


MATERNITY AND PATERNITY POLICY FOR STUDENTS



Policy Review					
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Tina Callow	Head of Student Services	SMT 	24.04.25	Every 2-years April 2027	Y

Document Control – Revision History (Policies only)					
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Michelle Dennett		24.05.17			Yes
Michelle Joy	Update	13/8/21			
Michelle Joy	Update to include links and statement from the SSCP re unborn child				
Michelle Joy	Updated to include paternity following audit from Centre of Excellence EDI report	12.8.22			
Richard Watson	Updated to include new link to Govt website paternity pay and leave.	20.07.23		V1	
Sian Deasy & Donna Short	Formatting updates to reflect accessibility best practice. Inclusion of Policy and Procedure in one document for ease of use, compared to appended procedure. Update of gendered language to better reflect diversity of those accessing this policy.	13.11.23			
Donna Short	Updated and reviewed inc name change	24/4/25		V2	

Initial Equality Impact Screening					
Has anyone else been consulted on this policy and/or procedure? Previous learner who has used the policy.					
What evidence has been used for this impact screening (e.g. related policies, publications)?					
Declaration (please tick one statement and indicate any negative impacts)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this Policy and/or Procedure and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. There are no specific negative impacts on any of the Protected Characteristics groups.					
<input type="checkbox"/> I recommend that an Equality Impact Assessment is required by the Equality and Diversity group, as possible negative impacts have been identified for one or more of the Protected Characteristics groups as follows:					
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-start; gap: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief <input type="checkbox"/> Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity </div>					
Completed by:	Donna Short	Position:	VP Q/E	Date:	24/4/25
Reviewed by Equality & Diversity Group: YES/NO If Yes: Date: I confirm that any recommended amendments have been made					
Summary of Comments including Recommendations from Equality & Diversity Group Review:					
Amended by Author:		Position:		Date:	

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1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 1.1. This policy sets out the rights and responsibilities of learners who are pregnant or have recently given birth and gives details of the arrangements for absence for prenatal/antenatal care, pregnancy-related illness, and leave from their course. It also sets out the rights and responsibilities of learners who are supporting a partner who is pregnant, and learners who are new or expectant parents.
- 1.2. Yeovil College believes that becoming pregnant, terminating a pregnancy, or having a young child should not in themselves be a barrier to a learner starting, completing, or succeeding their studies. A learner will not be treated less favourably on the grounds of pregnancy, maternity, paternity, termination of pregnancy, having a young child, or having to provide reasonable support to a partner who is pregnant.
- 1.3. The college acknowledges that individual students will have different needs and requirements, and it is not possible to provide detailed information to cover all circumstances and situations. This Policy is intended to be used as a framework, offering general guidance to facilitate individualised planning around the specific needs of each learner. Where necessary and appropriate, the Policy will refer to other sources of information and advice.
- 1.4. The College recognises its safeguarding duty to safeguard both parents and the unborn child. The College will follow its Safeguarding policies and procedures and work with or make referrals to external agencies, in line with Somerset Safeguarding Children

Partnership Procedures¹, which state that “Where professionals become aware a person is pregnant, at whatever stage of the pregnancy, and they have concerns for the mother or unborn baby's welfare, or that of siblings, they must not assume that Midwifery or other Health services are aware of the pregnancy, or the concerns held. Each professional should follow their agency's child protection procedures and discuss concerns with their safeguarding lead/named professional for safeguarding”.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The Maternity and Paternity Policy for Students applies in instances where a learner is pregnant, where a learner is an expectant or very new parent, or where a learner is supporting a spouse, civil partner, or long-term partner who is pregnant. This includes instances in which a learner is an expectant or very new parent via surrogacy, or through a process of adoption.
- 2.2. The Maternity and Paternity Policy for Students will be applied fairly and consistently to all students regardless of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marital status, family responsibility, or disability. This policy is applicable to Yeovil College and Yeovil College University Centre learners studying across all curriculum areas and modes of study.
- 2.3. Where an apprentice studying with the College is pregnant or a new or expectant parent, this policy should be implemented alongside the appropriate policies and procedures of their employer. If an employer's terms and conditions of employment were to conflict with the guidance in this policy, a meeting would be convened between the learner, their employer, and a representative from the Employer Engagement team to identify a reasonable way forward. If it were not possible for an employer's terms and conditions of employment to be followed and for the apprenticeship to be conducted in line with funding body guidance and the policy requirements of the college, then the learner may be able to take a break in learning for a reasonable period of time, until they were able to return to their programme of study.
- 2.4. There is a separate policy in place covering maternity and paternity protocols for staff² – these fall outside of the scope of this policy.

3. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

- 3.1. Any learner who is pregnant is strongly advised to share this with an appropriate member of staff, such as their tutor, in order to facilitate support, to enable them to manage pregnancy alongside their studies, and to ensure appropriate consideration is given to matters of health and safety.

¹ Available at <https://swcpp-somerset.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/pre-birth>

² Available to staff via the Policies and Procedures SharePoint area.

- 3.2. It is the responsibility of the Study Programme Manager or Curriculum Area Manager to lead the completion of the Risk Assessment Checklist (Appendix 1) with any pregnant learner and to review this appropriately as the pregnancy progresses.
- 3.3. It is the responsibility of the Study Programme Manager or Curriculum Area Manager to meet with any learner who is a new or expectant parent, or supporting a partner who is pregnant, to identify appropriate reasonable adjustments to be put in place to support the learner to continue with their studies.
- 3.4. Any staff member to whom a learner discloses that they are pregnant is responsible for ensuring this information is shared appropriately to safeguard the learner.
- 3.5. It is the responsibility of the Head of Student Services to review all Risk Assessment Checklists for pregnant learners, and to ensure these are appropriately uploaded to a learner's ILP.
- 3.6. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that appropriate safeguarding protocols are followed in instances where a learner is a new or expectant parent, including those to safeguard an unborn child.
- 3.7. Ultimate responsibility rests with the Principal and Governing Body.

4. **NOTIFYING THE COLLEGE**

- 4.1. Once the pregnancy has been confirmed, or a learner otherwise becomes aware that they are a new or expectant parent, the learner should contact their tutor, or other appropriate member of staff, as soon as possible to ensure appropriate support is put in place.
- 4.2. **Where a learner is pregnant**, the Study Programme Manager, Lead Tutor, or Personal Tutor (as appropriate) must then meet with the learner as soon as possible to complete the Risk Assessment Checklist (Appendix 1) to manage any risks to the health & safety of the student and their unborn child.
 - 4.2.1. This meeting should be recorded in the learner's Individualised Learner Plan (ILP).
 - 4.2.2. As outlined in more detail in Section 6, depending on the specific requirements and structure of a learner's programme of study, it may be necessary for a programme of study to be extended, amended, temporarily suspended, or otherwise adjusted to ensure the ongoing safety of the learner and their unborn child, in line with funding body requirements and awarding body regulations.
 - 4.2.3. The member of staff who has completed the Risk Assessment Checklist must then send this on to the Head of Student Services who will contact the learner to arrange an appointment if they are under the age of 18 or if there are any safeguarding risks.
 - 4.2.4. The Head of Student Services should upload the Risk Assessment Checklist to the learner's ILP or Smart Assessor Record and may also upload the Risk

Assessment Checklist to MyConcern, dependent on the age of the learner and / or any associated safeguarding risks.

