



Wirral Met College

# Supporting pregnant students Policy and Procedure

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1. Wirral Metropolitan College (WMC) is committed to an ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion. Pregnancy/maternity is protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, and it is essential that we ensure any such student receives appropriate support to meet their needs, as far as can be reasonably expected. We would similarly wish to support any student whose partner/spouse is covered by this protected characteristic.

## **2. Aim**

2.1. To ensure a consistent approach to supporting students who are pregnant or have recently become parents, in order wherever possible to enable them to achieve their educational goals. This includes minimising any risk to the expectant parent or unborn child, providing support to enable the student to continue learning or to take a break in learning as appropriate, and to signpost the student to any potential sources of external support they may benefit from.

## **3. Scope**

3.1. This policy and procedure relates to all students who become pregnant, from the point that they make the college aware of this up to 20 weeks post-partum (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010), as well as any student whose partner/spouse this applies to.

## **4. Health & Safety**

- 4.1. The relevant Curriculum Manager must be informed when a student discloses they are pregnant. The Curriculum Manager must then ensure that an individual Risk Assessment is carried out to minimise any risk to them or their unborn child. Appendix 1 contains a standard Risk Assessment for pregnant students; this must be used as a template, but then modified to include any additional risks relevant to the individual student or their area of study. The completed risk assessment will be forwarded onto the Health and Safety Manager.
- 4.2. Any additional hazardous activities relevant to the student (e.g. educational trips/visits; use of hazardous equipment) must be added to the individual risk assessment for the pregnant student if the hazards are not covered on the standard template.
- 4.3. Student must not attend college for a minimum of four weeks following the birth of their child.

## **5. Data Protection/confidentiality**

- 5.1. Some students may not wish to share openly the fact that they are pregnant, but may still disclose it to a member of staff in order to seek support
- 5.2. The fact that a student is pregnant must not be shared openly without the student's consent, and must only be shared with other staff for the purpose of managing risk in line with the relevant Risk Assessments

## **6. Curriculum**

6.1. Adaptations to the curriculum may be needed to support the student. The Curriculum Manager must ensure due consideration is given to any reasonable adaptations, on a case by case basis, including:

- Time off to attend medical appointments (including enabling a student to support their pregnant partner at medical appointments)
- Remote learning on a temporary/occasional basis if required either during the pregnancy, or after the child is born
- Reasonable adjustment to attendance expectations to accommodate pregnancy-related illness
- Allow the student to take regular breaks when needed, to eat, move or use the toilet
- Allowing the student to transfer to a smaller qualification (in consultation with MIS)
- Allowing the student to take a break in learning and return to complete their course after the pregnancy (taking account of any restrictions set by the awarding body and any limitations due to change of planned curriculum offer in the college) (in consultation with MIS)
- Allowing the student to withdraw, and re-start their place at the college after the pregnancy (In consultation with MIS)
- Making reasonable adjustments to the student's timetable and/or attendance expectations to accommodate breast feeding/expressing of milk once the baby is born, if required.
- Having regular one-to-one meetings with the personal tutor to monitor the student's welfare upon their return to college

## **7. Support**

7.1. In addition to any adaptations to the curriculum, the college may be able to offer further support to the student.

7.2. The student must be offered to be referred to the Pastoral Support Mentor, who will explore with them support including the following:

- Financial support (e.g. Care 2 Learn; Childcare fund; bursary; signposting to other external sources of financial support)
- Housing support
- Signposting to Family Nurse Partnership, GP and other medical services
- Referral to the Mental Health & Wellbeing team if necessary
- Emergency contact details – check with the student that these are still correct and up-to-date on the college system

7.3. Upon returning to college, the student must be offered to be referred again to the Pastoral Support Mentor for any further ongoing support they may need

## **8. Breast feeding**

8.1. If, after returning to college following the birth, the student needs support to enable breast feeding or expressing of milk, appropriate arrangements will be offered to facilitate this

8.2. In such circumstances, the student should contact Reception in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made (e.g. identification of a suitable room if required)

## **9. Safeguarding**

- 9.1. Occasionally, a student pregnancy may be an indicator of a safeguarding concern, for a range of reasons including:
- Student indicates the pregnancy is a result of rape or sexual exploitation
  - Staff are concerned as to the student's capacity to choose to have or care for a baby, e.g. due to their particular learning difficulties
  - There are pre-existing known safeguarding concerns about the student's home environment or personal circumstances
- 9.2. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported in the usual way, in line with the college Safeguarding policy & procedure

#### **10. Related policies and procedures**

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding, Protecting and Promoting the Welfare of Children & Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure

#### **11. Appendices**

- 11.1. Appendix 1 – College Generic Expectant Mother Risk Assessment, Students

# Appendix 1

## COLLEGE RISK ASSESSMENT Title: Student Pregnancy



Name of assessor(s): Tracy Wilkinson	Date: 10/6/2023	RA REF: Student	RA Title: Expectant mother
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Description: College Expectant Student Risk Assessment  
All activities have been reviewed against College risk assessment designed to mitigate where reasonably practicable any risks. This risk assessment will be kept under review and changes will be made if and when required, if there is a change in the expectant mothers condition, that of her baby's condition, a change in environment or study activities or location.

