



London School
of Jewish Studies

The London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS)

Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Fostering Policy & Guidance

1 Introduction & policy statement

1.1 Policy Statement

This document provides practical information for students about the London School of Jewish Studies' (LSJS) 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 2010²), 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. LSJS 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.

1.2. Terminology and Definitions

The term 'Birth Parent/Mother' will be used throughout the policy. 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. LSJS actively seeks to develop best practice in discharging its legal responsibility under *The Equality Act* (Appendix 1).

1.3 Guidelines

LSJS follow Middlesex University guidelines which take on board recommendations from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Guidance (2010), in 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.”*

Middlesex University Guidelines are available here:

https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0042/599298/Pregnancy-Maternity-Paternity-Adoption-Fostering-Policy-and-Guidance.pdf

2 Scope of Policy

2.1 LSJS Ethos

LSJS believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not, in itself, prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. LSJS 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).

2.2 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
- Any student who is about to become a parent because their partner is pregnant, and/or who expects to be responsible for a child
- Any student who has or will become a parent through adoption or fostering

3. Guidance for staff on supporting students

COVID Implications

The global COVID-19 pandemic has led to many changes and adjustments for students. While there is no evidence at present to suggest that pregnant people are more likely to get seriously ill from Covid-19, they have been included in the list of people at “moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) as a precaution.”

For that reason, students who are pregnant and concerned about their health when returning to campus can carry out the self risk-assessment as well as adhering to COVID-secure behaviours at all times. As the COVID-19 situation is fluid, and because LSJS is responding flexibly, we strongly encourage students who are pregnant to remain up to date with the institution’s response here. Some measures within this policy will be changing in line with Middlesex university’s response to Covid-19.

For information on this policy, please contact the C.O.O Paul Gould
paul.gould@lsjs.ac.uk.

4. Confirming the Pregnancy

4.1 A student who suspects they are pregnant will see their General Practitioner (GP) to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as they can and to seek health advice and guidance. Absence from LSJS required as a result will be classed as ‘sick leave’ but there is no need to give the specific reason, also if the student decides to terminate the pregnancy, or they miscarry, this need not be disclosed to LSJS. However, if the student (and their partner, if applicable) have upcoming assessments or deadlines which may be impacted, they will contact the Programme

leader Dr. Helena Miller, or their personal tutor, for guidance and support as they may wish to apply for Extenuating Circumstances.

4.2 LSJS encourages any students who are pregnant at the time they will commence their studies, irrespective of whether they were pregnant when they accepted the place or during their studies or who becomes pregnant during their studies, to disclose this information to us confidentially, as we can only make provision for the student if we have been made aware of these circumstances. The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy and so it is important that the student informs us as early as possible – where appropriate.

For a summary of key responsibilities please see Appendix 5.

4.3 The student can choose to disclose their pregnancy to whichever member of staff the student feels most comfortable with, however the student will note that the Programme Leader will be required to be informed so that support arrangements, risk assessments and other concerns can be discussed, If a student has not informed a member of staff of their pregnancy, generally, they will not be approached regarding a potential pregnancy. If there are particular health and safety concerns which mean that it is important to establish if the student is pregnant, the matter will be handled sensitively, on a one-to-one basis between the student and their tutor/Programme Leader. The tutor/Programme Leader will only take this step if they are concerned for the student's health and safety as per the Safeguarding Policy. Once the student's pregnancy is confirmed, the steps within this policy (see Appendix 4) will be followed.

4.4 There may need to be an interruption of studies or a deferral of the start of study, depending on when the baby is due. The student, together with the Programme Leader, will decide whether an interruption of programme or deferral of assessment(s) is needed and in the case of an interruption of study, the time period this needs to cover. This decision also needs to take into account the academic requirements of the student's programme. The student wishes to make use of the Extenuating Circumstances processes.