- 4.3. **In all instances**, the Study Programme Manager, Lead Tutor, or Personal Tutor should meet with any learner who is pregnant, is a new or expectant parent, or is supporting a partner who is pregnant, to discuss how this may impact upon their learning and support the College can provide.
- 4.3.1. This discussion should be led by the Study Programme Manager, Lead Tutor, or Personal Tutor and the Curriculum Area Manager, supported as appropriate by other individuals within the College who hold expertise surrounding funding and compliance regulations to support this conversation. This may include, but is not limited to, the MIS Manager, Head of Finance, Assistant Principal Employer Engagement, Head of Student Services, and / or Head of Higher Education and Adult Learning.
- 4.3.2. Support available to learners who are pregnant, supporting a partner who is pregnant, or are new or expectant parents, may include measures such as reasonable adjustments to the study programme, examination access arrangements, extensions to deadlines, an amended assessment schedule, or moving to a part-time programme of study. Specific support will be dependent upon the programme a learner is studying, the requirements of their funding body, and the regulations of their awarding body.
5. **TIME OFF FOR ANTENATAL CARE AND FOLLOWING A BABY'S BIRTH**
- 5.1. A pregnant learner is entitled to take time off for antenatal care appointments. Evidence of appointments must be provided to their Tutor / Study Programme Manager and employer as appropriate. Where possible, learners should endeavour to schedule appointments outside of taught session or work placement times.
- 5.2. This policy also enables pregnant learners to take reasonable absence from their studies for and following the birth of their baby. Where possible and within the regulations of funding bodies, policies of the college, and requirements of the awarding organisation, the College will take a flexible approach to facilitating the continued study of the learner and maintain a safe and high-quality experience for them.
- 5.3. This policy recognises that learners who are expectant fathers, the spouse or civil partner of a person who is pregnant, in a long-term relationship with a person who is pregnant, or an intended parent (e.g. through a surrogacy arrangement), may need to attend some antenatal appointments and / or take leave after the baby's birth, whether the person having the baby is a learner at the college or not. In these cases, learners will be entitled to attend up to two antenatal appointments, and to take a period of absence of up to two

weeks after the birth of the baby, in line with Government guidance for paternity leave at the time of writing³.

6. PROTECTION OF PREGNANT LEARNERS AND THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN BIRTH

- 6.1. The college is committed to creating and maintaining a healthy and safe learning environment. This is particularly important in relation to the safety of pregnant learners and those who have recently given birth. As part of normal Health and Safety practices, the college will risk assess all learning areas.
- 6.2. Suitable accommodation will be provided for pregnant learners and those who have recently given birth to allow for appropriate rest periods, or to express milk.
- 6.3. Dependent upon the specific requirements of a learner's programme of study, the regulations of their funding body, and requirements of their awarding organisation, it may be necessary for the programme of study to be extended, amended, or for a break in studies to be taken to allow the learner to complete their course safely.
 - 6.3.1. For example, if a learner was on a programme which included an extensive mandatory placement in a high-risk setting they may have to take a break in studies until they were able to safely undertake the placement, or if a learner's programme of study required them to interact with hazardous materials in order to evidence occupational competency it may be necessary to extend their planned end date to allow for this competence to be assessed once the learner was safely able to do so.

7. POST-NATAL HEALTH, WELLBEING, AND SUPPORT

- 7.1. If, following the birth of a new baby or becoming a new parent, a learner is unable to fully engage in their programme of study, the Health, Wellbeing, and Fitness to Study Policy⁴ may be used to support in managing this, including through identifying appropriate reasonable adjustments to support a learner to re-engage with their programme of study.

8. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

- 8.1. The College recognises that, from time to time, learners may have questions or concerns relating to their maternity or paternity rights. It is the College's policy to encourage open discussion with learners to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible.
- 8.2. If a learner is pregnant, supporting a partner who is pregnant, or is a new or expectant parent, they will be able to access wellbeing and pastoral support in line with established College mechanisms.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave>

⁴ Available at <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

- 8.3. In the event of a miscarriage, still birth, or termination, wellbeing and pastoral support will be available from the Student Support Services Team if any learner wishes to access this.
- 8.4. Dependent upon a learner's age, personal circumstances, qualification type, and mode of study, they may be able to access financial support either through the College or through Student Finance England to support with the costs of childcare. For most learners, information about financial support can be requested through the iZone team (izone@yeovil.ac.uk), and for Yeovil College University Centre learners this can be accessed through the University Centre team (university.centre@yeovil.ac.uk).

9. **CARE TO LEARN**

- 9.1. The college will support and direct new and expectant parents up to the age of 20 to engage with Care to Learn⁵ to support childcare costs whilst in education.

