POLICY FOR PREGNANT SCHOOL GIRLS

“Sacred Heart School exists to provide a community that values Catholic traditions and beliefs. Our priorities are:

- to care for the community
- to encourage individual growth
- to work towards academic success.”

Sacred Heart School shall endeavour to care purposefully for the well-being and development of pregnant schoolgirls and the unborn child.

It is to be noted from the Cleveland Child Protection Committee that:

“Parents and Carers should be aware that the school has a duty to take reasonable action to ensure the welfare and safety of its students. In cases where school staff have cause to be concerned that a student may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff will follow County Child Care Protection procedures and inform the Social Services of their concern.”

Sound and sensitive judgements will need to be made with regard to each individual situation.

Sacred Heart School has adopted the following procedures in dealing with either a suspected pregnancy or the disclosure of a confirmed pregnancy:

- Inform the relevant Head of Year, Deputy Head [Pastoral] and Headteacher
- The Deputy Head or Head of Year will discuss the situation, in a supportive and non-judgemental manner, with the individual student. Under no circumstances must a member of staff take a schoolgirl for a pregnancy test, as doing so can place those employees in a legally vulnerable position.
- Ascertain whether the schoolgirl’s parents are aware of the pregnancy.
- If they are not aware of the situation, offer to arrange a meeting with parents, the schoolgirl and the Deputy Head/Head of Year so together the parents can be informed, or request that the schoolgirl inform her parents that evening and ask her parents to contact the above staff early the next day.
- Explain to both parents and schoolgirl that all cases of schoolgirl pregnancy must be referred to the Team Leader of the Education Social Work Service.
- The Team Leader will assess whether or not there are any child protection concerns for the mother or the unborn child.
- All cases where the pregnancy was conceived under the age of 13 years will be referred automatically to Social Services Department and a strategy meeting held.

Each situation is different and as such Sacred Heart School would work with the individual in order to adopt a strategy with which the schoolgirl and her family feel both comfortable and supported. Arrangements can be made for the schoolgirl to continue her education outside of the school environment, however should the
schoolgirl wish to continue her immediate education in school, the following
arrangements would be made.

- Inform the PE Department and withdraw the schoolgirl from the lesson.
- Implementation of suitable, appropriate health and safety strategies, relevant
to the school environment, for both the schoolgirl and the unborn child, for
example arrange for the schoolgirl to leave the lesson slightly before the end
of the lesson in order to avoid the dangers of busy staircases and congested
areas.

At such a time when the schoolgirl can no longer wear her school uniform,
arrangements would be made for her education to continue at another establishment.
Sacred Heart School will ensure that appropriate liaison with external agencies with
regard to schoolwork would be maintained.
Following the period of confinement, the schoolgirl will be sensitively reintegrated into
normal school life. Consideration would be given to adopting a constructive modified
curriculum, which would allow the schoolgirl the opportunity to gain meaningful
examination results.