

## MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy #:	03-0009				
Name of Policy:	Pregnant and Parenting Student Policy				
Date of Last Revision:	January 2024	Initial Date of Approval:	Unknown	Initial Effective Date:	June 2017
Policy Owner	Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator				
Policy/Chapter Sections					
Date of Next Review:	February 2027				

### 1.0 PURPOSE

A pregnant and parenting student policy is designed to address the specific needs and challenges faced by students who are pregnant or parenting. The purpose of such a policy is to create a supportive and inclusive environment within educational institutions, ensuring that these students have equal access to education and opportunities.

### 2.0 SCOPE

The scope of this policy covers a range of areas to ensure the well-being, equal treatment, and educational access for pregnant and parenting students.

### 3.0 POLICY

#### Policy Statement

A student who foresees any educational issues related to a pregnancy or due to parenting responsibilities is strongly encouraged to notify University personnel as soon as possible. By doing so, the student and University personnel can collaborate and develop an appropriate plan for the continuation of the student's education. Pre-planning can also help with particular challenges a student may face while pregnant, when recovering from childbirth, or due to parenting obligations (e.g., missed classes, make-up work, etc.), and this planning can be particularly beneficial in health sciences and teacher preparation programs due to their practical requirements. Please note, however, that the choice to inform the University of a pregnancy is voluntary, and a student is not required to share this information with the University.

#### Options

If a student voluntarily decides to disclose a pregnancy to the University or is concerned that parenting responsibilities may have an impact on class attendance or other educational obligations, the student should contact the Title IX Coordinator. Once contact has been made, the student will have several options, as described below.

1. Continue at the University and Seek Reasonable Adjustments to Educational Obligations
  - If a student decides to continue in his/her program and desires to have any adjustments to his/her academic program due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities, the student, faculty member(s), and department chair will discuss any reasonable adjustments that may be implemented. The department chair may also consult with other University personnel in determining what, if any, reasonable adjustments are available. Also, while the student is able to and encouraged to ask for specific adjustments that are believed to be necessary, the University reserves the right to deny specific requests that it determines are not reasonable in light of the University's programs and the particular circumstances raised by the student's situation.
  - Adjustments that have been agreed upon, if any, will be documented and signed by the student, the faculty member(s), and the department chair.
  
2. Request a Leave of Absence
  - A student may desire to take a leave of absence due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities, and the Title IX Coordinator is available to discuss this option with the student.
  - A leave of absence due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities may be for various amounts of time depending on a student's particular circumstances. A leave based on pregnancy may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the student's doctor.
  - Due to the structure of the University's health sciences and teacher preparation programs, the timing and/or length of a student's leave of absence may result in the student being required to re-take or finish course(s) in a future term.
  - If taking a leave of absence under this policy, an Education Plan will be discussed and signed by the student, the faculty member(s) and the department chair.
  
3. Withdraw from the University
  - The student may, in his/her sole discretion, determine that he/she must withdraw from the University for an indefinite period of time or permanently due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities. Normal University withdrawal procedures, and readmission procedures (if applicable), apply.

#### **4.0 HISTORY**

This policy may be revised, edited, changed, or removed at any time with or without notice to applicable individuals.

January 2024 – updated to new format.

#### **5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

None