HAZARD / ACTIVITY	AT RISK GROUP	NATURE OF HARM / METHOD	EXISTING CONTROLS	Method	Severity	Risk	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS	RESULTANT RISK	OTHER SUPPORT	REFERENCES
				L	S	R				
<b>Infection from respiratory diseases</b> General risk of infection in the work place.	Student	Health risks resulting from infection from respiratory diseases	College COVID-19 Risk Assessment in place to control the risk of transmission of respiratory diseases in the college. Consider options of temporary/occasional remote study, break in learning or withdrawal if required on medical advice.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Student is to show her tutor a letter from medical professional, so that reasonable adjustments can be made for distanced working.	Low		
<b>Studies</b>	Student	Musculoskeletal Injury, stress, fatigue, Stress	Student must not attend college for a minimum of four weeks following the birth of the child Workstation DSE Assessment completed College support and make reasonable adjustments Manager keeps in contact with Student for welfare check to ensure Student is well and not feeling isolated Timetable and recommendations are given to Student Student can return to work when they are not advised otherwise. Student monitors her own welfare, taking regular breaks.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Studies from home is to be offered if deemed appropriate for Student or if medical professional has recommended for Student to do so.	Low	Student is required to speak with Tutor to discuss their study timetable and also whether studies and exams may/can be deferred. Mentors can assist with financial element for student along with supporting the student.	
<b>Tiredness due to standing/sitting for long lengths of time</b>	Student	Fatigue, Stress	Student monitors her own welfare, taking regular breaks.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Student is to ensure that she takes regular breaks, so if she has been sitting for a long period of time, to get up and stretch out. If Student has been standing for long periods, then she is to sit and rest. Student can manage this herself.	Low	Student can put a reminder on her PC to take breaks away from the computer.	
<b>Movement and posture - Manual Handling</b>	Student	Musculoskeletal Injury, stress, fatigue, Stress	Student may take rest breaks at times that she deems appropriate. Student does not complete any manual handling tasks. Colleagues available to assist Student with manual handling tasks. Student is aware of her surroundings and environment at all times. Student ensures her movements around college are completed at quiet times when the corridors are less congested.	High	High	High	Student is to ask colleagues for assistance with manual handling tasks. Student is not to carry heavy or bulky items, due to her pregnancy / being high risk.	Low	Student requires assistance with carrying items around the college, then a colleague will assist.	
<b>Hazards to the unborn child - Knocked, bump, slip, trip or fall</b>	Student	Fatigue, Stress or injury to Pregnant individual	Student is aware of her surroundings and environment at all times whilst moving around the corridors. Student wears appropriate footwear for work. Building floors in good condition. Use electrical outlets in floor to reduce risk from trailing cables. Good housekeeping evident in office and good safety culture among staff. Student is aware that floors may become slippery when wet. Student uses less populated side staircases to enter and leave the building thus reducing risk of being knocked / bumped Assistance to be sought, if necessary, when using stairs. Increased awareness of hazards along corridors, particularly at busier times.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Student is to walk the corridors at quieter times, to ensure that she is not knocked, bumped into by students.	Low	If Student is feeling fatigued, she is to utilise the lift to gain access to upper floors.	
<b>Illness / symptoms associated with the pregnancy</b>	Student	Raised blood pressure, sickness or dizzy spells	Rest facilities and first aid assistance. Work is not physically demanding. Light volume of work. Toilet facilities close by. High levels of support from colleagues. All medical advice, reports and certificates to be taken into consideration. Consultation and supports for time off.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Weekly review of needs Person is to be aware extent of risk depends on factors: the nature, duration and frequency of tasks/movements the pace, intensity and variety of work patterns of working time and rest breaks ergonomic factors and the general working environment suitability and adaptability of any work equipment involved Continuous standing during the working day must be avoided Additional breaks must be provided Workstation/desk will need to be adapted as pregnancy changes both size and the way in which Student can move. Awareness of tackling work related stress	Low	It may be necessary to adjust working hours or change evening patterns and duration to avoid risks. Student can attend all medical appointments throughout her pregnancy. Student is to ensure that she speaks with her Tutor to discuss these. Student is to update her Tutor and the Health and Safety Manager of any restrictions, adjustments or advice given by her medical professional, so that this risk assessment can be updated. Allow the student to take regular breaks to eat if required.	
