

Helpdesk Report: Education for pregnant girls and young mothers

Date: 27 May 2015

Query: How do Kenya, Nigeria and the UK deal with girls who get pregnant at school in terms of:

- 1) what the policy is around when they should leave school to have their baby, and whether this is actually implemented;
- 2) whether formal education is provided while they are away having their babies, how this is delivered, and whether it actually has impact on their learning; and
- 3) the kind of support girls get for going back to school once they have their babies and how negative attitudes are overcome

Additionally: Identify any information on bridging schools in Ghana and Liberia.

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1. Overview

KENYA

1) Policy around when pregnant girls should leave school and whether this is actually implemented

The National School Health Policy passed in 2009 articulates the specified action that school administrators should take when dealing with pregnant school girl cases. Pregnant girls in Kenya are allowed to stay in school as long as they think they can (UNICEF, 2015; Mirago 2014). However, a case study of Nairobi slums found instances of school authorities barring pregnant girls from attending school (Mumah et al, 2014). Experts in Kenya have also experienced this problem. In other cases girls leave school early to avoid stigma.

Comments from the ground suggests policy in Kenya has not been officially rolled out so implementation for girls to remain at school until they are ready to give birth is inconsistent. Insensitive school environments push against the policy. Those who do implement it are likely to get help from the private sector or NGOs to enforce it. Parental attitudes may also work against the policy.

2) Formal education provision whilst away

Comments from experts suggest there is no education provision whilst girls are on three-month maternity leave. Tuition may be paid for by parents who are able and value education significantly.

One expert based in Kakouma suggests formal education/extra tuition is only offered to girls whose parents are able to pay and understand the importance of education.

A news website reports on a girl being provided an invigilator in hospital straight after giving birth so she could sit her Kenya Certificate of Secondary school Examination (KCSE).

3) Support given for going back to school and how negative attitudes are overcome

A policy was introduced in Kenya in 1994 that enables teenage mothers to return to school. However stigma remains a problem. One option for girls to return to school and avoid stigma is to attend a different school. In Kenya support is provided to gain admission into another secondary school (UNICEF, 2015). Mothers have been found to prefer this option (Onyango, 2015). Policy states that pregnant school girls and their parents should receive counselling. There is a radio programme focused on out-of-school teenage mothers to get people thinking and talking about the issue.

Wekesa (2014) investigates whether re-admission policy was actually implemented in schools in Emuhaya district in Kenya finding mixed results. Many students were found to be unaware of the policy. Achoka & Njeru (2012) note that lack of legal backing or official communication make the policy in Kenya weak. A case study of the Emuhaya District (Wanyama & Simatwa, 2011) also notes lack of policy guidelines as well as fears for the reputation of the school. Re-entering into a different school is again suggested from this study.

There is a disconnect between policy goals and the socio-cultural realities for teenage mothers re-entering school (Onyango et al, 2015). Omwancha's (2012) case study of the Kuria district found conflicting views as to the value, nature and implementation of the policy.

A programme implemented by HOPE for Teenage Mothers (2008) in Mukuru kwa Ruben slums in Kenya is described in a web page. The project has explored alternative schooling methods such as accelerated learning for those not able to attend structured classes but details and results of this could not be identified.

Comments from experts in Kenya include:

- Some schools allow mothers to bring their children to school, given time to go home or attend to their sick babies, others do not.
- Policy is viewed as discriminatory with child-fathers receiving more support for continuing education than mothers.
- Socio-economic backgrounds of the girls contribute to girls becoming pregnant in the first place and later act as barrier to their going back after giving birth.
- Young mothers are dependent on support from their family to look after their baby so they may re-enter education.
- Bright girls may be more likely to get help from teachers in returning to school.

NIGERIA

There was little research identified on pregnant schoolgirls in Nigeria. Information was gathered from those working in this area.

1) Policy around when pregnant girls should leave school and whether this is actually implemented

There is no policy on when girls should leave school to have their babies. Cases are known of girls being dismissed from school when they are 'showing' or confirmed pregnant.

2) Formal education provision whilst away

There is no formal education in place for while a girl is away from school

3) Support given for going back to school and how negative attitudes are overcome

Opinions and reports of re-admission differ. Two experts state that those who are out of wedlock are expelled. Data from the North West region suggests girls have pro-actively supportive policies and practices including: separate classes for young mothers returning to school; child care facilities the school for young women's babies. Most girls do not return to school and counselling is not provided for those that do. One expert comment says that schools have been mandated to accept girls back.

UK

1) Policy around when pregnant girls should leave school and whether this is actually implemented

An official policy was not identified. The girl gets 18 weeks maternity leave to be taken before and after the baby is born. Support with transport to school suggests girls are encouraged to stay in school for as long as possible before giving birth.

