

Know Your Rights: Pregnant & Parenting Under Title IX at Bethel College

Office of Human Resources & Compliance

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. All public and private schools, school districts, colleges and universities receiving any Federal funds (“schools”) must comply with Title IX. Here are some things you should know about your rights:

Classes and School Activities – Bethel College (BC) MUST:

- *Allow you to continue participating in classes and extracurricular activities even though you are pregnant.* This means that you can still participate in advanced placement and honors classes, school clubs, sports, honor societies, student leadership opportunities, and other activities, like after-school programs operated at BC.
 - *Allow you to choose whether you want to participate in special instructional programs or classes for pregnant students.* You can participate if you *want* to, but BC *cannot pressure* you to do so. The alternative program must provide the same types of academic, extracurricular and enrichment opportunities as BC’s regular program.
- *Allow you to participate in classes and extracurricular activities even though you are pregnant and not require you to submit a doctor’s note unless BC requires a doctor’s note from all students who have a physical or emotional condition requiring treatment by a doctor.* BC, also, must not require a doctor’s note from you after you have been hospitalized for childbirth unless it requires a doctor’s note from all students who have been hospitalized for other conditions.
- Provide you with reasonable *adjustments*, like a larger desk, elevator access, or allowing you to make frequent trips to the restroom, when necessary because of your pregnancy.

Excused Absences and Medical Leave – Bethel College (BC) MUST:

- *Excuse absences* due to pregnancy or childbirth for as long as your doctor says it is necessary.
- *Allow you to return* to the same academic and extracurricular status as before your medical leave began, which should include giving you the opportunity to *make up any work missed while you were out.*
- *Ensure that teachers understand the Title IX requirements related to excused absences/medical leave.* Your teacher may not refuse to allow you to submit work after a deadline you missed because of pregnancy or childbirth. If your teacher’s grading is based in part on class participation or attendance and you missed class because of pregnancy or childbirth, you should be allowed to make up the participation or attendance credits you didn’t have the chance to earn.
- Provide pregnant students with the *same special services* it provides to students with temporary medical conditions. This includes *homebound instruction/at-home tutoring/independent study.*

Harassment – Bethel College (BC) MUST:

- *Protect you from harassment* based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions. Comments that could constitute prohibited harassment include making sexual comments or jokes about your pregnancy, calling you sexually charged names, spreading rumors about your sexual activity, and making sexual propositions or gestures, if the comments are sufficiently serious that it interferes with your ability to benefit from or participate in BC’s program.

Policies and Procedures – Bethel College (BC) MUST:

- Have and distribute a *policy against sex discrimination*. It is recommended that the policy make clear that prohibited sex discrimination covers discrimination against pregnant and parenting students.
- *Adopt and publish grievance procedures* for students to file complaints of sex discrimination, including discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. **BC's version of this required policy and procedures is called the [Equal Opportunity, Harassment & Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedures](http://www.bethelks.edu/EqualOpp) and may be found at <http://www.bethelks.edu/EqualOpp>.**
- Identify at least one employee to carry out its responsibilities under Title IX (sometimes called a “*Title IX Coordinator*”) and notify all students and employees of the name, title and contact information of its Title IX Coordinator. These responsibilities include overseeing complaints of discrimination against pregnant and parenting students. **Here at BC the Title IX Coordinator is Jacob Gunden.** He may be reached at (316) 284-5248 or at titleixcoordinator@bethelks.edu.

Helpful Tips for Pregnant and Parenting Students:

- *Ask your school for help* – meet with BC's Title IX Coordinator or counselor regarding what BC can do to support you in continuing your education.
- *Keep notes* about your pregnancy-related absences, any instances of harassment and your interactions with school officials about your pregnancy, and *immediately report problems* to BC's Title IX Coordinator, counselor, or other staff.
- If you feel BC is discriminating against you because you are pregnant or parenting you may *file a complaint*:
 - Using BC's internal Title IX grievance procedures (see <http://www.bethelks.edu/EqualOpp>).
 - With the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), even if you have not filed a complaint with BC. If you file with OCR, make sure you do so within 180 days of when the discrimination took place.
 - In court, even if you have not filed a complaint with BC or with OCR.
- Contact OCR if you have any questions. They are available to help make sure all students, *including pregnant and parenting students*, have equal education opportunities!

If you want to learn more about rights, responsibilities, Bethel College policy and procedures, or would like to know more about your reporting options related to Title IX here at BC, you may contact Jacob Gunden, Title IX Coordinator, at (316) 284-5248 or titleixcoordinator@bethelks.edu. Additional information is also available on our website at www.bethelks.edu.

If you want to learn more about your rights, or if you believe that BC 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. If you wish to fill out a complaint form online, you may do so at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintintro.html>.