



## **Pregnancy Policy**

Owensboro Catholic Schools teach the Commandments and Teachings of the Church concerning chastity and opposes anything that could lead to premarital sexual activity. The school actively promotes respect for sacredness of all life, especially that of the unborn, and stands strongly in support of good Christian parenting and the family

Even with the care and guidance of the Catholic family and school community, it may happen that a student becomes and expectant parent. At such a time, OCS has a dual role responsibility toward both the good of the student and the common good of the school.

Administrators and educators, aware of the level of moral reasoning and tensions of our students, are fearful that former policies may have forced or pushed students toward life decisions that would be morally unacceptable. There is a fear that punitive policies can cause extra stress in an already stressful situation and might prevent some from seeking proper counsel. OCS recognizes that the pregnant student or student father as made a choice that cannot be undone, and seeks to offer support to carry the pregnancy to term. As an educational and faith community to the student, OCS will seek to provide an environment where a pregnant teenager can find support, compassion, and forgiveness. There is no attempt to discipline the student for the purpose of punishing a moral offence. This is an issue between the student, his/her priest-confessor, and God. Care will be taken that there is no discrimination in which young men and young women are considered in this area.

Consistent with the Guidelines for Christian Marriage for the Diocese of Owensboro, OCS opposes marriage for students involved with a pregnancy. Nevertheless, there are expected to assume responsibility concomitant with the act of bringing a new human life into the world. This implies a change in priorities. The pregnant girl should be caring for herself as a mother-to-be. The father is expected to accept his responsibilities as the individual situation calls for.

We at OCS have a great respect for the sacredness of life and therefore rejoice in an expectant parent's decision to choose life amid a culture of death and convenience. We offer to students who are parents or expecting to be parents all the respect and compassion our school system is able to give. We celebrate the birth of all children and believe them to be children of God and, as such, that they should be treated accordingly. For the good health of the child and maintenance of an environment conducive to the academic process, we prohibit the child's presence in the building during regular school hours; however, we welcome family participation in school Mass. Therefore, it is permissible for the caregiver of the child and the child to attend a school Mass. All other exceptions to this policy must be approved according to the visitor's policy.

Each case of student pregnancy presents the possibility of unique circumstances which require specific interpretation and application. The principal and administration are responsible for making such interpretation and decisions.

## OCH Pregnancy Policy Guidelines

### Female Students

1. As soon as possible, the student and her parents/guardians are required to inform the Guidance Counselor who will inform the Principal of the pregnancy.
2. The student is required to provide a statement from her doctor indicating that her physical condition will allow her to remain a student at OCS and participate in extracurricular activities.
3. The student will meet with the Guidance Counselor and come up with a plan of action for the student that will include the following:
  - a) An academic assessment with possible adjustments if necessary to classes and course levels
  - b) An assessment of the student's participation in extracurricular activities with regard to the impact on the student and the student's representation of OCS.
  - c) Go over the schools expectations during and after pregnancy.
4. The student is required to see the school Guidance Counselor during and after the pregnancy so that any needs which arise may be met.

### Male Students

1. As soon as possible, the student and his parents/guardians are required to inform the Guidance Counselor who will inform the Principal of the pregnancy.
2. The student will meet with the Guidance Counselor and come up with a plan of action for the student that will include the following:
  - a) An academic assessment with possible adjustments if necessary to classes and course levels
  - b) An assessment of the student's participation in extracurricular activities with regard to the impact on the student and the student's representation of OCS.
  - c) Go over the schools expectations during and after pregnancy.
3. The student is required to see the school Guidance Counselor during and after the pregnancy so that any needs which arise may be met.