A guide to support for students who are pregnant or who have young children

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Student Services

Alternative formats or additional questions

If you require this guidance in an alternative format, or have any questions relating to this guide, please contact:

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Introduction

This document provides practical information for students about the university’s approach to supporting students who are pregnant, who have young children and/or their partners.

In addition to this student guide, a form has also been produced for members of staff who have been told of a student pregnancy, to serve as a prompt for key issues that should be considered. A copy of this form can be accessed at https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Documents/Support%20Agreement%20for%20pregnant%20students.pdf

The university has a legal duty to ensure that students do not face discrimination during pregnancy and maternity. The Equality Act 2010 introduced new protection from discrimination for students during pregnancy and maternity, by extending the protection that exists for women in employment to education. This includes students who:

- are existing or prospective parents (through pregnancy, paternity, adoption or surrogacy)
- decide not to proceed with a pregnancy
- have a miscarriage or still birth

Under the Act, discrimination can occur against a student because of her pregnancy or because she has given birth if:

- the student is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy
- within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth the student is treated unfavourably because she has 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 she is 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

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 woman’s partner is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy or because she has given birth, this may constitute sex discrimination.

Under the Equality 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 university also has a legal responsibility, under the Equality Act (2010) to ensure that they do not penalise students who miss examinations or course work deadlines because of pregnancy and maternity, including pregnancy-related illness or appointments.

The university recognizes that every student’s circumstances are individual, and so a “one-fits-all” approach to childcare and maternity issues is not appropriate. 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:

- **Avoiding less favourable treatment** – in line with the Equality Act the University and its staff will make sure they avoid treating the student (or applicant) less favourably than other students or applicants on the grounds that she is pregnant.
- **Taking a flexible approach** – the University 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.
- **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.
- **Enabling informed choices** – members of staff should 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 programme or period of study to provide appropriate support.

Since the issues experienced by pregnant students and student parents/carers often overlap, this document has been structured by theme rather than by pregnancy stage or age of child.

If you require any additional information to that included in this guide, the Student Experience and Equalities Manager is available to help with individual queries by emailing equality@brighton.ac.uk or telephoning 01273 642160. A list of useful contacts, both internal and external to the university, is also contained at the end of this guide.
**Who organises what support?**

Students who become pregnant during their studies can access a range of support from within the university. Different departments have different responsibilities and specialisms as part of this support process:

It is important that pregnant students contact both their Academic School/College and the Disability and Dyslexia Team in Student Services to ensure that they are given appropriate support and information.

**If students do not inform their academic school of their pregnancy, the university will be limited in the support that it can provide.** Students are strongly advised to inform their school of study as soon as possible after they know they are pregnant.

**This may also have serious implications in relation to protecting the health and safety of the unborn child(ren).** This may particularly relate to exposure to radiation or hazardous chemicals during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy.

Adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment may be required for students who become pregnant during their studies. Recommendations for adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment will be provided for academic schools by the Disability and Dyslexia Team in Student Services through a Learning Support Plan.

Although it is recognised that pregnancy and maternity do not fall within the remit of disability, Learning Support Plans should be issued by the Disability and Dyslexia Team in these instances in order to ensure that recommendations are appropriate and consistent. Therefore, it is important that in addition to informing their academic school, students inform the Disability and Dyslexia Team of their pregnancy as soon as possible.

It is also recommended that students contact the Student Advice Service in Student Services for guidance about different study options and the potential impact on funding and eligibility for benefits. International students should also contact the International Student...
Advisers at the Student Advice Service for guidance about how changes to the way they study could affect their student visas.

Students may also wish to access more general support from other Student Services departments or support from places that are external to the university. This may include medical support from your family doctor and support and advice from specialist agencies.

Contact details for all the above services can be found in the contacts section at the end of this guide.

**Information for students who are adopting**

Students who have been matched for adoption should inform their Academic School/Department as soon as possible. If the student is the primary adopter, then as with the disclosure of a student pregnancy the same approach should be taken as set out in this guide. If the student's partner is the primary adopter, upon formal adoption of the child, the student should be allowed time off from studies in line with advice given within this guide for fathers and partners (including same-sex partners).
Informing the Academic School about a pregnancy

Students can inform their schools of their pregnancy by talking to a member of staff of their choice within the department. This may be their Personal Tutor, Course Leader or Student Support and Guidance Tutor, or they may prefer to talk to another member of staff within their school. Whoever they tell, the process should be the same in that the same issues need to be considered to support them.

