



**Know Your Rights: Pregnant or Parenting?  
Discrimination Protection Under Title IX at Gaston College**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex—including pregnancy and parental status—in educational programs and activities.

***Classes and School Activities – Gaston College MUST:***

- Allow you to stay involved in your regular classes and extracurricular activities while pregnant. This includes advanced placement or honors courses, clubs, sports, honor societies, student leadership roles, and after-school programs.
  - Allow you to decide whether to participate in any special instructional programs or classes for pregnant students. Participation is optional, and schools cannot pressure you. If you do participate, the program must provide the same academic, extracurricular, and enrichment opportunities as regular programs.
- Allow you to participate in classes and extracurricular activities without exclusion due to pregnancy. A doctor's note can only be required if the same documentation is required of all students with similar medical conditions. After childbirth, a doctor's note can only be required if it's needed for all students hospitalized for other conditions.
- Provide reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy, such as a larger desk, elevator access, or more frequent restroom breaks, as needed.

***Excused Absences and Medical Leave – Gaston College MUST:***

- Excuse pregnancy- or childbirth-related absences for the full length of time your doctor says is needed.
- Allow you to return to the same academic and extracurricular standing you had before your medical leave, including the chance to make up missed assignments or activities.
- Make sure teachers follow Title IX rules on excused absences and medical leave. Teachers cannot deny you the chance to turn in missed work or unfairly penalize you for absences. If participation or attendance counts toward a grade, you must be given a fair way to make up those credits.
- Provide the same support services to pregnant students as it does to students with temporary medical conditions—for example, homebound instruction, tutoring at home, or independent study.

### ***Harassment – Gaston College MUST:***

- Protect you from sex-based harassment, including harassment related to pregnancy or related conditions. This includes things like sexual jokes or comments about your pregnancy, offensive name-calling, rumors about your sexual activity, or unwanted sexual propositions or gestures—especially if the behavior is severe enough to limit your ability to participate in or benefit from school programs.

### ***Policies and Procedures – Gaston College MUST:***

- Maintain and share a policy that prohibits sex discrimination. The policy should clearly state that this includes discrimination against pregnant and parenting students.
- Establish and publish grievance procedures that allow students to file complaints of sex discrimination, including discrimination based on pregnancy or parental status.
- Designate at least one employee—often called a Title IX Coordinator—to ensure compliance with Title IX. The school must inform all students and staff of this person’s name, title, and contact information. The coordinator is responsible for handling complaints of discrimination, including those involving pregnant and parenting students.

### ***Helpful Tips for Pregnant and Parenting Students:***

- Reach out for support—talk with your school’s Title IX Coordinator or a counselor about the resources and accommodations available to help you stay on track with your education.
- Keep records of your pregnancy-related absences, any harassment, and your communications with school staff. Report any problems right away to the Title IX Coordinator, a counselor, or another trusted staff member.
- If you believe your school is discriminating against you because of pregnancy or parenting, you have the right to file a complaint:
  - Through your school’s Title IX grievance process.
  - With the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), even if you have not filed with your school. Complaints to OCR must be submitted within 180 days of the discrimination.
  - In court, even if you have not filed a complaint with your school or OCR.
- Contact the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) with any questions. They are available to help ensure that pregnant and parenting students receive equal access to educational opportunities.

If you want to learn more about your rights, or if you believe that a school district, college, or university is violating Federal law, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at (800) 421-3481 or [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov). If you wish to fill out a complaint form online, you may do so through the [OCR Discrimination Complaint Form](#).