Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Fostering Policy

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August 2020

Due for review May 2021[1]

1 Introduction & policy statement

This document provides practical information for students about Middlesex University's approach to supporting students who become pregnant during their studies, prospective students and students who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks (the 26 weeks post birth is covered by the Equality Act 2010[2]), their partners (where applicable) and those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption). The policy also includes students who may be pregnant through a surrogacy arrangement. In addition, this policy serves as guidance to university staff on advising students who may come to them seeking support.

Middlesex University is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, research and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. The university aims to foster and develop a wide range of skills and experience which cannot be found within any single group of students or staff. In the pursuit of these aims, Middlesex University seeks to create a community in which diversity is valued and which both reflects and services the needs of the broader communities in which it operates. As such, the term 'Birth Parent/Mother' will be used throughout the policy along with the use of 'them' / ' their' pronouns to reflect non-binary and trans people who may become pregnant. The term 'Partner' will be used throughout, where applicable. It will be noted that the terms 'maternity' and 'paternity' are used here in line with language used across the NHS and Government. We acknowledge that much has to be done to make the language used in midwifery more inclusive. This policy does not make assumptions as to the gender identity of the Mother/Birth Parent and partner, if applicable, and Middlesex staff will ask students' preferred pronouns when supporting them.

Middlesex University actively seeks to develop best practice in discharging its legal responsibility under The Equality Act (see *Appendix 1*). Middlesex University also takes on board recommendations from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Guidance (2010), which recommends that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) develop policies and procedures "to ensure that students are not discriminated against, that they receive appropriate information on the support provided by their HEI in relation to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption, and that policies are visible to help to encourage early notification of pregnancy."[3]

Middlesex University believes that becoming pregnant 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 possible to facilitate students' success, making sure no student is disadvantaged whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised. The degree of flexibility that can be offered will vary with each individual student and programme of study. The health and safety of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times, and staff will engage with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive, non-judgemental 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 (unless there is immediate risk of harm, in line with the university's Safeguarding Policy.

2 Scope of the policy

This policy covers:

- Any student who becomes pregnant during their studies
- Prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study
- Any student who has given birth within the previous 26 weeks

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[1] This policy has been considered by Wellbeing and Inclusivity Sub-Committee and Assurance Committee. Consultation with the Head of Department for Adult, Child & Midwifery is due October 2020. An Equality Impact Assessment is due in the Autumn Term of 2020. The policy will be updated accordingly and ahead of the May 2021 review date.

[2] For further information please see *Appendix 1*

[3] Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions, 2010, Equality Challenge Unit, page 4

carrying out a specific risk assessment for pregnant women (and women returning to work following a birth).

Therefore, students who are pregnant must notify their work placement provider when commencing the placement, or during the placement if they become pregnant later. This is necessary so that the work placement provider can carry out a risk assessment as required by law. Students will also ensure that their university Placement Administrator is also notified and receives a copy of the pregnancy risk assessment, along with their Programme Leader. The University's Health & Safety Unit will then review the risk assessment (and any reasonable adjustments) to confirm they are suitable and sufficient.

Generally, work placements can continue during pregnancy although some reasonable adjustments may be required depending on the work activities, location any health or disabilities which the student may be experiencing. However, if when following a risk assessment it is determined that the work could be harmful to the student or unborn child then alternative placement options will be explored. More information as well as risk assessment templates for placements can be found on the intranet.

Students are also advised to check their placement or course handbooks to see if these contains further, course specific guidance. In the majority of cases, pregnant students will be able to continue on placements (if they wish).

Where a placement is judged to present a particular risk to the student or their unborn child by the Programme Leader, employer or University Health and Safety Unit, the student may be advised to have a conversation with their GP to seek guidance. Where concerns are outstanding, the student's case may be referred to Care and Concern and to the fitness to study policy to best support the student and ensure their safety. This may involve requiring the student to take time out or to transfer to a different programme of study. MDXworks may also be able to assist students considering different programmes of study by offering individual and independent career advice as to study and work options. Middlesex University Students' Union has more information on fitness to study processes

5.3 Parking on campus

Parking on campus is necessarily limited. Students who wish to park on campus will follow university procedure by contacting wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk if they do not have a blue badge, or the Disability and Dyslexia Service if they have a blue badge. For non-blue badge holders, parking is considered on a case by case basis. It will be noted that pregnancy, the maternity period and childcare responsibilities in and of themselves will not guarantee a successful application for a parking permit. Application will take into account special circumstances which mean that the student cannot reasonably be expected to use public transport or to park in the surrounding area of the university campus. It will also be noted that all parking is on a first come first serve basis and therefore a permit does not guarantee space availability. More information is available on UniHub.