On being informed of a student’s pregnancy, staff are advised to refer to the Support Agreement for Pregnant Students form, which acts as a prompt for things to consider, such as Risk Assessment, Occupational Health access and consequences for student placements etc. This form represents an agreement between the student and the university as to how the student’s learning experience will be facilitated during pregnancy/maternity.

The form also contains a “consent to share” section, so that other member of staff can be told about the pregnancy if required, so that they can make appropriate adjustments. Without this consent, the university may not be able to offer appropriate support. Since currently there are no fields relating to pregnancy on the student records system, staff would need to be told by email or verbally in order for this information to be communicated.

Risk Assessment and Health and Safety

One of the most important reasons for students to inform their academic school of a pregnancy is so that adjustments can be made to ensure the safety of mothers and their unborn children. In many cases, a Risk Assessment will be required within academic schools to ensure that any necessary Health and Safety adjustments are made. This Risk Assessment may either be carried out by the person to whom the student declares their pregnancy or it may be carried out by another member of staff who has a better knowledge of the risk assessment process or potential hazards (e.g. a lab technician).

Health and Safety issues for pregnant students should be considered in a similar way to how they would be assessed for staff. The university has created A Code of Practice for New and Expectant Mothers at work that can be found at https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/safety/PublishedDocs/New%20and%20expectant%20mothers.pdf. The university has also created an Expectant Mother or New Mother Risk Assessment Form for members of staff: https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/hr/aod/docs/New%20and%20Expectant%20Mothers%20Risk%20Assessment.pdf. The risk assessment form can be used for pregnant students, although copies should not be sent to Occupational Health. Guidance is also available from the Health and Safety Executive: http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/.

Time off to attend medical appointments

Pregnant students may require time away from lectures to attend antenatal and medical appointments. Students are requested to arrange these outside taught hours, but where this is not possible, the school/college should be notified in advance in order to take these into account.

Where a taught subject has a minimum attendance regulation applied, this should also be discussed with the student and alternative contact hours arranged if necessary and possible.
Where appointments prevent a student from attending classes in person, and where sufficient notice has been given, teaching staff are asked to supply any materials that may help the student in making up for missed work.

**Occupational Health guidance**

Pregnant members of staff are provided access to the university’s Occupational Health facilities. For students, this service is not routinely available but may be provided upon request. Certain courses, those relating to professional practice such as health-related subjects, may have contractual arrangements for Occupational Health support. Students should check with their schools in the first instance to see if a referral can be made.

For courses who do not have an Occupational Health support contract, the university may be able to provide these facilities and the student or member of staff should contact Student Services in the first instance by emailing studentservices@brighton.ac.uk or by contacting the Student Experience and Equalities Manager on 01273 642160 or equality@brighton.ac.uk

**Provision of a quiet space for rest periods**

In some cases, it may be helpful for students to be provided access to a quiet space where they can rest between classes or take time out during the day.

In some locations, students may be provided with access to a First Aid room, although these are not available on all sites. Staff members and students wanting to find out about or request access to First Aid rooms should contact the Health and Safety department by emailing healthandsafety@brighton.ac.uk. If First Aid rooms are not available locally, it is suggested that a private staff office could be made available at a pre-arranged time slot for the student concerned.

If these options have been exhausted with no success, please contact the Student Experience and Equalities Manager (equality@brighton.ac.uk or 01273 642160) who will investigate the alternatives.

**Information for students on placements or work-based programmes of study**

Students on placement are requested to inform their Academic School/College as well as their Placement Provider of their pregnancy, since adjustments may need to be made by both organisations. This is important to enable the university and placement provider to take steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the pregnant student and their unborn child. Students are advised to check their placement or course handbooks to check if this contains further, course-specific, guidance.

In the majority of cases, pregnant students may be able to continue on placements (if they wish) and will hold a contract of employment with the placement provider, which establishes their rights under employment law to any necessary adjustments. This would include access to their Human Resources procedures for pregnancy/maternity (including Occupational Health facilities).
Under current UK employment law, employers are not obliged to put procedures in place without receiving written evidence of a pregnancy (such as the MATB1 certificate, issued 20 weeks before the due date). However, it is often advisable to let an employer know about a pregnancy at an earlier stage since this may allow them to plan resources more easily.