4.5 Time off might be needed for medical appointments. This may also be the case if the student is going through fertility treatment and trying to become pregnant. It will be noted that fertility treatment can be stressful and can in and of itself cause wide

ranging physical and psychological difficulty, and a flexible approach will be taken to time off required. The student will endeavour to schedule appointments outside of their LSJS hours, however where this is not possible, they will give as much notice as possible to their academic tutors who will support them to remain up to date, for example by sending them lecture slides and recommended reading

4.6 As of 6 April 2020, employees in an organisation have a right to 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave if they experience a stillbirth or bereavement of their child under the age of 18. As an institution, we are aware that in the tragic event of a stillbirth or bereavement of a child, the Mother/Birth Parent, and their partner if applicable, may require this as a minimum, along with additional support, and staff will endeavour to signpost them to support. Though not usually classed as 'employees', LSJS will work to accommodate the student and their partner (if applicable) to be as flexible as possible with their health (physical and mental) needs.

4.7 Students are required to inform their Programme Leader of the date on which they intend to start maternity-related absence at least 15 weeks before the baby is due, though they will endeavour to inform their Programme Leader as early as possible. Some programmes will have specific guidance in place for return to study and processes to ensure that the student and baby's health is prioritised. This may especially be the case for programmes with placement elements. Students will refer to the individual guidance for these programmes. <https://www.acas.org.uk/time-off-for-bereavement/parental-bereavement->

5 Maternity/Paternity Leave

5.1 While the length of maternity-related absence students may prefer to take will vary, the Equality Challenge Unit (2010) recommends that, at a minimum, Mothers/Birth Parents are required to take two weeks' compulsory maternity-related absence, or four weeks if they are on placement in a factory. This is in line with employment law, and is to ensure the health and safety of the Mother/Birth Parent following birth. Students may need a longer period of maternity-related absence. For students who have had a Caesarean section, it is usually recommended that students take 6 weeks off. If a Programme Leader or representative from another

university team is concerned about how soon the student wishes to return to study including practice, the student may be asked to liaise with their GP or health worker(s) and to provide medical support in evidence of their fitness to return to study. There may also be need for an updated risk assessment. Where there is concern about knowledge of the field being affected by the length of maternity related absence, the Programme Team will take steps to ensure the student is kept up to speed with developments in the field for example by sending lists of key reading. Students will indicate the date on which they intend to start maternity related absence as well as the length of maternity related absence that they intend to take. The student must inform their Programme Leader when they are ready to return to study. The Programme Leader will notify the Academic Registrar of their return to study to ensure that their record is updated to indicate that they are back on their programme of study.

We would encourage students to contact Paul Gould, LSJS director of finance paul.gould@lsjs.ac.uk as soon as possible if they are considering interruptions to study and the implications this may have financially.

5.2 LSJS recognises that any kind of parental responsibility, whether biological birth, adoption or fostering, will have an impact not only on the Mother/Birth Parent but also the Partner (where applicable). The possible impact on study will be different however, if a student and their partner (if applicable) are fostering a child on a temporary basis versus having giving birth to a child and/or adopting a child. When you adopt a child, you become their legal parent. This is permanent and the child has exactly the same legal status in your family as any other family member, which continues throughout their lifetime.” In either case, we strongly encourage the Mother/Birth Parent and their partner (if applicable) to let LSJS know about their circumstances by speaking with their Programme Leader. LSJS will also try to support those students who need time off to accompany their partners at medical, adoption or fostering appointments (although it is preferred that these are arranged outside study hours wherever possible). If partners wish to take paternity-related or parental absence they will notify their Programme Leader in writing at least 15 weeks prior to their partner’s due date, fostering or adoption date. However, early

notification is always preferable, particularly if the period of leave coincides with any planned assessment or key stages of study or research.

5.2.1 The start date and length of paternity-related or parental absence will be agreed in discussion with LSJS. We will endeavour to accommodate and support partners in taking paternity leave (including shared parental leave and adoption leave) that is in line with the entitlements of employees under current employment law. For example, under UK employment law, partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave; therefore, LSJS will, wherever possible, allow partners to take the equivalent maternity support (paternity) absence from their studies.

6. Equality Duty

6.1 At all times, staff must ensure those students are not treated less favourably than any other student on the basis of their circumstances. In line with legal obligations, flexibility will be shown where possible to ensure continued learning is facilitated. Information given by students will be treated confidentially (unless there is a safeguarding concern) and with sensitivity. Staff will not 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.