2) Formal education provision whilst away

Local authorities are responsible for providing support. Home tuition may be provided. In Brighton and Hove they receive 5 hours of 1:1 time with a qualified teacher during the 18 weeks of maternity leave.

3) Support given for going back to school and how negative attitudes are overcome

Protection from discrimination because of pregnancy in schools is covered in the Equality Act 2010. Schools have a responsibility to ensure a girl returns to school after no more than 18 weeks leave. Girls receive pastoral and education support from a named teacher who they will see regularly. Parents of teenage parents are obliged under the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child regularly attends school.

GHANA

A quick search for information on bridging schools did not yield any results. One report outlines an interesting project which established a separate school which catered for children who are survivors of child trafficking or who are at risk. Child-led research on this school investigates teenage pregnancy and issues (See section 8).

SIERRA LEONE

An article in the Times Education Supplement describes an initiative of note (Jozwiak, 2014). To address the problem of children not returning to school because of the Ebola outbreak the Teachers Union in Sierra Leone is delivering lessons over national radio. This may be an option for girls who are not able to return to school to continue to receive education.

2. Kenya

Position Paper on Best Practices on educational support for Pregnant Girls and Young Mothers (Draft)

UNICEF (2015)

(not available online)

Kenya case study

Introduced in 1994, Kenya has a very progressive 'return to school' policy for teenage mothers. A girl who is pregnant is allowed to remain in school for as long as she thinks she can. After delivery, she is allowed to come back to school. She is also provided support to gain admission into another secondary school if she feels there are issues of stigma and discrimination. The policy also states that pregnant school girls and their parents should receive counselling. In addition, secondary education is nominally free in Kenya. The government pays for teaching while students' families fund transport, uniforms and meals. There are several programmes supporting pregnant girls and mothers including a radio programme focused on an out-of-school teenage mother to get people thinking and talking about the issue. Kenya also provides HIV and sex education curriculum in upper-primary and secondary schools. Another programme supported by an organisation called Centre for the Study of Adolescence trains teachers on life skills, provides safe spaces for girls in schools, and mentorship. This initiative, which is being implemented in more than 100 schools around the country, has had positive results so far: participating schools have noted a significant drop in teen pregnancy, higher retention and completion rates of school education, and improved self-esteem and confidence among girls, which in turn has led to higher scores in exams. The Ministry of Education has also revised the curriculum to make it gender sensitive and has trained its teachers.

Re-Admission Policy and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Bungoma North Sub-County, Kenya

Wekesa V. (2014). International Journal of Innovative Research and Development, 3(7): 446-441

<http://www.ijird.com/index.php/ijird/article/view/51718/41803>

Please note this study rates low quality according to the DFID Assessing the Strength of Evidence How to Note. Findings are not clearly reported.

The educational needs of pregnant school girls and mother-students have received minimal attention despite the introduction of re-admission policy in Kenyan secondary schools. The objectives of the study were to determine the extent of the implementation of re-admission policy in secondary schools, the involvement of stakeholders in the re-admission process, the effect of re-admitted mother/student on academic performance and challenges experienced by schools and students who return to school. The study was guided by the production function theory advocated by Tinto Model on school retention. The sample size for the study was 774 respondents. The experts in the department were consulted to ensure that the data collection tools were valid, piloting was also done to ensure reliability. Questionnaires were used and the major data collection instrument supported was interview schedules and the observation schedules from the sample of population.

On level of implementation of re-admission policy in schools responses were:

- Reported as high in 24% of schools
- 16% acknowledged implementation was very low
- 8% reported to have fully complied with the ministerial policy on ensuring that teenage mothers are re-admitted

Some principals and teachers feared that if they re-admitted students mothers, the students could set a bad example to the rest of students. On the student side, the results of the study shows that 44.1% of students were aware of the existence of re-admission policy in their schools, 33.2% said that the policy does not exist while 22.7% were found to be unaware of the policy. This shows that not all students in schools are aware of the implementation of re-admission policy by their head teachers and therefore could act as a barrier through which a pregnant student may fail to report back to schools due to her ignorance of the policy. It is also seen that a significant number of respondents were not aware on when the policy revision in their individual schools. Education officials recognised the fact that government input was needed to support the implementation of the re-entry policy. They mentioned the need for creating awareness among all stakeholders on re-entry policy for girls for its effective implementation to be realised.

Perception of the performance of re-admitted mothers was reported as: Fair, 30%; Poor, 16%; Good, 5%; Excellent, 1%.

The students reported that most of the re-admitted students feared participating in classroom discussions and this influenced their performance in end term examinations and KCSE. School/family balance issue was also found to be another hindrance to the effective implementation of re-admission policy in secondary schools.