Under UK legislation, mothers must remain absent from work for two weeks immediately after the birth. Pregnant students may also require time away from placements to attend medical or antenatal appointments. These should be discussed with the placement provider or employer so that any necessary adjustments can be made.

Some students on work-based programmes of study are entitled to maternity leave and pay. For example, students who are enrolled on NHS pre-registration courses and are in receipt of the maintenance grant element of the NHS bursary are entitled to a NHS bursary maternity award. For more information see Maternity leave and different study options.

Where a placement is judged to present a particular risk to the student or her unborn child, the mother may be strongly advised to take time out or to transfer to a different programme of study.

The Careers Service 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 available. Please see www.brighton.ac.uk/careers for further details and contacts.

**Information for students working or studying abroad**

Students studying on programmes of study abroad are also advised to check any insurance details to ensure that they provide adequate cover for any complications arising through pregnancy.

It is also worth checking any travel restrictions that may exist for mothers in later stages of pregnancy, since many major airline carriers require written proof that a pregnancy is “without complication” for expectant mothers travelling after 28 weeks, and may prohibit travel completely after 36 weeks.

**Information for international students studying at Brighton**

International or European students taking part in placements or university exchange programmes at the University of Brighton should discuss their pregnancy with their tutor or placement coordinator.

**If you are an international student (from outside the European Union), any change to your hours of study, or length of course (expected finish date) can have serious immigration issues and may affect your right to continue study at the university.** Please contact visas@brighton.ac.uk or telephone 01273 642888 and ask for an International Student Adviser. They can also provide information about healthcare eligibility.

It is also worth checking any travel restrictions that may exist for mothers in later stages of pregnancy, since many major airline carriers require written proof that a pregnancy is “without complication” for expectant mothers travelling after 28 weeks, and may prohibit travel completely after 36 weeks.
Personal and emotional support

Sometimes students may experience complications during pregnancy where things do not go according to plan. In many cases, the best starting place for neutral advice and support is from your family doctor, who can also refer you to specialist NHS services as required.

However, if your circumstances are affecting your life and studies at university, then the university provides a range of support services for all students through its Student Services department, including counselling & wellbeing support and medical centres (offering GP facilities).

Please see the list of useful contacts at the end of this guide for more information.

Occasionally students experiencing complications during their pregnancy may wish to apply for mitigating circumstances or adjustments to their learning. This can be done by a student explaining their situation to their academic school (e.g. by talking to their Personal Tutor or their school’s Student Support and Guidance Tutor).

If students do not want to tell their academic school about a termination or miscarriage, they can arrange for mitigating circumstances by talking to a member of the Counselling and Wellbeing team in Student Services instead. This member of staff will then act as an intermediary to provide the evidence required for mitigating circumstances without divulging confidential or sensitive information, so that details of the situation are not known by the academic school.

For further information, please email counselling@brighton.ac.uk or telephone your Student Services site office (contact details for all site offices can be found at https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/health-and-wellbeing/need-to-speak-to-someone/index.aspx).

Unplanned pregnancy

Where a pregnancy is not planned, students may want further advice and support as to different options available. Rather than produce separate guidance, the university can provide the following links to other organisations that have greater experience of the issues surrounding unplanned pregnancy.


The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) also has information on its website concerning unplanned pregnancy and different options available, as well as links to further support and information: https://www.bpas.org/

For students who are based in Brighton, the Brighton and Hove Sexual Health and Contraception Service has various clinics across the city that offer support and information about different options. Often appointments can be arranged at short notice. More details, including opening hours, can be found on their website: http://brightonsosexualhealth.com/services/
The main sexual health services in East Sussex are based at Avenue House in Eastbourne and at the Station Plaza Clinic in Hastings. These two main clinics are open all week from 8:30am with clinic sessions running from Monday to Friday and offer the full range of sexual health services. There are also a number of clinic sessions run from different venues across the area. Further information can be found on the following website: http://www.eastsussexsexualhealth.co.uk/

**Support for fathers and partners (including same-sex partners)**

The university recognises that a pregnancy will affect both parents/partners, and that it can be helpful for students whose partners are pregnant to let their academic school know about their circumstances (by talking to a member of staff such as a Personal Tutor, Course Leader or the school’s Student Support and Guidance Tutor). This is likely to be a much less formal process for partners when compared with that for pregnant students.

Fathers and partners can access many of the same university support services as their partners, including Counselling, Student Advice Service (for finance support and immigration advice) and the Careers Service. The university will also try to support those students who need time off to accompany their partners at medical appointments (although it is preferred that these are arranged outside study hours wherever possible). These appointments should be discussed with the academic school concerned.