<b>Effects to health due to stretching and reaching.</b>	Student	Stress, fatigue, raised blood pressure, sickness or dizzy spells	Stretching and reaching to be risk assessed and minimised. Assistance given by colleagues when retrieving items from a height. Student does not complete any tasks that require steps, stepladders or ladders.	High	High	High	Student will not use steps/stepladders or ladders of any description.	Low		
<b>Exposure to hazardous substances</b> Exposure to substances labelled: R40, R45, R46, R48, R51, R53, R64. Agents of known absorption Lead and lead derivatives. Radiation/ionising particles/gases/volatile organic compounds	Student	Health effects due to exposure to hazardous substances	Exposure to substance to be minimised. COSHH assessments available. Labelled substances that could be hazardous to unborn children. Prevention of exposure first priority. Substitution of harmful agents. PPE only with minimum exposure. Constant review to any exposure. Separate assessments must be made. Areas to be clean and dust free Housekeeping to be kept at high standards	High	High	High	Student is not to utilise any of the college photocopiers for the duration of her pregnancy as photocopiers emit toner particles, toxic gases namely ozone, nitrogen dioxide, volatile organic compounds, radiation, particle matter, nano particles and low-frequency electromagnetic fields.	Low	Tutor will collect photocopiers for Student.	
<b>Heat stress and dehydration</b>	Student	Stress, fatigue, raised blood pressure, sickness or dizzy spells	Access to refreshments at all times. Water coolers in communal areas and facilities within office work space. Regular short breaks as necessary.	Medium	Medium	Medium		Low	Student can alter her clothing according to the weather.	
<b>Emergency situations</b> general emergencies getting help for any personal emergency	Student	Injury due to effects of fire and smoke	PEEP completed for emergency evacuation from the college. Fire exits available within college.	High	High	High	Student is fully mobile and can access a safe route out of the college.	Low		
<b>Workstations DSE</b>	Student	Musculoskeletal Injury, stress	All work stations must be assessed for seating and posture for the user DSE training and assessment	Medium	Medium	Medium	If discomfort is experienced further assessment must be undertaken and the work reviewed	Low	Student is to complete a DSE questionnaire/risk assessment to ensure that any reasonable adjustments can be made if necessary.	
<b>Passive smoking</b>	Student	Harm to unborn child	College is a no smoking site. Minimise exposure to prevent preconditions.	Low	Low	Low		Low		
<b>Mental and physical fatigue and working hours</b>	Student	Stress, fatigue, raised blood pressure, sickness or dizzy spells	Working hours are adjusted where necessary. Timing and frequency of rest breaks is increased.	Low	Low	Low		Low		
<b>Lone Working</b>	Student	Stress, fatigue, raised blood pressure, sickness or dizzy spells	No lone working permitted for Student.	Low	Low	Low		Low		
<b>Insert here any specific risks associated with the student's course of study (e.g. in workshops, safons, handling animals, exposure to chemicals/hazardous substances/other specific hazards)</b>	Student		Insert here any specific control measures, e.g. additional PPE, staff providing physical assistance, adjusting environment due to limited mobility, preventing student taking part in hazardous activity after 28 weeks gestation (third trimester of pregnancy)						If Student's role requires her to wear PPE, PPE is available for use, however if there is a task that includes use of chemicals or hazardous substance then Student is required to discuss this with her Tutor in order to eliminate exposure risks.	

Note: The confidentiality concerning a woman's pregnancy means an employer should not make it known that she is pregnant if she does not wish it to be known, or if she does not consent to it.

Signature of assessor(s) Tracy Wilkinson	Review date due: Weekly updates, risk assessment to be updated when any changes occur in Student's role, her health or that of her unborn baby, or if Student has been given advice from her medical professional.
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**RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

L I K E L i H O O D	5	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM/HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	4	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM/HIGH	MEDIUM/HIGH	HIGH
	3	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM/HIGH	MEDIUM/HIGH
	2	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	1	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
		1	2	3	4	5
SEVERITY						

Risk Matrix

L I K E L i H O O D	5	Moderate	Moderate	Substantial	Intolerable	Intolerable
	4	Tolerable	Moderate	Substantial	Substantial	Intolerable
	3	Tolerable	Moderate	Moderate	Substantial	Substantial
	2	Trivial	Tolerable	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	1	Trivial	Trivial	Tolerable	Tolerable	Moderate
		1	2	3	4	5
SEVERITY						

Explanatory Risk rating