De-Stigmatizing Teenage Motherhood: Towards Achievement of Universal Basic Education in Kenya

Achoka JS & Njeru FM. (2012) Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS) 3(6): 887-892.

<http://jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.com/articles/De-Stigmatizing%20Teenage%20Motherhood.pdf>

Teenage motherhood is a situation in which a girl in teenage years, that is, 13-19 years is a mother or has a child. Globally, a third of teenage mothers live in India whereas the least affected country by teenage motherhood in the world is Japan. In Africa, it is estimated that approximately 5.5 million girls between 15-19 years are mothers. Of these 62% live in Sub Saharan Africa. In Kenya, 13,000 girls leave school every year due to teenage pregnancy. The relationship between teenage motherhood and schooling is explicit; when teenagers become pregnant and consequently mothers they abandon schooling altogether.

Stigmatisation and discrimination by teachers, parents, fellow students and the immediate society are the major causes for discontinuing school. In turn, the girls feel that they deserve to be punished for getting pregnant by dropping out of school or are too shy to return to school. By discontinuing school, teenage motherhood spells a blank future for both the teenager and her child. This situation can be reversed, given Kenya's return to school policy. The policy calls for counselling for the girl, the parents, teachers and other students in the school. Nevertheless, the lack of legal backing or any official communication on how to implement the policy in schools makes it weak. Hence there is need to de-stigmatise teenage motherhood in an attempt to win back the girls to school. This paper elaborates on the question of teenage motherhood (causes and effects) and delves into the issue of teenage motherhood stigmatisation and the need for the society to de-stigmatise teenage motherhood to enable the girls achieve education. The paper contributes to the ongoing debate on teenage motherhood. It also sensitises the policy makers, educationists and the public on the need to recast their perception towards teenage motherhood and specifically on the social stigma associated with this old age problem.

Reviving Kenyan 'return to school' policy may end teenage mums' poverty, ignorance

Mirago, K. (2014) Thomson Reuters Foundation
<http://www.trust.org/item/20140722150159-872qb/>

News article

On paper, Kenya has a very progressive 'return to school' policy for teenage mums, introduced in 1994.

"A girl that gets pregnant is really supposed to be allowed to remain in school for as long as she thinks she can," said Chi-Chi Undie (a Population Council researcher). "After delivery, she is supposed to be allowed to come back. Or she is supposed to be given support to gain admission into another secondary school if she feels there are issues of stigma and discrimination."

The policy also says that pregnant schoolgirls and their parents should receive counselling to help them work things out. In addition, secondary education is nominally free in Kenya. The government pays for teaching while students' families fund transport, uniforms and meals.

"Despite the really brilliant policy, a lot of school personnel are not really well versed in it," said Undie.

"Teachers don't want them back. There's always that sense that: 'Letting you be here is sort of contagious. It will cause other girls to get pregnant while they are here and it's not ok'. The school environment is just hostile."

Undie and her team will meet the heads of every government secondary day schools in Homa Bay County to hear their views. They will also talk to girls who have dropped out of school, the husbands of child brides, parents, teachers and students about reviving the school re-entry policy.

Prospects and challenges in the implementation of reentry policy of girls in secondary schools in Kenya: a case study of Emuhaya District

Wanyama EGA & Simatwa EMW (2011). Education Research, 2(8): 1373-1390.

<http://www.interestjournals.org/full-articles/prospects-and-challenges-in-the-implementation-of-re-entry-policy-of-girls-in-secondary-schools-in-kenya-a-case-study-of-emuhaya-district.pdf?view=inline>

A potentially useful case study but of questionable quality according to DFID Assessing the Strength of Evidence How to Note.

The purpose of the study was to establish the challenges and prospects in the implementation of the Ministry of Education policy on the re-entry of girls. The study was guided by a conceptual framework. The research design for the study was descriptive survey. The study population consisted of 24 head teachers, 24 teachers of guidance and counselling, 24 chairpersons of parents' teachers associations, 24 chairpersons of boards of governors, one district quality assurance and standards' officer and 1040 girls in 24 schools.