Some students on work-based programmes of study are entitled to maternity support (paternity) leave and pay. For example, students who are enrolled on NHS pre-registration courses and are in receipt of the maintenance grant element of the NHS bursary are entitled to a NHS bursary maternity support (paternity) award. Further information can be found on the NHS Business Services Authority website: http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Documents/Students/FAQ_20_0612.pdf

NHS Bursary rules may be subject to change in the future. Therefore students should not assume that the current NHS Bursary rules concerning maternity support (paternity) leave will still be in force when planning for subsequent academic years. Further information concerning any updates or changes to the current rules will be posted on the NHS Student Bursaries Unit website: http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/816.aspx

Research Council UK funded students are also entitled to take maternity support (paternity) leave, shared parental leave and adoption leave. Students are allowed to make provision for additional stipend to be paid where appropriate, and are allowed to change to part-time study. Further information can be found in this Research Council UK briefing: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/skills/RCUKMaternityBriefing-pdf/

For most students whose partner is pregnant, there is no formal, statutory, procedure in place for maternity support (paternity) leave and pay. However, the university will endeavour to accommodate and support fathers and partners in taking maternity support (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, fathers and partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave; therefore the university will, wherever possible, allow fathers and partners to take the equivalent maternity support (paternity) absence from their studies. Further information about current employment law relating to maternity support (paternity) leave can be found...
at https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave/overview Information about shared parental leave can be found at https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/overview and information about adoption leave can be found at https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/overview

Students should contact a member of staff in their academic school (for example, their Personal Tutor, Course Leader or the school’s Student Support and Guidance Tutor) to discuss the possibility of taking maternity support (paternity) related absence.

In some cases, partners may also need to access mitigating circumstances procedures to allow for their situation to be considered during examination and assessment marking processes. This may be the case where caring responsibilities or an emotional concern have impacted on an individual’s performance.

In cases of mitigating circumstances, impartial evidence is required. However, if students do not want to tell their academic school about a pregnancy (including issues arising from termination or miscarriage), they can arrange for mitigating circumstances by talking to a member of the Counselling and Wellbeing team in Student Services instead. This member of staff will then act as an intermediary to provide the evidence required for mitigating circumstances without divulging confidential or sensitive information, so that details of the situation are not known by the academic school.

Student Services will try to support students where they can, signposting to external services where required.

_**Accommodation enquiries**_

For some students, becoming a parent can require a change of housing accommodation to better suit their needs and to provide more space.

The Accommodation Team will try to support pregnant students (and their partners) to find suitable accommodation in the local private sector market. Given the demand for student accommodation, and in particular accommodation that is suitable for families, students should consider their accommodation requirements in the early stages of pregnancy wherever possible.

Students who are living in university halls of residence or university managed housing can also talk to the Accommodation Team who will try to take a flexible approach when considering their current housing contracts and accommodation requirements. Contact details and more information about the Accommodation Service can be found on the website here: http://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/contacts/advice-and-support-services/index.aspx
Study options and support for Teaching, Learning and Assessments

This section gives information about different options students have for taking time out from the university, transferring to a part-time course or changing the distribution of modules, and the effect this may have on their student funding, grants and fees. It also contains details about how to apply for a Learning Support Plan (outlining recommendations for adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment) and Mitigating Circumstances procedures.

International students

If you are an international student (from outside the European Union), you must seek immigration advice before making any changes to the way that you study, as any decisions relating to your course length and attendance will affect your student visa.

The International Student Advisers in Student Services are the only members of staff who are qualified to offer immigration advice. They can be found in the Student Advice Service within Student Services or you can email them at visas@brighton.ac.uk

Maternity leave and different study options:

Some students on work-based programmes of study are entitled to maternity leave and pay. For example, students who are enrolled on NHS pre-registration courses and are in receipt of the maintenance grant element of the NHS bursary are entitled to a NHS bursary maternity award. Further information can be found on the NHS Business Services Authority website: http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Documents/Students/FAQ_20_0612.pdf

NHS Bursary rules may be subject to change in the future. Therefore students should not assume that the current NHS Bursary rules concerning maternity leave will still be in force when planning for subsequent academic years. Further information concerning any updates or changes to the current rules will be posted on the NHS Student Bursaries Unit website: http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/816.aspx

