

**Penalty > School principals will risk being jailed for three years or Sh3m fine**

# New Bill aims at keeping pregnant girls in school

Draft law provides that a learner should not be denied right to education for being expectant

BY NATION TEAM  
newsdesk@ke.nationmedia.com

Students who get pregnant will not be kicked out of school if a Bill before the Senate becomes law.

However, the Bill might come a little too late for 22 girls at Songollet Secondary School in Uasin Gishu County, who were this week found to be pregnant.

The Care and Protection of Child Parents Bill, 2016, which also forbids compulsory pregnancy tests, seeks to protect school girls who get pregnant against discrimination. It also makes termination of their studies difficult.

The Bill is sponsored by Nominated Senator Elizabeth Ongoro and is likely to be introduced in the House when the Senate resumes next week. It provides that a learner should not be denied her right to education for being expectant. Instead, she should be given adequate support to pursue her dreams.

"Every girl shall have the right to

## Details

### PREGNANCY TEST FOR 22 GIRLS POSITIVE

This week, 22 girls at Songollet Secondary in Uasin Gishu were found to be pregnant. The school principal Syprose Kizito said the students were aged between 14 and 18 years. "I don't want to blame my girls because this problem is a result of them not boarding in the school. The girls go home in the evening, we are not able to monitor them keenly," she said. She wants a dormitory built in the school to house all students "so that they don't fall prey to such incidents".

remain in school and receive the necessary support to continue their education and participate fully during their pregnancy or as a parent student," says the Bill. No one will force the learner out of school unless they request to leave of their own volition.

School administrators will also be required to ensure that such girls study in a conducive environment devoid of harassment.

"A child shall not be compelled to undergo a medical examination where she

refuses to undergo the examination," says the Bill. If after a test the results turn out positive, teachers are barred from revealing the results to anyone else, including a student's parents or guardians. A school principal who defies the proposed law will risk being jailed for three years or a fine of Sh3 million or both.

"The management of an institution of basic education shall not inform the parents or guardians of a child who, while in the institution, falls pregnant unless the child has been consulted on the matter," the Bill says.

Once they give birth, they will be given a year off to look after their babies but must be readmitted once the period elapses. At home, their parents or guardians will be expected to provide maximum care to ensure they recuperate faster in order to return to class.

County governments will be required to build and maintain care centres that will take care of the school girls' children.

Ms Ongoro said the Bill was necessary in order to prevent stigmatisation in schools owing to pregnancy. She said most of the pregnant students were victims of discrimination and vilification by fellow students and teachers, a situation she argued had led many to drop out of school.