The study concluded:

- Prospects available for head teachers in the implementation of re-entry policy included: the schools' willingness to allow re-entry, head teachers' knowledge of the value of implementation of re-entry policy and their willingness to support the girls who seek re-entry, availability of space and the fact that re-entry can be sought in other schools.
- Challenges faced by the head teachers in the implementation of re-entry policy included: lack of policy guidelines, fear that the schools will be ostracised if they

- allowed re-entry, fear of having mothers in schools, the fact that peers will frown at them, and that re-entry is allowed early in the calendar year.
- Challenges faced by the teachers of Guidance and Counselling in the implementation of re-entry policy included: lack of adequate training, unawareness on re-entry and fear of bad influence these girls will have on others.
 - Prospects for the girls as they seek re-entry in secondary schools included: their readiness to continue, availability of space in schools and their belief that they have the potential to reform.
 - Challenges faced by the girls as they seek re-entry in secondary schools included: fear of being ridiculed and discriminated against, shyness, low self-esteem, lack of a maid, fear of being frowned at and fear of being labelled as a mother.
 - Community factors that influenced the implementation of re-entry policy included: parental unawareness on re-entry, fear of a second pregnancy, fear of bad influence, belief that it is hard for one to be a student and mother at the same time, and the feeling that it was a burden to raise the child and still pay fees.
 - Strategies of coping with the challenges of implementing the re-entry policy included the following: allowing re-entry in different schools from those originally attended and inviting parents for guidance and counselling.

Challenges of School Re-entry among Teenage Mothers in Primary Schools in Muhoroni District, Western Kenya

Onyango GO, Kioli FN, Nyambedha EO (2015). Available at Social Science Research Network (SSRN)

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/SSRN_ID2546761_code2344831.pdf?abstractid=2546761&mirid=1

Much has been done towards attainment of gender equity in education as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), yet gender disparities persist in many parts of the country.

Studies indicate that most of girls who drop out of school do not return to class after childbirth despite provisions for it. The purpose of this study was to examine factors that influence re-entry of school girl mothers in primary schools in Muhoroni District, Kisumu County in western Kenya.

The literature review finds that while policy development have attempted to address pregnancy related school exits, studies still document poor rate of return. It is however emerging that there is a disconnect between policy goals and the socio-cultural realities related to school re-entry among teenage mothers.

Cross-sectional descriptive research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, was used in this study. The data was collected from teachers, pupils, parents/guardians and teenage mothers using questionnaires, key informant interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). It emerged that a range of socio-cultural factors constrained school re-entry of young mothers after pregnancy.

The social environment at school was one of the major factors in re-entry. Asked about the problems affecting schoolgirl mothers in schools, teenage respondents identified social isolation and stigma as the major challenges. Social isolation constituted 34% while stigma was 20.4% of the challenges faced by schoolgirl mothers in the re-entry process.

Faced with the question of the choice of school they would prefer in re-entry, a majority of young mothers favoured transfer to new schools after delivery. They also preferred day mixed schools instead of boarding and girls' only schools. In a related study carried out in

Kakamega South District, it was established that teenage mothers prefer to join day schools rather than boarding school because of social hostility within boarding schools.

According to one teacher, girls who were close to teenage mothers at school also predisposed themselves to early pregnancies. Teenage mothers stated that some teachers discouraged other pupils from being close to them on the grounds that they were a negative influence.

The study concluded that the main socio-cultural factors influencing the re-entry of schoolgirl mothers in Muhoroni included gendered customary practices such as patriarchy, gender preference, early marriage as well as widespread poverty in the area. It was established that there was a close link between inability to return to school after childbirth and vulnerability in the area of study. The study further concluded that the existence of predominantly negative attitudes and perceptions among pupils, teachers and parents regarding teenage motherhood greatly undermined the re-entry of young mothers. The social environment prevalent in most of the schools in the study area perpetuated stigmatisation and enhanced exclusion of young mothers, thus militating against the re-entry process.

Coping with Unintended Pregnancies: Narratives from Adolescents in Nairobi's Slums

Mumah J, Kabiru CW, Izugbara C & Mukiira C (2014) African Population and Health Research Center

<http://aphrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/APHRC-Step-Up-Formative-Report-26.06.2014-Hi-Resolution.pdf>

It was reported in this case study that in some instances, school authorities would bar such girls from coming to school. But more commonly, stigma and shame would force pregnant adolescents to stay away from school. It was also noted that most parents usually discontinued support to girls who become pregnant forcing such girls to look for work to support themselves. Getting a girl pregnant also sometimes led boys to drop out school. Such boys would drop out of school in order to work to support the girl and new family.