5.4 Babies and children on campus

The University has responsibility for the health and safety of all visitors to its premises. These duties are much greater for children as they may not be aware of existing or potential risks. It has therefore been agreed that children under 18 years of age are not normally allowed on University premises unless attending officially approved activities. More information can be found in the Code of Practice: Children on University Premises. For children not attending officially approved activities it is a requirement that the person responsible for the child must report to the Campus Reception in the Quad and complete the 'Children on Campus Log'. It may be necessary to verify where the child will be taken and to confirm any other relevant details. In line with this as well as to avoid the disruption of classes or study, babies and children will not be brought into teaching or learning areas without prior agreement with a Programme Leader. Students wishing to bring babies/children into the Sheppard Library must sign in at Sheppard Library reception.

Mothers/Birth Parents must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at university. Students can apply to the Middlesex University nursery for a place if they wish. Students must not bring babies or children to university with the expectation that any staff member will take responsibility for caring for the child whilst the student is in classes.

Students may bring babies and children into public areas of the university provided that they are properly supervised at all times, but the university cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances. The

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format the birth parent and baby requires). To arrange this, the birth parent should email wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk and the arrangement will be put thra(n)ga.ne.ol D.280.08(he ar)sabilihey [(a)4917slaxi

attempt to influence any student's decision but will provide impartial advice. If a staff member does not feel that they can give impartial advice due to religious, cultural or other beliefs, they will immediately seek to find an alternative member of staff to support the student, and will under no circumstances try to influence the student's decision.

9.1 Use of language

Following guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit 2016, staff will be mindful of the language that they use to refer to a pregnancy depending on the circumstances of the student concerned. If a student discloses to a member of staff that they do not wish to proceed with their pregnancy, using the terms embryo and foetus may be most appropriate. These are scientific terms used to describe process of development of the fertilised egg. During the first eight weeks the cells are referred to as an embryo. The term foetus refers to developments from nine weeks onwards. Scientifically, a foetus is not considered to be a baby until birth.

If a student chooses to proceed with their pregnancy, using the term baby is likely to be more appropriate. This is also the case if a pregnant person miscarries, has a still birth or terminates their pregnancy for reasons relating to their health or the health of the baby.

Staff will offer general support and ensure that their own views regarding pregnancy and termination do not influence conversations with students. Students seeking in depth advice

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Allowing time out of study (for a predetermined amount of time) for the birth and a period of time tie3.8 (h an)11.3 (1 13.08 273.48 752481 14.096 33re f 72.6 327.72 66.96 0.481 re 2 0 re f 6t(i)

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UHSU@mdx.ac.uk

MDX Nursery
Early years education and full daycare for children aged six weeks to five years
https://www.mdx.ac.uk/student -life/facil ities/nursery
020 8411 6032

Under the Act, it is unlawful for HEIs 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

Name:

Student number:

Average time spent on campus:

Completed form shared with University Health and Safety Unit on following date:

Department **Form completed by** **Date:**

Hazard	**Risk** Yes / No		**Possible solution**	**Agreed actions**
Can the student leave the building without assistance during an emergency evacuation?			Contact the University Health and Safety Unit to complete a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). **Note: it is a requirement that all pregnant students have a PEEP in place**	. **Note: it is a requirement that all pregnant students have a PEEP in place.**
Does the student's study involve: **Reaching?** **Stretching?** **Repetitive Twisting?** **Lifting/carrying loads?**			Can a mechanical aid be used? Can the task be adapted or automated? Can peers offer help with loads? Avoid this part of the study or reduce the length of time spent doing it.	
Workstation Ergonomics **Does the student have a workstation set up?**			Review the equipment the student uses for suitability. Signpost the student to _____	

Hazard	Risk Yes / No		Possible solution	Agreed actions
Does the student work hours that are causing them to feel fatigued?			Adjust timetable? Suggest breaks during lectures and study time. Support the student to create a timetable that better balances their time. Is the student able to get enough sleep? Signpost to self-help sleep resources on together.all. Speak to Personal Tutor. Can the student make use of the welfare room to rest? e	

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Appendix 5

Summary of Key Responsibilities

The university will ensure that:

- Relevant staff are made aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising under it through sharing to appropriate colleagues on a bi

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