6.2 When a student contacts a member of staff to discuss any circumstances covered by this policy, wherever possible a response will be made within three working days so as to provide students with support and to keep the student and baby safe.

6.3 It is important that support arrangements and study decisions are based on discussion with the student, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements. All decisions taken will be based on discussion with the student. Whilst an appropriate degree of flexibility will be exercised, care must be taken to ensure that academic standards are not compromised. A balance must be achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged, and giving undue special treatment. It is not necessary

for the university to grant every request made, although efforts will be made to meet reasonable requests. Requests will not be refused solely on the basis of being too costly to implement, although this will necessarily be considered when assessing the overall 'reasonableness' of a request. If any request is refused, the reasons for the refusal will be provided in writing for the student. Where specific arrangements are required to be put in place for a student who is already granted additional arrangements (e.g. on the grounds of disability), these will be kept separate in order that it remains clear which arrangements relate to which particular circumstance. This ensures that these arrangements are in place for the required amount of time and also clarifies adherence to the different pieces of legislation.

6.4 Allowing time out of study (for a pre-determined amount of time) for the birth and a period of time thereafter. Prior to and after the birth, giving permission for periods of absence for medical appointments, and making arrangements for the student (and partner where applicable) to catch up on missed classes. Showing a degree of flexibility regarding assignment deadlines if the student's circumstances make it difficult for them to be met. The student will with as much notice as possible where they feel they may not be able to meet a deadline to allow their tutors to make alternative arrangements. Allowing resit examinations to be counted as first attempts where the pregnancy or birth prevents the student from taking them at the usual first attempt. Offering support to help the student reintegrate to their studies after any period of prolonged absence.

7 Complaints

Any student who feels that the institution has not properly applied this policy may raise a complaint under LSJS' Complaints Procedure, available here:

<https://www.lsjs.ac.uk/degrees.php>

Appendix 1

Legal duties

Under The Equality Act 2010 LSJS 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.

This document is intended to serve as general guidance to be followed in the way that is most helpful and practicable to the student concerned, under the following guiding principles:

- I. Avoiding less favourable treatment – in line with the Equality Act, LSJS and its staff will make sure they avoid less favourable treatment of a student or applicant in relation to a pregnancy; and because of an illness suffered by the student as a result of pregnancy.
- II. Taking a flexible approach – LSJS recognises its legal obligations and its staff will take a flexible approach to facilitating the continued learning of, and maintaining a high-quality and safe student experience for a pregnant student, a student who is the parent of a child or a student whose partner is in either of these positions.
- III. Demonstrating a non-judgemental and sensitive approach – when supporting and working with a student on these matters, staff will take an open-minded and non-judgemental approach. Information provided by the student will be treated sensitively and only passed onto others on a need-to-know basis and where possible with consent to share.
- IV. Enabling informed choices – members of staff will not attempt to direct or unduly influence a student's decisions. Their role is to provide context and advice to the student and to explore, in consultation with the student and others, flexibility that can be applied to the student's situation.

Appendix 2

LSJS Pregnancy and maternity risk assessment template

The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that our students are not exposed to risks which could affect their health and safety or that of their child and so that LSJS can meet its legal obligations.

Student Name	Student Number	Average time spent on campus:
Risk assessment to be completed by Programme Leader and student YES/NO	Form completed by	Date
Risk Assessment Questions		
Does the student have any long term health conditions or disabilities?		
Is the student considered to be a riskier pregnancy by their midwife/pre-natal team e.g. is older than 35? <i>Student to speak with their midwife/prenatal team to ascertain if any aspects of their study are of particular risk, or any other mitigating measures that could be taken.</i>		

Can the student leave the building without assistance during an emergency evacuation?
If it is not possible for the student to leave the building unaided, contact the LSJS Health and safety officer to complete a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP).

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?

Can the student make use of a welfare room to rest?
Increase frequency of rest breaks.

Does the student feel isolated or distressed by work/study?
Encourage the student to discuss the issues with Personal Tutor to find resolution.

