

Student Parental Policy

POLICY COVERSHEET

# Key Details

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| **POLICY TITLE** | 11.1 Student Parental Policy |
| **DATE APPROVED** | 16 May 2024 |
| **APPROVING BODY** | Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee |
| **VERSION** | Version 2.0 |
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| **OUTCOME OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT** | *No major change – previous EIA had addressed areas of concern.* |
| **RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / GUIDANCE** | Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy  Student Disciplinary and Conduct Policy  Mitigating Circumstances Procedure |
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| **POLICY OWNER (JOB TITLE)** | Director of Student Services |
| **UNIT / SERVICE** | Student Services |
| **CONTACT EMAIL** | izone@cardiffmet.ac.uk |

# Version Control

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| **VERSION** | **DATE** | **REASON FOR CHANGE** |
| 1.0 | 09 June 2021 | First version |
| 2.0 | 30 April 2024 | Triennial review |

# Policy Hub

## For further information on policies:

1. You can go to the Secretariat pages on InSite at [https://outlookuwicac.sharepoint.com/sites/Secretariat](https://outlookuwicac.sharepoint.com/sites/Secretariat/);
2. You can go to the Policy Hub at [cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub); or
3. Contact [policies@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:policies@cardiffmet.ac.uk).

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[2 You can go to the Policy Hub at cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub; or 1](#_Toc165366316)

[3 Contact policies@cardiffmet.ac.uk. 1](#_Toc165366317)

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# Policy Statement

Cardiff Metropolitan University believes that becoming pregnant, adopting or caring for a child should not in itself prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. The University is committed to showing as much flexibility as reasonably practicable to facilitate students’ success and to ensure that no student is disadvantaged as a result, whilst maintaining academic standards. The degree of flexibility that can be offered will vary between Schools depending on curriculum design, but all Schools will follow the general approach set out in this document.

The health and safety of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times, and Schools and Professional Services will deal with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive, non-judgmental and confidential manner. Only members of staff who need to be informed for valid reasons will be informed of a student’s circumstances and this will be done only with the student’s prior consent. Names of staff members who have been informed will be recorded on the student’s pregnancy support plan.

# Scope of the Policy

The policy covers any enrolled student who is pregnant, considering adoption or caring for a child. It also covers any enrolled student who is the partner of someone who is pregnant and expects to be responsible for the child, and any person becoming a parent (e.g. through adoption) of a child.

The policy should also be read in conjunction with the [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/structureandgovernance/equalityanddiversity/Documents/EDI-Policy-2020.pdf) which sets out the University’s commitment towards the development of an inclusive working and learning environment for all staff and students where all people have the opportunity to flourish and reach their potential.

# Legal protection

The Equality Act 2010 significantly strengthened the legal protection for pregnancy and maternity in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act considers pregnancy and maternity to be a protected characteristic and prohibits discrimination on these grounds.

Section 17 of the Act extends protection from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity to women outside the workplace and specifically includes Higher Education.

Under the Act, discrimination can occur against a student because of their pregnancy or because they have given birth if:

* the student is treated less favourably than other students because of their pregnancy
* within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth the student is treated unfavourably because they have given birth; this also applies in cases of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death provided more than 24 weeks of the pregnancy has elapsed
* the student is treated unfavourably because they are breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old; if the child is more than 26 weeks old, unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding is likely to constitute sex discrimination

The protection afforded due to pregnancy and maternity is narrower than other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Consequently, there is no protection afforded for discrimination that occurs by being associated with someone who is pregnant or in a period of maternity, or being perceived to be pregnant or in a period of maternity. However, if a student’s partner is treated unfavourably because of their pregnancy or because they have given birth, this may constitute sex discrimination.

Under the Act, it is unlawful for Higher Education Institutions to discriminate against applicants and students in relation to admissions; the provision of education; access to any benefit, facility or service; and disciplinary proceedings. The protected characteristic of pregnancy and

maternity is included in the public sector equality duty (PSED) of the Equality Act. The

PSED requires HEIs to have due regard to the need to:

* eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is

prohibited by or under the Act

* advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected

characteristic and people who do not share it

* foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic

and people who do not share it

# Pregnancy Support plans

All undergraduate and taught postgraduate students who experience pregnancy during their time at Cardiff Met will have a personalized pregnancy support plan (available from the Taught Programmes Office or equivalent in each School) which will ensure that they are able to continue to study if they wish to. The Pregnancy Support Plan will include both a risk assessment, and details of any adjustments to study.