Research Council UK funded students are also entitled to take maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave. Students are allowed to make provision for additional stipend to be paid where appropriate, and are allowed to change to part-time study. Further information can be found in this Research Council UK briefing: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/skills/RCUKMaternityBriefing-pdf/

If a student has been in recent employment they may be entitled to receive Maternity Allowance. More information is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-benefits-technical-guidance/maternity-benefits-technical-guidance

For most students who are pregnant, there is no formal, statutory, procedure in place for maternity leave and pay. However, the university will, wherever possible, endeavour to support students in taking maternity related absence that is in line with the entitlements of employees under current employment law. For example, under UK legislation, mothers must remain absent from work for two weeks immediately after the birth; therefore, the
university recommends that, at a minimum, students take two weeks’ compulsory maternity-related absence. Further information about current employment law relating to maternity leave can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/overview](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/overview). Information about shared parental leave can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/overview](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/overview) and information about adoption leave can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/overview](https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/overview).

Many students choose to take time out from their studies, or to change to part-time study, or to liaise with their course tutors to change the way that modules are studied or assessed to better suit their circumstances. The decision will vary depending on the academic subject you are studying (different subjects have different assessment requirements and different physical demands), what time of year your baby is expected (and how that affects assessment periods, distribution of core modules etc.) as well as your personal circumstances and preferences.

Advice on what study options are available and academic issues is best offered by your school, as they know more about your academic discipline and course components. They may advise you to take time out from your studies. However, you are not under any obligation to follow this advice. Under the Equality Act (2010), it is illegal to make a student take extended time out from their course as a result of a pregnancy/maternity (or associated illnesses) unless there is a considerable and quantifiable health and safety risk.

Students will not automatically be required to interrupt their study for a whole year. Instead staff in your academic school will work with you to establish a suitable return-to-study date. Where course structure or content indicates the need for a student to return to study sooner than they would like to, the reason given will need to be justified by the university in writing to the student. This justification should stand up to scrutiny by a third party.

Your situation can change over time, so it is important that both students and staff communicate with each other to explain any changes in circumstance or difficulties that arise so that adjustments can be made and different options considered where appropriate.

**Practical considerations such as funding**

In addition to academic concerns, it is also important to consider how changes to your studies will affect your student funding.

Going part-time, changing mode of study, or taking time out from your course will affect your fees, student loan, grant and bursary entitlement (if undergraduate), or your fees and any Research Council funding or PGCE bursary (if postgraduate), but you may be eligible for additional welfare benefits.

To ensure that the information that you receive is up-to-date, it is best to organise an appointment with the Student Advice Service in Student Services ([studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk) or telephone 01273 642888).

They can also help with more general budgeting and money management advice.
Changing plans
In some cases, students may want to change an initial decision about how they have chosen to study, as their circumstances and expectations change. In these cases, communication between students and their course staff is vital, to ensure that everyone is kept up-to-date with relevant information. This is important at a personal level because good communication can reduce anxiety, but also because the university is governed by some rules and deadlines (e.g. those relating to fees and funding) where timing is important.

Requesting adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment
The university has a legal responsibility and an ethical commitment to ensure that students have fair access to education and equality of opportunity in teaching, learning and assessment. Adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment may be required where a student has a ‘protected characteristic’ (as defined within the Equality Act 2010) that impacts their ability to learn and perform under specific teaching conditions or in particular types of assessment tasks (for example, Disability, Pregnancy/Maternity, or Religion/Belief).

In the case of students who become pregnant during their studies, there are two main procedures for requesting adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment. Firstly, a Learning Support Plan (LSP) may be recommended where it is possible to anticipate that a student may require adjustments to how a course is taught, examined or assessed. This may particularly be helpful where there are medical complications in a pregnancy (e.g. severe backache) or where the expected birth date is anticipated to coincide with a period of assessment. For example, it may be possible to grant a deadline extension or to allow an exam to be taken in a more convenient location, under medical supervision or at a different time.

The second procedure, mitigating circumstances, is applied where there is not sufficient time available for a Learning Support Plan to be arranged, but where pregnancy or maternity related issues have impacted on a student’s performance.

Both these procedures will require evidence to be seen to ensure that the examination and assessment criteria are applied fairly with regards to other students.

Applying for a Learning Support Plan (LSP)
Adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment may be required for students who become pregnant during their studies. Recommendations for adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment will be provided for academic schools by the Disability and Dyslexia Team in Student Services through a Learning Support Plan.

