

Pregnancy and Expectant Parents Policy

September 2025

Scope	All Students at UK Business College
OFS Condition	B2
Strategic Plan	Pillar 2
Access:	Public

Version 1.1
Approved by the Board of Governors

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1.Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and support mechanisms available at UK Business College for students who are pregnant, have recently given birth, or are parents of very young children.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students receive fair and equal treatment, and that no student is disadvantaged academically or otherwise due to pregnancy, maternity, or early parenthood.

1.3 UKBC is committed to fostering an inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environment. This policy provides clear guidance for students, staff, and relevant stakeholders on how to manage academic engagement, risk assessments, health and safety, and reasonable adjustments during pregnancy and early parenthood.

1.4 The College recognises that pregnancy and childcare responsibilities can pose additional challenges to study and aims to support affected students through flexible arrangements, compassionate understanding, and practical assistance.

2. Legal Basis

2.1 The *Equality Act 2010* provides legal protection for students in higher and further education during pregnancy and maternity. Pregnancy and maternity are recognised as **protected characteristics**, and any discrimination on these grounds is prohibited by law.

2.2 Under the Act, unlawful discrimination occurs when:

- A student is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy.
- Within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth, a student is treated unfavourably because she has given birth. This protection also extends to cases of miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal death occurring after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

2.3 A student is treated unfavourably because she is breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old. After 26 weeks, unfavourable treatment due to breastfeeding may constitute sex discrimination.

2.4 UKBC fully complies with these legal obligations and ensures that pregnant students, new mothers, and students with young children receive appropriate academic, pastoral, and welfare support. Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of any student on these grounds will not be tolerated.

3. Expectant Parents

3.1 Students who suspect or know they are pregnant are encouraged to seek **confidential advice** from the Student Support Services at the earliest opportunity, as well as appropriate medical guidance.

3.2 Students who are pregnant or expecting a baby are **strongly advised** to inform the College (via Student Support Services) as soon as possible. While disclosure is not mandatory, early notification enables the College to:

- Conduct a timely health and safety risk assessment.
- Make reasonable academic adjustments to support continued study.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

3.3 Students may inform their **Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)** or a **Student Support Officer**, both of whom are trained to offer sensitive, confidential, and practical assistance.

3.4 UKBC guarantees that all disclosures regarding pregnancy will be handled confidentially, with respect to the student's privacy and dignity. No information will be shared beyond the immediate support staff and academic leads without the student's explicit consent, unless required for health or safeguarding reasons.

4. Academic Support

4.1 The College recognises that pregnancy and maternity can impact academic performance, attendance, and participation. Therefore, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure affected students are not academically disadvantaged.

4.2 Students are encouraged to contact their **PAT** or **Student Support Team** as early as possible to discuss their circumstances. Adjustments may include:

- Modified deadlines for coursework or assessments.
- Alternative examination arrangements or deferrals.
- Adjustments to placement schedules or attendance requirements.
- Remote learning options (where available).

4.3 Although pregnancy is not an illness, UKBC acknowledges that physical and emotional changes may affect a student's ability to study. Students may apply for **special consideration** if their pregnancy, medical appointments, or related circumstances interfere with examinations or coursework.

4.4 Each case will be reviewed individually, and adjustments will be based on medical advice, student preference, and the academic demands of the programme.

5. Student Support Teams

5.1 The Student Support Teams provide confidential and impartial advice to pregnant and parenting students. Support may cover a wide range of issues, including:

- Financial advice, including eligibility for student funding, maternity grants, or benefits.
- Welfare and housing support.
- Guidance on childcare options and family responsibilities.
- Academic planning, including options for deferral, suspension, or flexible study.
- Emotional and wellbeing support.

5.2 Student Support will help students explore their options and make informed decisions regarding continuation, interruption, or modification of their studies. Decisions will take into account:

- The nature of the academic programme (including attendance and placement requirements).
- The stage of pregnancy or parental leave.
- Personal circumstances and health considerations.

5.3 Support is delivered in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner. The Student Support Team may liaise (with consent) with course leaders, academic tutors, or relevant staff to coordinate adjustments.

6. Implications for funding

6.1 If a student chooses or needs to **interrupt their studies** due to pregnancy, maternity, or parental responsibilities, this may have implications for funding and financial entitlements.

- Tuition fee and maintenance loans will usually stop once the interruption begins.
- Students who receive a tuition fee loan remain liable for the fees of the term in which the interruption occurs.
- Students should contact **Student Finance England (SFE)** to clarify how an interruption may affect their financial arrangements and future eligibility.

