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MINISTER GWARUBE PUBLISHES DRAFT BELA REGULATIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER PREGNANCY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

The draft learner pregnancy regulations represent a critical step in safeguarding the constitutional right to education for all learners, particularly vulnerable girl children. They are designed to ensure that pregnant learners are supported to remain in school during pregnancy and are able to return to school after childbirth, without fear of expulsion or exclusion.

The regulations further require schools to foster a non-discriminatory and supportive environment for pregnant learners. In partnership with the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development, schools will facilitate access to essential ante-natal, post-natal, and psychosocial support services. Minister Gwarube emphasised that South Africa has made significant progress in protecting the rights of pregnant learners. “We have moved away from a painful past where young girls were expelled or forced out of school due to pregnancy, these practices contributed to alarmingly high dropout rates. These regulations build on that progress and reaffirm our commitment to dignity, inclusion, and equal opportunity.”

Importantly, the draft regulations introduce a mandatory reporting requirement: where a learner under the age of 16 years falls pregnant, the school must report the matter to the Department of Social Development and to the South African Police Service. Members of the public are invited to submit written comments to: LearnerPregnancyRegz@dbe.gov.za within 30 days from the date of publication of 25 March 2026.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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