The Implementation of an Educational Re-Entry Policy for Girls after Teenage Pregnancy: A Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in the Kuria District, Kenya

Omwancha KM (2012) Victoria University PhD Thesis

<http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/2382/thesis.pdf?sequence=1>

A new policy was introduced in Kenya in 1994 that enabled teenage mothers to continue schooling after delivery. The re-entry policy for girls who drop out of school after becoming pregnant while still at school is of international concern. The Kenyan government has already signed numerous international and regional declarations guaranteeing all children the right to education. However, it is not well known to what extent girls are taking advantage of the policy, how aware school managers are of the policy, and what challenges they meet in its implementation. Little is known in the international literature about the girls' experiences in attempting or succeeding in being able to re-enter school. This study investigated the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. This study used critical theory in identifying the importance of the study which also aimed to sensitise stakeholders to the issues involved in teenage pregnancy by raising them for discussion. A qualitative method using a case study approach was chosen. Standard open-ended interviews were used to obtain in-depth information from the Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, head teachers, current students, teenage mothers and parents. Data were analysed thematically, using a social constructivist lens. Particular attention was given to the young girls' experiences by presenting them as narratives. The study revealed that there are conflicting views as to the value, nature and implementation of the policy. There was a concerning lack of awareness and understanding of both the policy and the guidelines. The findings further

showed that many socio-cultural factors were important in preventing young mothers from returning to school. Hence there was a strong desire from the participants to be involved in any discussions about the policy. Findings from this study will help in creating awareness of the policy among all Kenyan stakeholders. The findings provide insights into inclusive policies, valuing and listening to voices not typically heard with an objective to enhancing the education of young mothers in Kenyan schools. They will also help in understanding the challenges in policy implementation in the context of limited resources, diverse viewpoints and expectations, and in studying the problems of pregnancy policy implementation in specific cultural settings. They will also contribute to the literature that calls for more understanding of the experiences of the young mothers.

Girl sits for KCSE in hospital after giving birth

Njung'eh J. (2014) News 24 Kenya, 22 October 2014

<http://www.news24.co.ke/MyNews24/Girl-sits-for-KCSE-in-hospital-after-giving-birth-20141022>

Nyeri - A 19-year-old girl form four candidate at Muirungi Mixed Secondary School in Othaya, Nyeri County is sitting for her Kenya Certificate of Secondary school Examination (KCSE) in hospital after she gave birth to a baby girl on Tuesday night.

Doctor Mwangi said Hellen was sitting for exams in the hospital under supervision of officers, an invigilator and a guard from the examinations council.

The Future of Teenage Mothers

Programme implemented by 'HOPE for Teenage Mothers'. Webpage dated:2008. Accessed: 22/5/15

<http://educationinnovations.org/program/future-teenage-mothers>

HOPE for Teenage Mothers provides access to education for teen mothers. Most teen mothers in Kenya do not receive the opportunity to return to school following child birth. By providing access to education for teen mothers, HOPE addresses the social and emotional learning needs of these young female students; including identifying their strengths and goals, discussing the importance of completing their secondary school education, and identifying a career path that will maximise their ability to function independently as a young parent.

Despite having most of their students going through the formal system or vocational training, the project has explored alternative schooling methods such as accelerated learning that cater to those that are not able to attend structured classes. This involves creating a learning environment and schedule suitable to the teens that balance the demands of their personal lives with their education.

Other opportunities provided for these students include engaging with positive role models and mentors. HOPE staff includes not only academic and resource/support teachers but also counsellors and social workers.

3. Nigeria

Gender in Nigeria report 2012. Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria

British Council Nigeria (2012)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67333/Gender-Nigeria2012.pdf

A strong tradition of free education for all in Ekiti State has been maintained by the current Governor. Parents still have to pay for books, uniforms and other basics but costs are kept relatively low. As a result, respondents claimed that very few girls drop out of school and that "both boys and girls go to school in this area, we don't discriminate...". Girls who become pregnant are allowed to continue their schooling once their babies are born.

This report notes country efforts to reduce unwanted pregnancies (eg. The Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young People in Nigeria, 2007) in the health section of the report. It notes pregnant schoolgirls as an issue but does not describe how this is dealt with.

Unintended pregnancy and termination of studies among students in Anambra state, Nigeria: Are secondary schools playing their part?

Onyeka IN, Miettola J, Ilika A, Vaskilampi T. (2011) African Journal of Reproductive Health, 15(2): 109-115

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajrh/article/viewFile/69629/57638>

This study evaluated efforts of secondary schools to prevent unintended pregnancy among students and their reactions to pregnant students before and after delivery. A cross-sectional survey of 46 teachers in three public and two private schools in Anambra state, Nigeria was carried out. Information was collected using self-administered questionnaire. Of all the teachers in the study, 87% reported unintended pregnancies among students in the previous 3 years. Expulsion (43%) and suspension (28%) were the most common reactions. Private schools were more likely to expel pregnant students than public schools. Following the delivery of their babies, 43% discontinued their education in the same school, whereas 37% continued their education in a different school. Counselling was given before suspension or expulsion in 4% of public schools and 15% of private schools. Majority of the schools (61%) did not have sex education as part of their schools' curriculum. Students should be re-admitted in order to ensure continuity of their academic development, prevent unemployment and mitigate poverty-induced repeat pregnancy.