The Programme Director will be responsible for ensuring that the pregnancy support plan is completed. They may delegate this to another member of academic staff, such as a Personal Academic Tutor, as long as that member of staff is familiar with the academic demands of the student’s programme of study. The pregnancy support plan must be completed in partnership with the student. Completed pregnancy support plans will be stored securely by the Taught Programmes Office (or equivalent) in the relevant School.

In all cases only staff named on the pregnancy support plan will be given access to it, alongside the programme admin team. The pregnancy support plan should be revisited on a regular basis to allow for any changes or updates that may occur.

# Guidance for pregnant students

## 5.1 Pre-enrolment

Students who are pregnant while applying to study at Cardiff Met, and who will still be so once enrolled should advise the Admissions team as early as possible. The admissions team will then refer the student to the relevant staff member to complete the pregnancy risk assessment. Pre-enrolment students should contact [askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk)I. Being pregnant will not on its own prevent a student from enrolling on a programme of study.

## 5.2 Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students

### 5.2.1 Notifying the university

Students should notify the university in writing of their pregnancy as soon as they have decided to proceed to full term, and in any case at least 15 weeks before the expected date of birth. The first point of contact should be the Personal Academic Tutor, but a student may choose another member of staff if they prefer. In all cases, the member of staff will seek the permission of the student to notify the Programme Director so that the pregnancy support plan can be completed.

### 5.2.2 Ante-natal appointments.

Students will be allowed reasonable time off to attend ante-natal and other appointments related to their pregnancy. Students must notify their lecturer in advance if they are going to miss a teaching activity, and lecturers should ensure that students have access to relevant materials. This might include recordings of sessions, materials used or other resources. If possible a student may be allowed to attend at an alternative time covering the same content.

### 5.2.3 Time off around the birth

If the expected date of birth falls during term time ie not in the summer vacation, students are advised to take a minimum of one week away from university prior to their expected due date and are required to take at least two weeks away from university following the birth of the baby. Students will not be academically disadvantaged by taking this leave and will be provided with catch-up support on their return.

If a student wishes to take longer than the mandatory two weeks, this must be agreed in advance with the Programme Director. Every effort will be made to accommodate such requests, but the impact on academic progression will be a key consideration – some Programmes are able to offer more flexibility than others. Students should also be mindful of the potential volume of catch-up work which will be required after a longer break.

NHS Student Bursaries recommends a minimum of 12 weeks’ maternity absence, but allows students to return earlier if they have approval from their GP or health worker. Students on these programmes should speak with their Personal Academic Tutor to confirm arrangements.

If an agreed period of leave cannot be negotiated, a student is advised to consider suspending their studies and discussing with their programme team an appropriate point at which to return. Suspension of studies should be agreed with the Programme Director who will submit a request to the [Special Cases Committee in line with Section 5 of the Academic Handbook](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Pages/Ah1_05.aspx).

### 5.2.4 Placements and work-based learning

All pregnant students who are due to undertake a placement or work-based learning during their pregnancy will complete a specific risk assessment (see Appendix Three) in partnership with their personal academic tutor and the placement provider. All risk assessments will be submitted to the High Risk placement management group for the School for approval.

If the risk assessment determines that the student cannot complete the placement, then the Programme must identify a suitable alternative assessment. Where the placement or work-based learning forms part of a professional accreditation, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that the student makes an informed choice about continuing with their studies.

### 5.2.5 Field work

Where the student plans to take part in field work as part of their studies, this should be included in the risk assessment carried out by the School (template available from the Health & Safety Team) as there may be particular risks associated with the field work; the student should discuss this fully with an appropriate member of staff.

### 5.2.6 Assessments and examinations

Pregnant students will not be required to apply for Mitigating Circumstances for assessments and examinations that they are unable to complete on schedule during their pregnancy. Instead, management of assessments and examinations will be considered as part of the pregnancy support plan, with alternative arrangements put in place where required.

