSL will communicate details of these charities to the pupil.
- Respecting, understanding, and listening to the decisions, wishes and thoughts of the pupil.
- Taking steps to ensure the pupil's wishes, e.g., preferences concerning confidentiality, as a school-age parent or expectant parent are adhered to where possible.
- Ensuring all relevant teachers understand the pupil's status as a school-age parent or expectant parent.
- Meeting with the pupil and, if appropriate, their parents to establish any medical history that may affect the pregnancy and making arrangements based on the pupil's medical history.
- Where the pupil has SEND, meeting with the SENCO and the pupil's parents to ensure the pupil's needs are met and the appropriate arrangements are in place.

3.3. School-age parents and expectant parents are responsible for:

- Informing the school of their status as an expectant parent or parent as soon as possible.
- Collaborating with the school and, if possible, their parents to ensure the proper care can be provided and suitable arrangements made.
- Liaising with the school, where necessary, to amend their timetable to suit arrangements and appointments. Expressing their feelings and emotions to a member of the Safeguarding Team and, where necessary, other relevant teachers to ensure the members of staff can understand and respond to any needs the pupil may have.

4. Disclosure of pregnancy

- 4.1. When a staff member discovers that a pupil is an expectant mother, they will conduct an early help pre-assessment and consider an early help assessment.
- 4.2. The staff member will make sure the pupil receives information about relevant services in the area and advise them how to access the services.
- 4.3. The staff member will explain to the pupil that she can discuss all the options available to her with a member of Safeguarding Team.
- 4.4. A member of Safeguarding Team will conduct a risk assessment.
- 4.5. Where a pupil requires support to disclose their pregnancy to their parents, the school will advise the pupil to:
 - Choose an appropriate time and place when the parents are unlikely to be stressed.
 - Tell the parent they are closest to first.
 - Have someone with you if you are concerned about how parents will react – the school can provide someone where necessary.
 - Practise telling someone else first – the school may be able to help with this.
- 4.6. The school will authorise absences where required to allow the pupil to attend appropriate local services.
- 4.7. If a pupil is considering an abortion, the school will help her to access professional services for appropriate counselling, advice, and support. The school will be non-judgemental and offer no opinions – only offering the pupil the opportunity to speak to professionals.
- 4.8. Where a pupil decides to continue with her pregnancy, the headteacher will be informed so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- 4.9. A member of staff, typically a member of Safeguarding Team, will take responsibility for the pupil's continuing education.

5. Supporting expectant mothers

- 5.1. To ensure expectant mothers can still enjoy a diverse and interesting learning schedule, the school will make arrangements to make lessons as accessible as possible – these adjustments include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Modifying the temperature in classrooms to suit the pupil's needs
 - Ensuring the pupil has access to fresh air during the school day
 - Permitting the pupil to always have their mobile phone with them, in case of emergencies
 - Offering additional tutoring sessions to ensure the pupil can make good academic progress
 - Excusing the pupil from lessons which could expose them to harmful substances, e.g., science experiments and woodwork lessons
 - Establishing a quiet and private area for the pregnant pupil to use for comfort breaks – this space will be furnished suitably and offer somewhere for the pupil to sit comfortably
 - Allowing the pupil to take regular toilet breaks without explanation
 - Adapting activities such as PE and science to ensure they are as accessible as possible to the pupil – if these cannot be adapted, the pupil is given alternative work which they can complete
- 5.2. Expectant mothers can be anxious about weight gain and may diet or eat less healthily than is appropriate: the school will encourage the pupil to eat a well-balanced lunch and encourage the pupil to feel more body positive and accepting of their changing shape. The pupil's uniform rules will be amended to reflect changes to her body.
- 5.3. If the pregnant pupil is thought to be a victim of sexual abuse, the school will work in accordance with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- 5.4. The school is aware of national charities and agencies that offer guidance and will assist pupils with accessing this support where requested.
- 5.5. Appropriate arrangements will be made for any exams the pupil is sitting, e.g., easy access to a restroom, ensuring the room is air conditioned and access to food and water.
- 5.6. Where possible, the school will support expectant mothers by helping them to access appropriate travel arrangements.
- 5.7. The school will ensure that the pupil continues to learn for as long as possible until the birth by exploring all opportunities for curriculum support within the LA.

6. Supporting expectant fathers

- 6.1. When a staff member discovers that a pupil is an expectant father, they will conduct an early help pre-assessment and consider an early help assessment.
- 6.2. The school recognises that pupils who are expectant fathers may have additional needs that they require assistance with.
- 6.3. Where both parents attend the school, the school will consider amending timetables where the parents are no longer in a relationship or difficulties have developed.
- 6.4. Expectant fathers may face threats, emotional distress, and anxiety. The school will make counselling available and introduce expectant fathers to local services that can support them.
- 6.5. The school will encourage and facilitate fathers' participation in ante-natal and post-natal appointments, attending the birth of the child and attending parenting classes.
- 6.6. The school is under no obligation to allow the father to take paternity leave; however, the school understand the benefits of this and, where the father is actively involved with their baby and its mother, will allow the father to have

a flexible timetable or an authorised absence of up to 10 school days (this excludes school holidays and weekends), as determined by the DSL.