4. UK

The Equality Act 2010 and schools. Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities

Department of Education (2014)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality Act Advice Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)

Pregnancy and maternity section

Protection for pupils from discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity in schools is covered in the Equality Act. This means it is unlawful for schools to treat a pupil less favourably because she becomes pregnant or has recently had a baby, or because she is breastfeeding. Schools will also have to factor in pregnancy and maternity when considering their obligations under the Equality Duty.

Local authorities have a duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable full-time education for any pupils of compulsory school age who would not otherwise receive such an education. This could include pupils of compulsory school age who become pregnant or who are parents. In particular, where pupils are unable to attend their previous school, the local authority would need to consider whether this duty is applied. 'Suitable education' should meet the individual needs of the pupil and must take account of their age, ability, aptitude and individual needs including any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities must have regard to statutory guidance on alternative provision and the ensuring a good education for children unable to attend school because of health needs.

Supporting Pregnant Teenagers and Young Parents in Education. Guidance for Education Settings

London Borough of Merton. Children, Schools and Families

http://www.merton.gov.uk/supporting_pregnant_teenagers_and_young_parents_in_education_lbm_guidance_2014.pdf

The Equality Act ensures protection from discrimination for pupils who are pregnant. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced guidance for schools on the Equality Act. This means that it is unlawful for schools to treat a pupil less favourably because she becomes pregnant or has recently had a baby, or because she is breastfeeding. Schools will also have to factor in pregnancy and maternity when considering their obligations under the new Equality Duty.

Although the specific provision in the Act is new, schools should already be aware of their specific responsibilities to any student in their care who become pregnant or are parents. Previous government guidance makes it clear that schools must not exclude simply on the grounds of her becoming pregnant but should allow her no more than 18 calendar weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of her child. This is in order to ensure that she is reintegrated into education as quickly as possible. Pregnancy is not an illness and therefore DfE guidance for pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs does not apply.

The new Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training (DfE, March 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/349300/Participation_of_Young_People_Statutory_Guidance.pdf) also sets out that parents caring for children would be expected to participate in education and may qualify for Care to Learn to enable them to do so. Care to Learn is a childcare subsidy for women under 20. A reasonable period of maternity leave (up to 18 calendar weeks) is, however, justified.

Guidance emphasises the importance of support from re-integration and education welfare officers to enable pregnant students and school age mothers to complete their education.

Entitlements of School Aged Pregnant Women and Young Parents:

- Right to remain in education. Cannot be excluded.
- Pastoral and education support from a named teacher who they will see regularly.
- Attendance. Expected to be as regular as pregnancy allows. All Merton Schools are advised to offer support to their students. The young woman is entitled to up to 18 weeks "authorised absence" to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. Up to two weeks paternity leave for a young father to help to care for his child would be considered reasonable and should be in line with statutory paternity leave provision.

Schools must acknowledge the additional needs that school age fathers and fathers to be may have. If a member of staff finds that a pupil is a father or father-to-be a pastoral member of staff should be identified to take responsibility for addressing their needs. The named teacher should encourage the young man to speak to his parents or carers and a referral should be made to the Children's Centre for on-going family support. The educational setting may wish to allow young fathers or fathers-to-be authorised absence to accompany partners to antenatal and post-natal health checks and permit a father to take two weeks paternity leave if he so wishes. Paternity leave may be taken in accordance with ordinary parental leave. Leave cannot start before the birth and must end within 56 days of the birth.

Teenage Parents Next Steps: Guidance for Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts

Department of Health (2007)

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00597-2007BKT-EN.pdf>

Re-integration into schools is included in the section: supporting teenage parents to achieve better outcomes. Services support housing, benefit, and education issues. The delivery chain that will ensure that effective support is forthcoming includes a wide range of agencies and services. Directors of Children's Services need to ensure that Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators and other key staff have the resources and support they need to ensure this strategy is successful. This involves midwives, health visitors, children's centres etc.

This document aims to help local authorities to understand the challenge they face in effectively supporting teenage parents and the need for an integrated package of support to be in place.

Guidance on the Education of Pregnant Schoolgirls and School Age Parents

Gloucestershire County Council (2012)

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=52406&p=0>

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide suitable education for all pupils for whom they are responsible including pupils of compulsory school age who become parents. The local authority should consult the pupil, parents/carers and the school to secure a package that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and individual needs including any special educational needs they may have.

The local authority may find a place at a pupil referral centre or other educational centre during periods of absence from school, or choose to provide home tuition. Pregnant schoolgirls and school age mothers attending a pupil referral unit will maintain links with and remain on the roll of their mainstream school. The aim should be reintegration wherever possible.