If a student cannot complete a planned alternative assessment or examination because of additional complications or illness in their pregnancy, then they should [apply for Mitigating Circumstances, and they will be considered in line with university policy](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Pages/Ah1_05.aspx)

### 5.2.7 Accommodation

When the University becomes aware that a student living in our Halls of Residence is pregnant, a full Health & Safety Risk Assessment will be carried out and, where possible, reasonable adjustments will be made to the accommodation, if required.

Unfortunately, the University does not have any family accommodation so the student will not be able to continue to live in Halls after the birth. Students will be released from their accommodation contracts to find alternative arrangements. The Accommodation Team will be able to provide advice on possible alternative accommodation options.

Students living in non-university Halls should contact their Halls Manager for further advice and information. Given the demand for student accommodation, in particular accommodation that is suitable for families, students are advised to consider their accommodation requirements in the early stages of pregnancy

### 5.2.8 Financial implications

Undergraduate students should seek advice from Student Finance Wales/England or where appropriate Student Finance Northern Ireland and Student Awards Agency for Scotland, to establish what financial support they will be entitled to both during the pregnancy and afterwards, as a package of support is available to students who are parents.

Students suspending their studies should contact the Finance department at [tuitionfees@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:tuitionfees@cardiffmet.ac.uk) for further information about any refund of tuition fees that may be available to them.  The [Money & Welfare Advice Team](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/study/studentservices/finance/Pages/default.aspx) can also provide further advice and support to students thinking about suspending their studies.

## 5.3 Doctoral research candidates

### 5.3.1 Notifying the university

The first point of contact for Doctoral Researchers is normally their Director of Studies or the Lead Supervisor (when the Supervisory arrangements include a Supervisory Team Coordinator).. They should be notified as soon as the student feels comfortable to do so.

Members of Cardiff Met staff who are also enrolled as a Doctoral researcher should ensure that they are aware of their rights under the Staff Parental Policy. Taking time off from work while pregnant does not automatically mean that a student needs to take equivalent time away from studies.

### 5.3.2 Parental Leave / Study Break (formerly referred to as Suspension)

Normal procedures for applying for a study break should be followed as outlined in the Research Degree Regulations and Doctoral Researcher Handbook and any application will be granted at the discretion of the School Research Degrees Committee. Guidance on suspension of studies is also provided in the Doctoral Researcher’s Handbook.

In accordance with Cardiff Met Research Degree Regulations, Doctoral Researchers may apply for a study break for a maximum period of 12 months in total for the purpose of maternity leave. During this time, tuition fees will not be payable to the University.

Under normal circumstances, the earliest commencement date for a period of maternity leave will be the eleventh week prior to the expected week of childbirth. In cases of adoption, leave may commence on the date the child is placed or on a pre-determined date no earlier than 14 days prior to the expected date of placement.

### 5.3.3 Financial implications

Doctoral researchers who are enrolled as a full time or part time Doctoral research student and in receipt of a bursary, which includes a maintenance stipend, from Cardiff Metropolitan University are entitled to up to 6 months of paid maternity leave. They will receive the full amount of the maintenance stipend for this period.

If required, a further period of unpaid maternity leave of up to 6 months may be taken. The paid and unpaid periods of maternity leave must be taken consecutively. The candidature of the student will be extended by a commensurate period, in line with the standard policy regarding study breaks.

Doctoral researchers who are in receipt of an annual maintenance stipend directly from an external organisation must follow the regulations of the funder. If the funder does not provide the additional funds to cover maternity costs, Cardiff Met is not liable to provide any payment during the student’s maternity leave.

Doctoral researchers who receive an annual maintenance stipend via a project funded by a research grant should enquire with the project leader if any funding for maternity leave can be provided. If the project does not provide additional funds to cover maternity or adoption costs, Cardiff Met is not liable to provide any payment during the student’s maternity leave.

Cardiff Metropolitan University will not make any payment to self-funded Doctoral researchers during maternity leave.

Doctoral researchers in receipt of a one-off bursary[[1]](#footnote-1) or a fees only award will not be eligible to receive any payment during a period of maternity leave. Fees only awards will be suspended during periods of maternity leave.