7. Miscarriages and stillbirths

- 7.1. Tibshelf Community School understands the trauma attached to miscarrying a child and will respect both school-aged parents' right to grieve should this event occur.
- 7.2. The school will, if the parent suffers a miscarriage, contact the pupil's parents on a regular basis, but at least once per week, to discuss a return to school and the pupil's current mindset.
- 7.3. The school will not rush pupils back to school; however, if pupils do not return to school within four weeks, alternative learning provision will be made.
- 7.4. The school has a knowledge of charities and guidance pertaining to miscarriages to ensure they can offer support to pupils.
- 7.5. Under the Equality Act 2010, maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth – if the pupil's baby is stillborn and the pregnancy lasted for 24 weeks before she gave birth, the pupil will be eligible for 18 weeks away from school.
- 7.6. Should the pupil wish to return to school before this period is over, the school will meet the pupil to discuss whether a reduced timetable may be a good idea.
- 7.7. Once the pupil has returned to school, regardless of whether this is on a reduced timetable or not, they will meet with the school at least once per week for counselling sessions, where they will discuss the pupil's readiness for returning to school and the pupil's feelings.

8. Missing school

- 8.1. The school will maintain regular communication with the school-aged parents and, where necessary, their parents to ensure the school remains aware of the pupil's schedule, e.g., in relation to ante-natal classes, and to ensure the pupil is receiving the best support in and out of school.
- 8.2. The Headteacher, in collaboration with the pupil's subject teachers, will ensure that the pupil is set work that can be completed at home when they are unable to attend lessons – this work will be marked to ensure the pupil receives feedback and allow progress to be monitored.
- 8.3. The school will organise home visits, if appropriate, to ensure the pupil can remain on-track with their educational progress.
- 8.4. Tutoring sessions are offered to school-aged parents to ensure the school continues to offer a high standard of education, and to ensure the pupils can make good academic progress.
- 8.5. Where a pupil in Year 11 is likely to miss examination entry and requirements, the school will encourage the pupil to consider further education and suitable post-16 provision.
- 8.6. The school will allow the pupil time off school to attend baby clinics, immunisation appointments, six-week check-ups, etc. as these are important in developing good parenting skills and ensuring the good health of the baby.

9. Breastfeeding

- 9.1. Young parents are often reluctant to breastfeed for several reasons. Whilst midwives and health visitors will advise the pupil, the school will be supportive of arrangements that facilitate breast-feeding by:
 - Adjusting the pupil's timetable.
 - Making facilities available on-site.

9.2. The DSL will identify a private area in which the pupil is able to breastfeed, extract milk and store it.

10. Childcare

10.1. The school does not have a responsibility to provide or fund childcare; however, due to the emotional strain placed on young parents leaving their child in the care of strangers, the school will support pupils to help them access appropriate childcare near to the school premises.

10.2. Childcare arrangements will be considered as part of the pupil's reintegration plan.

11. Social and emotional support

11.1. Both school-aged parents will be offered and given emotional support in accordance with the school's Mental Health Policy.

11.2. The school and all its staff members take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying: any reports of bullying or teasing directed at either school-aged parent will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti Bullying Policy.

11.3. During meetings, the school will discuss pupils' emotional and mental wellbeing to decide whether anything more can be done to assist them.

11.4. The DSL act as points of contact for all expectant parents and school-aged parents and will offer an open-door policy to ensure social and emotional support is readily available.

12. Confidentiality

12.1. The school respects pupils' right to manage their pregnancy or status as a parent as they choose.

12.2. School staff will remain impartial, unbiased, respectful, and fair in light of pupils' wishes relating to their pregnancy – staff will only offer guidance to inform the pupils' choices.

12.3. If necessary, the DSL will support the pupil when informing their family of their upcoming parenthood.

12.4. The school will always consult the pupil and seek consent before disclosing information regarding their pregnancy or parental status to a third-party, e.g., other pupils or parents; however, staff will ensure confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

13. Returning to school

13.1. The school will try to maintain continuity of learning while pupils are on maternity leave; however, school-age mothers are expected to return to full-time education once their maternity period ends.

13.2. Before returning to school, the pupil will meet with the DSL to discuss a phased return to school to allow time to adapt.

13.3. The reduced timetable will be flexibly scheduled around the young mother to ensure the pupil can attend appointments.

13.4. During their meeting, the DSL will inform the pupil of the childcare funding they are eligible for.

13.5. When the pupil cannot attend school, e.g., if their baby is ill, the Headteacher will ensure that work is sent home so that the pupil's education does not suffer.

13.6. The DSL will meet with school-aged parents at least once per week after they have returned to school to ensure their return has been successful, and to see if there is anything else the school can do to make the transition easier.

13.7. The meetings between the DLS and the school-aged parents will continue until the DSL is satisfied the parents are comfortable at school and ready to discontinue the meetings.

14. Attendance codes

14.1. Attendance codes for expectant and school-age school-aged parents are as follows:

- Pregnancy is not an illness; however, any illness during pregnancy should be recorded as – I
- Ante-natal appointments – M
- Maternity leave
 - If within 18 weeks – C
 - If any absence beyond 18 weeks is unauthorised – O
- Paternity leave – C
- Where the baby is unwell – C
- Medical appointment for baby – C
- Lack of childcare due to unforeseen circumstances – C
- Failure to organise childcare, or refusal to access childcare place offered – O
- Reduced timetable – C
- Attending alternative learning provision – B or D (provision dependent)

Where DSL is referred to this means any of the Safeguarding Team with full DSL training and accreditation.