Evidence suggests that help with transport for this group has a positive impact on attendance. Where no statutory provision exists, it is good practice for the local authority to provide assistance with transport in circumstances where for example, a GP certifies that the pupil's state of pregnancy is such that they are no longer able to walk to school. A local authority officer has been identified as the lead for school aged parents and takes responsibility for this group.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents to secure education of their children of compulsory school age either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Parents of teenage parents are obliged therefore to ensure that their child attends the provision arranged by the LA.

The DfE publication Guidance on the Education of School Age Parents makes specific the role and responsibility of the school if a pupil on their roll becomes pregnant. When this occurs the school must, in line with their agreed confidentiality policy, "ensure that the pupil receives full information about services in her local area, knows how to access them and has the opportunity to talk through the options available to her." School staff are not bound to inform parents unless their Confidentiality Policy specifically requires them to do so although staff should encourage a pupil to talk to their parents whenever possible. The guidance is clear that pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school and there is no evidence that keeping a pregnant girl in school will encourage others to become pregnant.

The Equality Act 2010 removed the exemption that previously applied in schools about bringing discrimination cases on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity and these provisions were commenced in October 2010.

Brighton and Hove City Council. Home Tuition for children unable to go to school

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/schools/home-tuition-children-unable-go-school>

The Council 'consider supporting pupils who are pregnant if tuition is required in the last few weeks of pregnancy. Tuition may also be available for a short time after the birth, to help the pupil return to school'.

Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer (TPRO)- Links to EOTAS (Educated other than at school) re: Home Tuition Protocol

From Brighton and Hove City Council (Attached via email)

- TPRO contacts young woman as usual
- TPRO to make assessment of likelihood for home tuition to be accessed for the 18 weeks including before and after birth, as per guidance (Ref: DfES/0629/2001) Consent to share medical information completed if necessary
- Home Tuition referral Form with information about young woman emailed to Service Development Officer for information.
- Young woman added to Home Tuition spreadsheet
- Home Tutor to be identified and contacted by EOTAS at appropriate time. Information sent to Home Tutor and TPRO to be copied in. Ongoing contact with Tutor as before by TPRO.
- Tutor to be involved in 6 weekly PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings with school
- At the end of 18 weeks tuition to cease and school aged Mother to return to school. Reviewable at that point dependent on special circumstances (i.e. Y11 nearing exams etc). EOTAS Coordinator to make decision dependent on circumstances.

5. Ghana

Challenging Heights, Child-led Research Project 2013, "Teenage Pregnancy"

Edwards C et al. (facilitators) 2013. Challenging Heights

<http://challengingheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Child-led-research-teenage-pregnancy-CH-FINAL-report-24-Oct-2013.doc>

Challenging Heights works to support child rights, especially children's right to education and the prevention of child labor and child trafficking, particularly in the fishing industry. Children are often sent/sold from "source communities" along the coast to "destination communities" on Lake Volta to work long hours at difficult and dangerous tasks on small fishing canoes harvesting fish. In order to ensure that more children have access to education, Challenging Heights established a school in 2007 in an impoverished neighborhood of Winneba where child trafficking is common. Many children in this area were not going to school, had been trafficked, and/or were engaged in child labor. The school caters to children who are

survivors of child trafficking or who are at-risk of being trafficked. Since 2007, the school has grown quickly and now has more than 750 students in nursery, primary, and junior high school classes.

Recent information from the Ghana Health Service indicates that alarming numbers of teenagers in Ghana are becoming pregnant, with incidence of teenage pregnancy on the rise. The Central Region in particular has recently been the focus of much concern from governments and NGOs relating to this topic, with a 14.8% increase in teenage pregnancy from 2011 to 2012. In 2012, 13,780 teenagers became pregnant in the Central Region alone.

Challenging Heights (CH) initiated this project as a part of the Participate research initiative to give voice to marginalised children in the post-2015 development debate. Data from children interviewed were categorised into three main themes:

- 1) Lack of parental care and advice. Child participants and researchers identified that girls may engage in sex to meet their basic needs. If they then fall pregnant, they become at risk for further neglect and abandonment by their parents and family.
- 2) Lack of education on prevention of pregnancy. Researchers and interviewed children identified that some girls do not have proper education on how to avoid having sex or how to prevent pregnancy if they do have sex if they have a boyfriend or because they are trying to meet their basic needs.
- 3) Older men who impregnate teenage girls should be held accountable. Many of the researchers and peer interviewees suggested that men who impregnate teenage girls will be arrested, with more than 28% of children citing this as a likely consequence of a man impregnating a teenager.