Does the student undertake travelling or driving to attend LSJS?
Adjust timetable to better balance weekly structure? Encourage the student to discuss the issues with their Personal Tutor.
Consider requesting temporary parking on campus to minimise the impact of commuting.

1 Student's details: Name/Address/Telephone/Student email/Student ID

2 Emergency contact's details: Name/Relationship to student/Telephone
3 Course details :Year of course/Personal Tutor/Programme Leader
4 Details of the student's agreed named contact for support: Name/Title/Location/Telephone /email
5 What is the student's due date?
6 How many weeks pregnant was the student when they notified LSJS of pregnancy?
7 What is the student's preferred method of communication: during pregnancy? during maternity-related absence? on return to study? Informing other staff and students.
8 Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy and when would the student like them to be informed? Name and title Date Health and safety assessment (attach copy/copies to this form)
9 Has an assessment been conducted? If the student is on a course with a placement element, has a placement risk assessment been conducted?
10 Where changes are required to alleviate or minimize risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?

11 Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to their pregnancy, maternity or adoption?
12 What alternative arrangements have been made between the student and the course team for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?
<i>Maternity, paternity and adoption-related absence</i> 13 How much absence does the student intend to take?
14 When does the student intend to start the absence?
15 When does the student intend to return from absence?
16 Will the dates of absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?
17 If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?
18 What information will the student require during absence to keep up to date on course developments?
19 Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?
20 Specify any follow-up required: Baby feeding and childcare

21 Has the student been informed about LSJS's Extenuating Circumstances arrangements with support from a Progression and Support Adviser?