Although it is recognised that pregnancy and maternity do not fall within the remit of disability, Learning Support Plans should be issued by the Disability and Dyslexia Team in these instances in order to ensure that recommendations are appropriate and consistent.

The university’s General Examination and Assessment Regulations (GEAR) offer a guide to ensure that Learning Support Plans (Section G) are applied consistently and fairly across the university. This need for transparency means that documentary evidence may be required to support the application (such as a pregnancy certificate MATB1, or a letter from
a medical practitioner). Adjustments will be made on the basis of the pregnancy itself, plus any medical conditions arising there from (e.g. pregnancy sickness). Evidence will be considered valid throughout the pregnancy and for up to 26 weeks after the birth of a child, in accordance with the definition of ‘pregnancy and maternity’ within the Equality Act (2010). This time limit will be stated in the Learning Support Plan at time of issue.

Evidence of adoption will normally be supplied in the form of a Matching Certificate, but a letter from Social Services or another relevant agency would be accepted in the interim if this certificate was not available with sufficient notice. Adjustments may be requested if an assessment period coincides with the start of the adoption period and will be supplied in the form of a temporary Learning Support Plan.

The evidence will be used to help establish what adjustments to teaching, learning or assessment a student will require. For example, a doctor’s note might explain that the pregnancy is affecting a student’s posture and that they require regular breaks so that they can stretch or move around. The Learning Support Plan might then recommend that a chair with suitable back support is provided, and that extra time is allowed in examinations to allow the student to take regular breaks.

Students who believe that they will require a Learning Support Plan as a result of their pregnancy (or associated medical conditions) should contact the Disability and Dyslexia Team in Student Services (disability@brighton.ac.uk or telephone 01273 643799). They will then arrange an appointment with you to discuss what adjustments are possible and complete the relevant paperwork to inform your school.

Once the Learning Support Plan has been completed, the details are then passed to your academic school in order to apply the recommended adjustments to your programme of study. The Learning Support Plan will only be shared with the academic schools at this stage and not with individual students. It is the school’s responsibility (later in the process) to inform individual students about what their accepted Learning Support Plan will be.

Any changes to teaching, learning and assessment methods must be in accordance with the learning objectives of the module concerned and approval by the Module or Course Leader, Head of School/Department, or Chair of the Examination Board may be required.

Changes in requirements can occur during the course of a pregnancy, so students are requested to inform the Disability and Dyslexia Team if their situation or needs change.

The process for arranging adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment may take up to 8 weeks, and although the university will endeavour to make arrangements wherever possible, there is no guarantee if requests are received after this deadline. In cases where it is not possible to provide adequate notice for adjustments to examinations and assessments, the Mitigating Circumstances procedure may be used.

**Mitigating circumstances**

Mitigating circumstances may be applied for in a situation where a student has not performed to the best of their ability in examinations or assessments because of a factor outside of their control, which they could not have foreseen.
The General Examination and Assessment Regulations (GEAR) offer a guide for staff and students, to ensure that mitigating circumstances (Section B.6) are applied fairly and consistently across the university.

Impartial documentary evidence is normally required in order to show that the student has been affected “by exceptional circumstances outside the student’s control (i.e. unforeseen and unavoidable)”. Cases for mitigating circumstances are considered by Examination Boards on a case by case basis, depending on the student’s individual circumstances.

If students feel that they wish to apply for mitigating circumstances, it is recommended that they contact their course tutors or another member of staff within their academic school as soon as possible to discuss this.

Further information about the mitigating circumstances procedures and GEAR may be found in the Student Contract.

Students wishing to appeal an academic decision or apply for mitigating circumstances can also access information and support from the Students’ Union Support Service (https://www.brightonsu.com/goodadvice/support/ or email bsusupportservice@brighton.ac.uk)
Returning to study after having a child can seem like a big step, and students can experience some “culture shock” settling back into university life. Studying at any time is challenging, and studying with children can sometimes be extra difficult for students juggling multiple responsibilities.

**Keeping in contact**

Even if you don’t choose to take extended leave for the birth of a child, you may find that your situation changes and some students can feel rather isolated and out-of-the loop with regards to their studies. It can therefore be helpful if you keep in contact with your academic school at regular intervals, perhaps with a Personal Tutor, Course Leader or your school’s Student Support and Guidance Tutor. This will allow the school/department to better prepare for your return to study and to reduce any anxiety that you feel after time away.

