

## **STUDENT MATERNITY POLICY**

Blackburn College Student Pregnancy, Maternity, New Parenthood, and Adoption Policy/Guidelines:

### **1. PURPOSE**

Blackburn College is committed to supporting students who are pregnant, have recently given birth, or are in the early stages of parenthood, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010, which protects students from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. This policy provides guidance on academic, financial, and pastoral support to enable students to continue their education with minimal disruption.

### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Blackburn College, regardless of their mode or level of study. It applies to:

- Students who are pregnant.
- Students whose partners are pregnant.
- Students who are adopting or becoming parents through surrogacy.
- Students returning to education after giving birth.

The College is committed to promoting inclusivity and providing a safe, supportive environment for all students.

### **3. NOTIFICATION AND SUPPORT PLANS**

- Students should notify the Inclusion Team, Safeguarding Team and Health and Safety Team as soon as possible after confirming a pregnancy through their Curriculum Team, preferably through a personal tutor.
- Completion of support plans: A student new parenthood support form will be completed upon notification by the curriculum team in collaboration with the Health and Safety Team, along with a pregnancy risk assessment if appropriate. Separate forms for pregnancy, maternity, new parenthood, and adoption support will be made available.
- Storage of Documents: Completed forms will be securely stored on the students Pro-Monitor page.

#### 4. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

A risk assessment will be conducted in collaboration with the student to identify any health and safety concerns related to but not limited to:

- Participation in practical activities and academic assessments.
- Access to facilities.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.

Adjustments will be made as needed to ensure a safe learning environment. A review period will be added to the risk assessment where appropriate.

#### 5. **STUDY ARRANGEMENTS**

- Flexible Learning: Adjustments such as recorded lectures, assignment extensions, and flexible deadlines will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Absences: Pregnancy-related absences will be recorded as authorised.
- Catch-Up Support: Students will be offered support to catch up on missed learning.
- Appointments: Students should arrange medical appointments around classes where possible.
- Change of Study Plans (COSP) and Extensions: Students can apply for a Change of Study Plan or request extensions if needed to accommodate pregnancy, new parenthood, or parenting responsibilities (medical or legal).

#### 6. **MATERNITY LEAVE AND RETURN TO STUDY**

- Students can take up to 12 months of maternity leave and return to their programme without academic penalty. Where completion dates might be impacted this would be discussed on an individual basis on the impact of this.
- It is strongly recommended that students do not return earlier than two weeks after the birth to support physical recovery and wellbeing.
- A reintegration plan will be developed to help students ease back into their studies.
- Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days: Students may arrange up to 10 KIT days with their Programme Leader/course leader to stay engaged with their studies. Appropriate provision for this will be discussed in the risk assessment.

The rules of the awarding organisation will always take precedence.

#### 7. **SUSPENSION OF STUDY**

- Students on a Lancaster University award should provide their Suspension of Study request form with a MATB1 certificate, proof of adoption, or application of a parental order.
- Approved suspension requests will be recorded on ProMonitor as a health reason so that Student Finance England can award the appropriate funding.

- For HE students on a ULan, USW, or Pearson award, students should speak to their Course Tutor to discuss relevant options and the process to follow. They can also contact Higher Education Quality via [hequality@blackburn.ac.uk](mailto:hequality@blackburn.ac.uk).
- Students not studying higher education will be required to follow the suspension process relevant to their awarding body in consultation with their Curriculum Team. Support is available from the Quality Team at the college also.

## **8. PATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE**

Partners of pregnant students are entitled to:

- Authorised absence for key appointments and the birth.
- Access to wellbeing support.

## **9. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Students may be eligible for financial support, including the Bursary and other relevant funding schemes. Advice on applying for Childcare Grants, parental benefits, and Student Finance England (SFE) support will be provided. Students can contact the Student Finance Team for personalised financial advice via [studentfinance@blackburn.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@blackburn.ac.uk).

## **10. BREASTFEEDING AND FACILITIES**

The College will provide a private, comfortable space for breastfeeding or expressing milk. Access to fridge storage will be available for expressed milk if required.

## **11. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

The College will offer counselling and wellbeing services to support students' emotional health during pregnancy and after childbirth through the Student Assistance Programme and safeguarding and pastoral team at the College.

## **12. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

Students under the age of 18 or considered vulnerable will be supported under the college's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed to ensure appropriate support.

## **13. RESUMING STUDIES AFTER LEAVE**

A reintegration plan will be agreed upon before the student returns to study, ensuring a smooth transition back into education. Support will be offered to help students catch up on any missed learning.

#### **14. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

Staff will be provided with training and guidance to ensure the appropriate support is offered to students under this policy. Staff should maintain confidentiality and ensure students are treated fairly and inclusively.

#### **15. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

If a student feels they have been treated unfairly under this policy, they have the right to raise a complaint through the College's Complaints Procedure.

[complaints@blackburn.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@blackburn.ac.uk)

#### **16. MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and reviewed bi-annually by Student Experience and Support Services, Academic Staff, and the College Single Equalities Committee.

#### **17. RELATED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES**

This policy aligns with and is supported by the following Blackburn College UK policies and procedures:

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Attendance and Engagement Policy
- Student Finance and Bursaries Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Appropriateness to Study Policy

Other relevant support information can be found in Blackburn College's Services & Support section, covering financial support, pastoral care, academic coaching, and safeguarding.

A full list of policies and procedures is accessible on the Blackburn College website under "Our Policies and Procedures."

#### **18. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

The effective operation of this policy is managed by:

- Executive Director of Student Support and Experience
- Head of Student Experience
- Head of Student Services
- Head of Inclusion
- Programme Leaders, Course Leaders and Tutors

- Student Finance and Welfare Team
- Access and Participation Officer

## **19. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted to ensure this policy meets the needs of all students, promoting inclusivity and fairness.

Blackburn College is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity, and providing a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment means that this policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate against (either intentionally or unintentionally) against any of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and meets our obligations accordingly. Therefore, this policy has no adverse impact on any of the above protected groups.

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<b>Owner:</b>	<i>Executive Director of Student Support and Experience</i>
<b>Date last approved:</b>	<i>New policy</i>
<b>Date of review:</b>	<i>New policy</i>
<b>Consulted with:</b>	<i>Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Head of Inclusion, Head of Student Experience, Head of HR, Director of Estates, Access and Participation Officer, Academic Registrar</i>
<b>Consultation date/s</b>	<i>10/03/2025, 20/03/2025</i>
<b>Date of approval:</b>	<i>18 June 2025</i>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<i>Policies and Procedures Committee</i>
<b>Next Review date:</b>	<i>April 2027</i>