10. **RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS⁶**

- 10.1. Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment Checklist for Pregnant Learners
- 10.2. Health and Safety Policy
- 10.3. Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- 10.4. Safeguarding and Prevent Procedure
- 10.5. Health, Wellbeing, and Fitness to Study Policy
- 10.6. HE Student Withdrawal and Temporary Suspension of Studies Policy
- 10.7. Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures⁷
- 10.8. Government guidance on paternity leave and procedures⁸

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

⁶ All Yeovil College Policies and Procedures are available at <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

⁷ Available at <https://swcpp-somerset.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/pre-birth>

⁸ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave>

12. RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR PREGNANT LEARNERS

The checklist below should be reviewed alongside the current departmental risk assessments to fully understand any risks of areas in which a learner may be studying. This checklist should be used as a guide to identify and mitigate potential risks to the safety and well-being of pregnant learners, leading to the creation of an appropriate risk assessment as required. It is essential to tailor an assessment to specific circumstances, regularly reviewing and updating it as needed. Involving the pregnant learner in the risk assessment process and considering their individual needs and preferences is crucial for effective support and risk management.

Student Name		Programme of Study	
Expected Date Baby is Due		Typical Area(s) of Study on-site	
Name of Staff Member Completing Checklist		Job Title	

1. Physical Environment

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any physical hazards in the learning environment that could pose a risk to the pregnant learner (e.g., machinery or tools used for learning activities, uneven flooring, stairways, crowded areas, excessive heat)? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the classroom adequately ventilated and at a comfortable temperature for the pregnant learner? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the sound levels acceptable for a pregnant learner? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there sufficient seating and table options available, including options for ergonomic support? 	

2. Chemical Exposures

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any chemicals or hazardous substances used in the learning activities that could potentially harm the pregnant learner or unborn child? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have COSH data sheets been reviewed for any chemicals used in practical activities and local areas? If so, these need to be included in the risk assessments. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there adequate measures in place to mitigate exposure to harmful substances (e.g., proper ventilation, Personal Protective Equipment)? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there control measures in place to remove at potential risks? 	

3. Biological Hazards:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there any biological hazards present in the learning environment (e.g., exposure to infectious agents (sciences or Biology))?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there protocols in place for handling biological materials safely (e.g. method statements or risk assessments)?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there adequate measures in place to mitigate exposure (e.g., PPE)?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there access to handwashing facilities and PPE to reduce the risk of infection?	

4. Ergonomics and Physical Strain:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are the seating arrangements and workstations ergonomically designed to support the pregnant learner's comfort and posture?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there opportunities for regular breaks to alleviate physical strain and fatigue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is lifting or carrying heavy objects required as part of the learning activities, and if so, are there alternatives or assistance available?	

5. Emotional and Mental Well-being:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there support available for the pregnant learner to address any emotional or mental health concerns?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there accommodations in place to manage stress levels and workload if needed?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a clear process for the pregnant learner to communicate any concerns about their emotional or mental well-being?	

6. Access to Facilities:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there accessible restroom facilities nearby for the pregnant learner?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there easy access to drinking water and healthy snacks to support hydration and nutrition during learning activities?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there designated rest areas available if the pregnant learner needs to take a break?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there safe areas for the pregnant learner to rest, which aren't over crowded and/or possible sites for general poor student behaviour?	

7. Emergency Preparedness:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are emergency evacuation procedures in place, has a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) been completed, and has this been communicated to the pregnant learner?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a designated person responsible for assisting the pregnant learner in the event of an emergency?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are emergency contact details for the pregnant learner readily available to staff?	

8. Communication and Support:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has the pregnant learner been given the opportunity to disclose their pregnancy and any related concerns in a confidential manner?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there clear communication between the pregnant learner and college staff regarding any accommodations or adjustments needed to ensure their safety and well-being?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a designated point of contact within the college for the pregnant learner to seek support and assistance?	

9. Regular Review and Feedback:

Risk Assessment Checklist Questions	Notes / Further Action Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a process in place to regularly review the effectiveness of the risk mitigation measures outlined in this risk assessment with the learner?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a clear way for the pregnant learner to provide feedback on their experiences and any additional support they may require?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do any adjustments made to departmental risk assessments and / or support strategies based on the content of this checklist?	

10. Sign-Off

Staff Name		Staff Signature		Date	
Student Name		Student Signature		Date	