**Car Parking**

An issue often raised by students is that of car parking availability, particularly for parents who need their cars in order to drop-off or collect children and who, for the same reason, may arrive on campus after 9am when car parks are at their busiest.

Permit parking is in place at most of the university’s campuses. However, a parking permit does not guarantee that a parking space will be available. Moulsecoomb, Falmer and Eastbourne have different coloured parking permits that are specific to their individual sites. If you wish to park at different campuses you will need a permit for each one.

Each application for a parking space is judged on its own merits, taking into account special circumstances which might mean that the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to use public transport. This includes students and members of staff who have child-care responsibilities (for children below 16 years of age). Applicants should provide details of the number and ages of the children concerned.

Further information about parking permits can be found at [https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/travel-and-transport/index.aspx](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/travel-and-transport/index.aspx)

**Breastfeeding/expressing milk at the university**

The university would like to support new mothers wherever possible and there are no university policies prohibiting breastfeeding in university social areas (although this would generally not be appropriate within a teaching setting).

Dedicated facilities for breastfeeding and/or expressing milk vary by campus, but the university will endeavour to find a suitable private space for this wherever possible. In some locations, students may be provided access to a First Aid room while in other locations Academic Schools may be asked to find a suitable private space (such as a staff office) as and when required.
At the Falmer Campus, room D415 in the Checkland Building is available for use and keys can be collected from the Student Services reception (Checkland Building E-Wing). At the Eastbourne campus, the Hillbrow Sports Centre has a suitable private space for expressing milk. The keys can be collected from the Hillbrow Sports Centre reception.

If you are studying at a campus other than Falmer and Eastbourne please contact someone from your academic school (such as your Personal Tutor, Course Leader or your school’s Student Support and Guidance Tutor) to ask what facilities are available locally.

Staff members wanting to find out about or request access to First Aid rooms should contact the Health and Safety department at healthandsafety@brighton.ac.uk. If these are not available locally, it is suggested that a private staff office could be made available at pre-arranged time slots for the student concerned. If these options have been exhausted with no success, please contact the Student Experience and Equalities Manager (equality@brighton.ac.uk or 01273 642160), who will investigate alternatives.

Where possible, the university will facilitate access to refrigeration. However, national guidance indicates that portable cool boxes provide an acceptable alternative in the event that facilities are not available. The university would expect the student to provide these.

**Bringing children or babies to the university**

The university does not consider itself to be an ideal location for young children, but children may be brought into social spaces of the university, provided that they are properly supervised by an adult at all times. There are also restrictions in high risk areas such as workshops, kitchens and laboratories. Individual guidance is available from your school.

Guidance is also available online from the Health and Safety Executive http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/

Children and babies are not normally permitted in teaching situations because they may cause a distraction to the parent/carer and to other members of the class. If teaching staff allow students to bring children/babies to a session, they must ensure that an appropriate Risk Assessment has been made.

Where childcare issues prevent a student from attending classes in person, teaching staff are asked to supply any available materials that may help the student in making up for missed work.

**Childcare and the university nurseries**

The university operates two nurseries, both based in Brighton at the Grand Parade and Moulsecoomb sites. They accept children aged between 2 and 5 years and are some of the few nurseries that have been recognised by Ofsted for providing “outstanding” childcare facilities.

The nature of the university nursery facilities and staffing ratio requirements mean that they are currently unable to accept children aged under 2 years. However, the nurseries do have strong links to other childcare providers in the area and can signpost students looking for childcare for younger children. Details of the nurseries, can be found at
Student parents may also be eligible for financial support to help towards their childcare costs. Please contact the Student Advice Services in Student Services for more information by emailing studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk or telephoning 01273 642888.

**Reading weeks and half term**

Many student parents have expressed frustration that the university calendar does not currently include half-terms. Regrettably, this is not something that the university can change because currently half-term periods vary between schools (including between East and West Sussex schools), and so there is not a clear choice of week that would facilitate this.

Students who face particular childcare issues during half-term are therefore advised to talk to their Course or Module Leaders, or Personal Tutors, to discuss how this may be managed most effectively within the context of your course. For example, your tutors may be able to provide handouts and lecture notes from missed sessions, or it may be possible to record teaching sessions for you to watch/listen to at a more convenient time.

