



January 2016

**Here are responses to frequently asked questions on Title IX, pregnancy, and student rights.**

### **Does my school have to excuse medically necessary absences due to pregnancy, childbirth, abortion or related conditions?**

Yes. Under Title IX your institution must excuse any absences related to these conditions, so long as your doctor says the absence is medically necessary. Further, your school's disability leave policy and/or maternity leave policy may provide leaves for even longer than what is medically necessary. When you return from your absence, you must be reinstated to the same status you held before you left—there can be no penalty for your leave.

### **What is an "excused absence"? Do I have to complete make-up work?**

You can't be penalized for taking legally-protected leave. Professors may require you to complete missed assignments or other work to make up for missed participation, but the make-up work should be comparable with the work given to other students, not extra. When setting timelines for make-up or missed work, professors need to treat leave as leave; for example, assignment deadlines should not be the day you return, but should be pushed back to give you at least the same amount of time as other students have had to complete the assignments.

### **I've had a difficult pregnancy or childbirth. Can my school provide support?**

If the school provides any special services or accommodations for temporarily disabled students—and most do—under Title IX you are equally entitled to the same services. Additionally, depending upon your condition, you may also have a right to accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accommodations range from providing more accessible desks to establishing home study programs. See <http://www.thepregnantscholar.org/accommodating-pregnancy-related-conditions/> for advice on how to request an accommodation.

### **Does Title IX only protect me in the classroom?**

No. Title IX covers all aspects of your education wherever they occur—you cannot be forced to limit your educational activities due to pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, or related conditions. This includes school sponsored internships or externships, clinics, lab work, athletics and extracurricular activities. Job placement and career counseling can't be biased because of your pregnancy or parental status.

### **Do I have a right to pump breastmilk at school?**

Your school should accommodate necessary absences for pumping breastmilk, just as it must accommodate other medically-necessary absences resulting from pregnancy and related conditions. Many colleges have private, well-equipped spaces (other than a bathroom) where you should be able to pump. Policies vary from university to university, but the bottom line is that you cannot be prevented from getting your education because you are breastfeeding. Please see



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

<http://www.thepregnantscholar.org/for-students/know-your-rights-breastfeeding/> for more information.

### **I work for my school as an employee. Do I have rights?**

In addition to the rights you have under Title IX as a student, you may also be covered by other laws that protect employees. Discrimination against employees based on pregnancy or sex-based stereotypes about parents is illegal.

Additionally, employees with pregnancy-related conditions that constitute disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are entitled to reasonable accommodations under that law.

Finally, you may be entitled to paid or unpaid job-protected leave because of pregnancy or childbirth. For more information about your rights as a pregnant employee, see our page [www.thepregnantscholar.org/for-students/working-at-school-while-pregnant-parenting/](http://www.thepregnantscholar.org/for-students/working-at-school-while-pregnant-parenting/) or visit our comprehensive online resource center [www.PregnantatWork.org](http://www.PregnantatWork.org).

### **I've been treated negatively because of my pregnancy/childbirth/miscarriage/false pregnancy/abortion. What can I do?**

Harassing or intimidating you because of your pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage, false pregnancy, or abortion or related condition is sex discrimination in violation of Title IX. Likewise, limiting your educational opportunities on those grounds is illegal. University officials are responsible for preventing and responding to harassment from any member of the university community. Consider reporting your experience to remedy your own situation and to help ensure that others won't go through what you did.

*For more information on making reports, see our guide to reporting at [www.thepregnantscholar.org/find-help](http://www.thepregnantscholar.org/find-help).*