Maternity payments will not be made to Doctoral researchers who have submitted their thesis.

### 5.3.4 Returning to research

Doctoral researchers must formally restart their candidature following a study break and should speak to their Director of Studies for advice on how to do this. Details are also available in the procedures for suspension of studies as outlined in the Research Degree Regulations.

If a Doctoral researcher does not return to their studies following a period of maternity leave, they will be required to reimburse the University for any maternity pay made to date. If a Doctoral researcher withdraws from their studies within 12 weeks of their return from a period of maternity leave, Cardiff Met has the right to recover any maternity payments made.

## 5.4 International Students

In general the process for supporting pregnant international students will mirror that for home students. However, the Programme Director must notify the Global Student Advisory team as soon as they are aware of the pregnancy, and the pregnancy support plan must be developed in partnership to ensure that any visa or sponsorship issues are considered from the beginning.

Where an international student suspends their studies due to pregnancy, they will normally be required to leave the UK and apply for a new visa to re-enter. In all cases, the University’s legal responsibilities in relation to the sponsorship of international students under the points-based immigration system will take precedence.

# Guidance for students who have a pregnant partner

This guidance relates to all students whose partners are pregnant, including same-sex partners, as long as the partner is expected to be responsible for the care of the child.

### 6.1.1 Notifying the university

Students should notify the university as early as possible in their partner’s pregnancy. The first point of contact should be the Personal Academic Tutor, but a student may choose another member of staff if they prefer.

### 6.1.2 Ante-natal appointments.

Students will be allowed reasonable time off to attend ante-natal and other appointments related to the pregnancy. Students must notify their lecturer in advance if they are going to miss a teaching activity, and lecturers are required to provide catch-up support for students. This might include recordings of sessions, materials used or other resources. If possible a student may be allowed to attend at an alternative time covering the same content.

### 6.1.3 Time off around the birth

Students whose partners have given birth are permitted to take up to two weeks parental support leave following the birth of the child without academic detriment. The dates of this leave will be agreed with the Personal Academic Tutor who will notify all relevant academic staff. The student will be provided with catch-up materials for the teaching time they have missed.

If the planned parental support leave coincides with formal examinations or assessment submission deadlines, the student should apply for Mitigating Circumstances in the usual way

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# Guidance for students adopting a child

Students about to become parents through adoption should inform their Programme of their circumstances as soon as possible so that suitable arrangements can be made. This should in the first instance be to their Personal Academic Tutor, but the student may choose another member of staff if they prefer. If the student is the primary adopter, a plan should be devised in line with the guidance for a pregnant student; if the student’s partner is the primary adopter, the guidance relating to parental support leave should be followed. Again, the Personal Academic Tutor will be informed if discussions involve a different staff member.

# Babies/Children on Campus

For health and safety reasons, students are not permitted to bring babies and children into teaching or learning areas, unless they have received prior permission from the relevant staff member.

Students may of course bring babies and children into public areas of the University or into 1:1 tutorials or meetings with the tutor’s permission, but the University cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances.

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children at all times while on Cardiff Met property. Children must not be left unsupervised nor with adults not previously known to them. Any student who does not supervise their child while on campus may be committing a breach of Student Conduct which may result in a disciplinary investigation.

Students must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at University. A grant may be available to undergraduates to help with the costs of childcare so students are advised to contact their funding provider or a Money and Welfare Adviser for information.

# Breastfeeding/Expressing

The University will support students who are breastfeeding and this is accepted in all social spaces of the University. The Equality Act 2010 gives explicit protection to women who breastfeed in public places and it is unlawful to ask them not to, or to prevent them doing so.

If other students are uncomfortable with this, the needs of the breastfeeding student take precedence.

# Parenting Room

Dedicated baby changing facilities are currently available at:

* Cyncoed C0.28c
* Llandaff A0.22.

These spaces also contain facilities for expressing and storing breast milk

# Complaints

Any student who feels that the University has failed to comply with the standards of this policy may raise a complaint under the University’s Complaints Procedure (see the Student Handbook or visit the website at <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/study/studentservices/Pages/Complaints.aspx>

1. A single payment, usually made at the beginning of the degree, to help towards payment of tuition fees and/or living expenses [↑](#footnote-ref-1)