6.2 Student Support can assist with liaising with SFE or other funding bodies to explore options such as hardship funding, maternity grants, or reinstatement of loans upon return to study.

7. Health and Safety During Pregnancy

- 7.1 Under health and safety legislation, pregnant women and new mothers are protected from risks that could harm them or their unborn child.
- 7.2 Once a student notifies the College of their pregnancy, a **formal risk assessment** must be completed by the **Operations Manager** or a designated **Student Support Officer**.
- 7.3 The assessment will consider:
- Physical risks associated with course activities (e.g., laboratory work, fieldwork, or manual handling).
 - Exposure to chemicals, radiation, or biological agents.
 - Travel or placement-related risks.
 - The need for rest breaks or ergonomic adjustments.
- 7.4 Appropriate control measures will be implemented to ensure the student's safety. If any significant risks cannot be mitigated, alternative arrangements will be made (e.g., modified study tasks or temporary suspension of specific activities).

8. Adoption leave

- 8.1 Students becoming parents through adoption are entitled to similar considerations as birth parents.
- 8.2 Students should inform their course team and the **School Registrar** (via Student Support) as soon as adoption arrangements are confirmed. Early notification allows the College to support planning for study interruptions and returns.
- 8.3 The duration of leave or interruption may vary depending on:
- The age and needs of the adopted child.
 - The student's programme of study.
 - The timing of the adoption within the academic calendar.
- 8.4 Student Support will work with the course team to coordinate appropriate academic and welfare arrangements.

9. Parental leave for those who hold responsibility to child rearing (including same sex couples)

9.1 UKBC recognises the diversity of family arrangements and supports all students who share parenting responsibilities, including same-sex couples.

9.2 Students with parenting responsibilities are entitled to **up to two weeks of parental leave**, to be taken within 56 days of the child's birth or adoption. Normally, parental leave will commence immediately following the birth or adoption.

9.3 Students wishing to take parental leave must inform their **Course Leader, Academic Mentor**, or a **Student Support and Wellbeing Team** member. At least 12 weeks' notice is normally required; however, in emergencies, shorter notice will be accepted.

9.4 Potential impacts of parental leave on academic activities, including assessments, examinations, placements, and group work, should be discussed in advance with the relevant academic staff.

9.5 Formal interruptions of study are typically approved for up to **twelve months**, depending on programme structure. Students should also be aware of possible tuition fee liabilities and annual fee increases.

9.6 For shorter absences (up to two weeks during term time), the **PAT and Course Leader** will provide advice on catching up with missed lectures, tutorials, and coursework.

10. Bringing very young children onto Campus

10.1 UKBC prioritises the safety of all campus users and the integrity of the learning environment. Therefore, it is generally not appropriate for students to bring children to lectures, seminars, or study-related activities (e.g., field trips, placements).

10.2 Bringing a child to academic sessions is **not a substitute for formal childcare** and may pose risks to the child, disrupt classes, or affect other students' learning experience.

10.3 In exceptional circumstances, where it becomes necessary to bring a child onto campus, permission must be obtained in advance from the **Operations Manager** and **Campus Associate Dean**.

10.4 When children are brought onto campus:

- The student retains full responsibility for their care and supervision at all times.
- Children must not be left in the care of other students or staff.
- Students must ensure that the child does not access restricted or hazardous areas.

10.5 Children may visit campus briefly for informal purposes, such as collecting items, submitting coursework, or introducing a new baby to peers. During such visits, the child must remain under close and continuous supervision.

10.6 Students are allowed to bring their children onto campus for brief informal visits such as delivering or collecting items i.e., library books or essays, or to show a new baby to their peers. In these circumstances, children should be under the close and continuous supervision of their parent or guardian.

11. Breastfeeding mothers

11.1 UKBC supports and promotes the rights of breastfeeding mothers. In accordance with the *Equality Act 2010*, the College provides appropriate and private facilities for breastfeeding or expressing milk.

11.2 Students requiring access to these facilities can contact Student Support, who will make suitable arrangements and ensure confidentiality.

11.3 UKBC encourages staff and students to support breastfeeding mothers in a respectful and inclusive manner, recognising that returning to study after childbirth can be challenging.

Document Information	
Document Title:	Pregnancy and Expectant Parents Policy
Version:	1.1
Date:	September 2025
Previous Version/Date:	September 2024
Next Review:	September 2025
Approve By:	Board of Governors
Owners:	Student Support Manager