

FACT SHEET

Pregnant and Parenting Students' Rights: FAQs for College and Graduate Students

October 2012

If you are a pregnant or parenting student, you should know that under Title IX, you have a right to stay in school so you can meet your education and career goals. Below are answers to frequently asked questions from students in post-secondary schools, including colleges, community colleges, universities, for-profit institutions, trade schools, etc.

How does Title IX apply to pregnant or parenting students?

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex - including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions, such as abortion - in all educational programs and activities that get federal funding. This means that schools must give all students who might be, are, or have been pregnant the same access to school programs and educational opportunities that other students have. Your professors or administrators should not tell you that you have to drop out of your classes or program or change your educational plans due to your pregnancy.

Does my school have to excuse my absences due to pregnancy, childbirth, or abortion?

Your school must excuse your absences due to pregnancy or any related conditions for as long as your doctor says it is necessary for you to be absent. This is true even if there is no leave policy for students with other conditions. When you return to school, you must be reinstated to the status you held before your leave. The school can require you to submit a doctor's note only if that is required of students with other medical conditions.

My professor adjusts grades based on class attendance. Can she lower my grade because of the classes I miss?

You cannot be penalized for pregnancy or other related conditions. If a professor provides specific "points" or other advantages to students based on class

Where do I start to figure out whether or not my school is violating Title IX?

- A good first step in measuring your school's compliance is to compare how they treat pregnant students to how they treat students with other temporary disabilities. Under Title IX, schools must offer pregnant students the same benefits they offer to students with other temporary medical conditions.
- One exception to this rule is absences - Title IX requires that schools excuse absences due to pregnancy and related conditions, regardless of the school's absence policy.
- Your school is required to designate a Title IX Coordinator who should be able to answer questions for you about Title IX and pregnancy.
- Some states and school districts have their own laws that provide other protections, or even support services, for students. You should talk to a lawyer to find out what policies apply in your area.

attendance, you must be given the opportunity to earn back the credit from classes you miss due to pregnancy, so that you can be reinstated to the status you held before you took leave.

Does my school have to let me make up the work I missed while I was absent?

Yes, your school must let you make up the work you missed while you were out due to pregnancy or any related conditions, including recovery from childbirth.

For example, if you have a doctor's note that excuses you from class for several weeks because you were