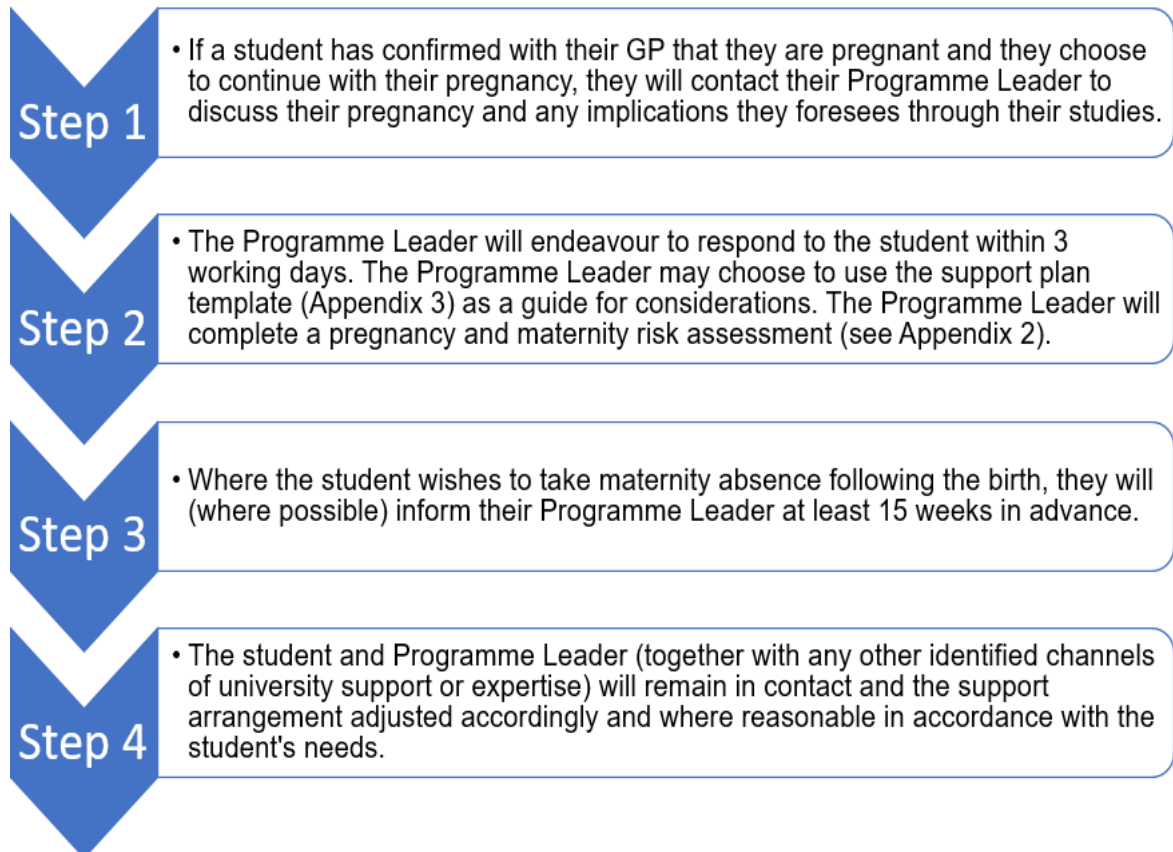
Appendix 3

Return to study

Student Name	Student Number	Average time spent on campus:
Form to be completed by Programme Leader and student together YES/NO	Form completed by	Date
What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (e.g. meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc.)		
Plan to be reviewed on		
Agreed by Staff Member: Name/Title/Signature/Date/		
Agreed by student: Name/Signature/Date		

Appendix 4

Support Process Flowchart for Maternity Period



Appendix 5

Summary of Key Responsibilities

LSJS will ensure that:

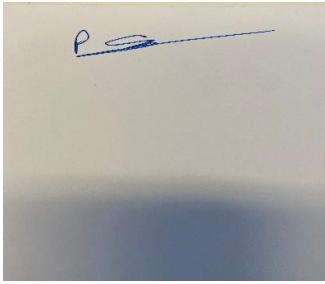
- I. Relevant staff are made aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising under it through sharing to appropriate colleagues on a bi-annual basis
- II. Support and guidance is available for staff undertaking risk assessments on elements of the programme of study that are likely to result in a risk to the health and safety of the student or unborn child
- III. Appropriate support is available to students through various support services
- IV. The policy is kept under review and updated on a bi-annual basis Schools and faculties will ensure that:
 - The policy is available to staff and students
- V. Staff are aware of the policy so that they can respond appropriately when a student discloses their pregnancy and seeks support to continue their programme of study
- VI. When a student discloses that they are pregnant, the Programme Leader will complete the pregnancy and maternity risk assessment and liaise with the student around the risk assessment which will be completed by the placement provider (if applicable)
- VII. Wherever practicable, accommodation is made to ensure that a pregnant student, or student with a very young child, is able to complete their programme of study
- VIII. If requested, a female member of staff or relevant is identified with whom a pregnant student can discuss their support needs
- IX. The student is given information on other sources of advice/support that are available All individual staff members are advised to:
- X. Familiarise themselves with this document and the university's responsibilities towards students who are pregnant or have very young children

- XI. Individual staff members to whom a pregnancy is disclosed are responsible for:
- o Reading the policy and this document and, in particular, becoming familiar with the procedure for supporting pregnant students
 - o Treating any disclosure of a pregnancy seriously and making students aware of appropriate sources of support
 - o Respecting a student's right to confidentiality and verifying that a student has no objections to their pregnancy being discussed with others – particularly when information needs to be passed on to other staff members to arrange any agreed accommodations to the programme of study or adjustments to fees
 - o Ensuring accurate information is given to prospective students regarding the availability of support for students who are pregnant or have very young children
 - o Seeking advice from colleagues or central support services within the university if they are unsure of how best to support the continued study of a pregnant student.

Students and applicants covered by this policy are responsible for:

- I. Disclosing their pregnancy to a trusted member of staff within LSJS/or their Programme Leader at an early stage of their pregnancy and at least 15 weeks before the due date, with a view to discussing any necessary risk assessments, support arrangements or adjustments – particularly where elements of their programme of study might present a health and safety hazard to the student or unborn child
 - II. Ensuring the safe supervision of any child they may bring onto campus
- Students and applicants covered by this policy are advised to:
- III. Read the policy in order to understand the university's approach to supporting pregnant students and students with very young children
 - IV. Ensure that they have a clear idea of what will be expected of them on their course of study in order to understand the potential impact of pregnancy related absence

Signed on behalf of LSJS:

A photograph of a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'P. Gould'.

(Paul Gould, on behalf of senior leadership team, LSJS).

Date: August 2023

To be reviewed in August 2025