The Effects of Teenage Pregnancy on the Educational Attainment of Girls at Chorkor, a Suburb of Accra

<http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/viewFile/542/567>

Recently, the incidence of teenage pregnancy has been very high in Ghana. The study therefore was designed to explore the effects of teenage pregnancy on the educational attainment of the girl-child at Chorkor. A total sample size of fifty-five (55) respondents was used for the study. Questionnaire, in-depth interview, focus group discussions and observation were used to collect data for the study. With respect to factors that lead to teenage pregnancy, it was evident that poor parenting, poverty and peer influence are the major causes of teenage pregnancy. The study also revealed that most of the teenage mothers drop out of school. The study therefore recommended that teenage mothers should be helped in their psychosocial development and job skills development.

6. Other useful resources

Life and learning under the shadow of the Ebola virus

Jozwiak G (2014) Times Education Supplement, 5 December 2014.

<https://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storyCode=6453319>

To address the problem of school children not returning to school because of the Ebola outbreak the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union is delivering lessons over national radio, in a project launched by the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Education in October.

Every day, teachers present three 90-minute shows pitched at primary, junior-secondary and senior-secondary levels. "Children listen and call or text comments or questions," Kuyateh says. "The difficulty is that some children do not have access to radios. But a good number are listening."

Connecting the private and the public: pregnancy, exclusion, and the expansion of schooling in Africa

Unterhalter E. (2013) *Gender and Education*, 25 (1): 75-90.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09540253.2012.742218>

Much of the policy prescription of large global organisations concerned with the expansion of secondary schooling in Africa does not sufficiently take account of the connection between the gender dynamics of the private and that of the public outlined in Leonard's work. In showing some of the effects of this oversight, this article reports on data from research studies in five countries in Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana) to show how aspects of silence, evasion, and stereotyping often characterise teachers' and education officials' reflections on youth and pregnancy.

Data from the studies highlight how ill equipped schools, families, and education officials are to appreciate the range of issues that the exclusion of pregnant schoolgirls raises. The issue of pregnancy connects many different sites of policy and practice that usually work in separate fields, sometimes with tragic consequences. Some national government officials and teachers see it as a problem undermining school attendance or status, which is also undoubtedly the case. District officials and head teachers are concerned to observe regulations and often lack the professional language, confidence, or networks to work beyond these.

This preliminary review of literature and data from three projects in Africa indicates that we know very little about young women's views on pregnancy, school exclusion, and the relationships that support girls' continuing education and those that make this difficult. While some teachers or education officials interviewed acknowledge the importance of more research on teenage pregnancy and the need for more opportunities to work across departments, a more prevalent view attributes shame to schoolgirls and silence or evasion on the complexity of the questions that teenage pregnancy raises. The portrayal of girls with little attention to what they say or think is a key feature of this gendered politics of shame, silence, and stereotyping.

Because I am a Girl, Africa Report 2012, Progress and obstacles to girls' education in Africa

Education for Change, Grout-Smith J, Tanner S, Postles C and O'Reilly H. (2012) Plan International

https://plan-international.org/girls/pdfs/Progress%20and%20obstacles%20to%20girls%20education%20in%20Africa_ENG.pdf

States...shall have all appropriate measures to 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.

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 11)

Many countries, including Malawi, Kenya, Ghana and Liberia, have amended legislation and policies to recognise explicitly the right of pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers to remain in school. However, these legal rights and policies are seldom implemented or enforced at a local level.

Kenya

Impact of teenage motherhood on the academic performance in public primary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya

http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1427875021_Barmao-Kiptanui%20et%20al.pdf

Bending the private-public gender norms: negotiating schooling for young mothers from low-income households in Kenya

http://thesis.eur.nl/pub/8766/Wekesa_Alice_SB0605_Final_RP.pdf

Hope for Teenage Mothers

<http://hopeforteenagemothers.org/welcome/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HopeForTeenageMothers>

Empowering Teen Mothers in Kenya

<http://www.educationinnovations.org/blog/empowering-teen-mothers-kenya>

Pregnancy forcing girls to leave class in Kilifi

<http://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/kenya/what-we-do/our-successes/pregnancy-forcing-girls-out-of-school-in-kilifi/>

General

Developing an Education Sector Response to Early and Unintended Pregnancy

http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Developing_an_education_sector_response_to_early_and_unintended_pregnancy_Global_consultation_4-6_Nov_2014.pdf

Getting Adolescent Girls Back in School—A Needs Assessment

<http://campaignforeducationusa.org/blog/detail/getting-adolescent-girls-back-in-school-a-needs-assessment>

Re-entry to School after Giving Birth: An Evaluation of the Process used to Design and Implement Policy in Zambia

http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/ImpAccess_RPC/PTA70.pdf

10. Additional information

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