For older children, there are often half-term play schemes in operation in the local area and contact details for local parenting/childcare organisations can be found at the end of this guide in the contacts section.
List of useful contacts

Academic Schools
Contact details for individual schools can be found at http://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us/academic-departments/index.aspx or you can call the university switchboard and ask them to direct your call on 01273 600900

Support from Student Support and Guidance Tutors
Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGTs) are located in all Schools across the University. SSGTs are not academic tutors but are there to help students with issues that may be impacting on their time at University. The contact details for each school’s Student Support and Guidance Tutors can be found here: http://www.brighton.ac.uk/ssgt

Support from Student Services
Student Services general contact – for student support, information advice and guidance, at all sites of the university.
Email studentservices@brighton.ac.uk telephone 01273 642895 (Moulsecoomb site office, but will redirect to other sites on request)
Individual site office contact details, opening hours and drop-in times can be found on the university website.

Counselling & Wellbeing
Email counselling@brighton.ac.uk or telephone 01273 642895 (Moulsecoomb site office, but will redirect to other sites on request). Individual site office contact details and opening hours can be found on the university website

Disability & Dyslexia Team
Email disability@brighton.ac.uk or telephone 01273 643799, or please call into your site Student Services office to book an appointment. Individual site office contact details and opening hours can be found on the university website

Student Advice Service
For financial advice and support, email studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk or telephone 01273 642888.
Individual site office contact details, opening hours and drop-in times can be found on the university website or please telephone in advance to arrange and appointment outside these times.
Information is available online at http://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-finances/index.aspx

Nurseries
Please see the website www.brighton.ac.uk/childcare, email s.boyle@brighton.ac.uk (One World Nursery, Moulsecoomb Campus) or m.leach@brighton.ac.uk (Phoenix Nursery, Grand Parade site) or telephone 01273 642021 (One World Nursery, Moulsecoomb Campus) or 01273 277016 (Phoenix Nursery, Grand Parade site)
Immigration and visa advice, international student support
Email visas@brighton.ac.uk or telephone 01273 642888. This service is based in the Tithe Barn, on the Moulsecoomb campus but appointments can be arranged at other sites upon request. Drop-in times can be found on the university website or please telephone in advance for an appointment outside these times. Information is available online at https://www.brighton.ac.uk/international/applying-here/visas-and-immigration/index.aspx

Support from the Students’ Union
Student’ Union Support Service – independent support and representation for students.
For more information about this service as well as information regarding common issues and processes, please see https://www.brightonsu.com/goodadvice/support/ or email bsusupportservice@brighton.ac.uk. Drop-in times and telephone numbers for each site are given on the above webpage.

Support for Student Parents
Student Parents website – this national website provides support information for student parents including information about funding, planning checklists and case studies. www.studentparents.org

Information about pregnancy
Family Planning Association guides
An information booklet on preparing for pregnancy
An information booklet about different pregnancy options and support

Health and Safety Executive guidance
A guide for new and expectant mothers who work is available at www.hse.gov.uk/mothers

Services for parents / families
Brighton and Hove Family Information Service - comprehensive national and local childcare and early years information, such as childminders, pre-school groups, after-school clubs etc.
Tel: 01273 293545
http://www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk/kb5/brighton/fsd/home.page

East Sussex Information for Families - free, impartial information and advice for families with children 0 – 19 (0 to 25 for young people with special needs). Information about: childcare, finances, education, activities and special educational needs and disability.
Tel: 0345 60 80 192
https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/information-for-families/
Family and Childcare Trust - national childcare campaign
Tel: 020 7940 7510 or email: info@familyandchildcaretrust.org
http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/

Gingerbread – provide advice, practical support and campaign for single parents
Tel: 0800 018 5026
www.gingerbread.org.uk

MOSAIC – Community organisation of Black, Asian and mixed parentage families and individuals.
Tel: 01273 234017 or email: info@mosaicbrighton.org.uk
www.mosaicqualities.org.uk

The PaCC - Forum for parent carers of children with any condition to work closely together to help improve services and support in Brighton and Hove.
Tel: 01273 234862 or email: admin@paccbrighton.org.uk
http://paccbrighton.org.uk/

Family Lives - national family support charity providing help and support in all aspects of family life.
Tel: 0808 800 2222
http://www.familylives.org.uk/

Working Families – national charity helping working parents and carers achieve work-life balance
Tel: 0300 012 01312 or email: advice@workingfamilies.org.uk
www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Directgov information for parents
Government website including information about childcare, money and work entitlements, schools, leisure and health & safety concerns.
https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/parents