

STUDENT PREGNANCY, MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION GUIDANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Keele University recognises and respects the diverse needs of its student body, including those related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, and whilst breastfeeding. This Guidance is designed to support and accommodate students who may be expecting a child, going through maternity or paternity processes, or navigating the adoption process while pursuing their education.

Pregnancy and maternity are a protected characteristic under The Equality Act (2010). This states that a student who is pregnant, or has given birth within the last 26 weeks, is explicitly protected from less favourable treatment (this includes both in the workplace and in educational settings). Additionally, a student who is breastfeeding is explicitly protected from less favourable treatment in the areas of education and provision of services.

This guidance provides a framework for supporting students who become pregnant during their studies or whose partner becomes pregnant, and for those students who have recently become parents, on issues related to their study, health and safety, and finance.

1.1 Purpose

The University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment. Students will not face any adverse consequences, discrimination, or harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, or related conditions.

1.2 Scope

The policy and guidance apply to all registered students at the university, who will require support under the provisions of this guidance.

The guidance aims to ensure that students are supported fairly and with dignity and respect, including students who have become pregnant, have given birth within the last year, have had a termination or experienced miscarriage, still-birth, or neonatal

death within the last year, become a parent through surrogacy, fostering or adopting and whilst breastfeeding.

The university believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a very young child should not prevent a student from succeeding in their studies. It will therefore apply Regulations as flexibly as possible, seeking to ensure that students are not disadvantaged whilst ensuring that academic standards are maintained. The degree of flexibility which can be applied will vary according to the programme of study.

2. DISCLOSURES

In order for the university to be able to adopt a flexible approach, provide appropriate support and conduct a health and safety risk assessment students should notify the university if they become pregnant or become a parent whilst they are a student.

Students are responsible for disclosing their circumstances to the University. This information should be disclosed to their dedicated Student Experience and Support Officer, by either emailing student.services@keele.ac.uk or booking an appointment at the following link:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/student-services/student-experience-and-support/>

Where a student is pregnant, early disclosure is encouraged to enable discussion of support arrangements and adjustments. It is of particular importance to ensure that the University is notified of the pregnancy where there are elements of the programme that may present a risk to the health and safety of the student and/or unborn child. This is relevant to students whose programmes include laboratory or practical work or who are on placement at the time of pregnancy.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

Where a student discloses that they are pregnant, a Pregnancy Risk Assessment should be undertaken by the student, the Student Experience and Support Officer (SESO), and the student's Academic Mentor, or Research Supervisor (if the student is a Postgraduate Research Student). This aims to ensure that any risks to the student and/or their unborn child arising from their programme of study are identified, with appropriate mitigations put in place. This may require modification of any activities deemed to be a risk to the health and safety of the student or unborn child. Students will not be permitted to take part in fieldwork after 35 weeks of their pregnancy. Further information may be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/>

Please see Annex A for a copy of the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Template

4. STUDENT PREGNANCY SUPPORT ACTION PLAN

Along with the Pregnancy Risk Assessment, the Student Pregnancy Support Action Plan should be completed by the Student, Student Experience and Support Officer, and the student's Academic Mentor/Research Supervisor detailing pregnancy and maternity-related absences, intentions of maternity leave, assessment information, return to study, and any other relevant information. The Action Plan should be reviewed every 6 weeks by the Student, the Student Experience and Support Officer, and the Academic Mentor/Research Supervisor to review any arrangements to ensure the student's circumstances are fully supported.

Please see Annex B for a copy of the Student Pregnancy Support Action Plan

5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR TAKING TIME OFF FOR ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS

Appointments due to antenatal care, adoption, or fostering should occur outside of teaching or placement time wherever possible, however if this is not possible, students should inform their Academic Mentor and Module Lead to agree arrangements for taking leave and catching up on missed work. Students should also record their absence on the Keele attendance app, and it will be registered as an authorised absence.

6. EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

During examinations and assessments if a student experiences complications because of their pregnancy and needs additional time off from their studies, they should inform their Student Experience and Support Officer, who will liaise with their Academic School. If the time off impacts their studies and assessments, then the student should make use of the 7-day automated extension process or submit a claim for exceptional circumstances to request another assessment opportunity.

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/examinations/ec/>

7. ABSENCES (LEAVE OF ABSENCE, MATERNITY, ADOPTION AND PARTNER LEAVE)

Students will normally be permitted to take a Leave of Absence from their studies for up to one calendar year for maternity/adoption leave. The length of time will be determined by a student's circumstances and the structure of the programme of study. Students should discuss the Leave of Absence with their Student Experience and Support Officer as well as their Academic Mentor/Research Supervisor, and

this should be documented in the Student Pregnancy Support Action Plan. If a student wishes to extend their Leave of Absence, the usual process for requesting an extension to the leave of absence will be followed:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/courseandstudychange/leaveofabsence/>

Whilst taking a Leave of Absence students can access support to enable their return to studies from Student Services.

Students not wishing to take a Leave of Absence are legally required to take a minimum of two weeks leave immediately following childbirth. Students that are due to return to a healthcare placement two weeks following childbirth will be required to have occupational health clearance before the placement commences.

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

[Pregnant At Uni - Search Your University To Get Support](#)

A student whose partner is pregnant or who is adopting a child may apply to take one or two weeks of paternity/maternity support leave, you can take them together or separately. The leave cannot be taken before the birth and must end within 52 weeks of the birth (or due date, if the baby is early). In case of adoption the paternity leave can be taken on a date you choose which falls after the date of birth or placement. The paternity leave will be agreed in line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/policyzone20/studentandacademicse rvices/student-attendance-and-engagement-policy.pdf>

8. VISA IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students should seek advice from the Immigration Compliance Team at the earliest opportunity to determine whether there are any implications for their visa status. The University will be required to inform the UKVI of any Tier 4 students taking an LOA. For further info see:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/visa/adviceandsupport/>

9. FUNDING

If a student is in receipt of funding from Student Finance, this will be suspended whilst a student is taking a Maternity Leave of Absence (for further details see: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-if-you-suspend-or-leave>), however, they may be able to apply for Universal Credit and claim Child Benefit once the child is born. The

Keele Students' Union Advice and Support at Keele service (ASK) in the Students' Union will be able to advise further or the Citizens Advice Bureau

<https://keelesu.com/advice/>

[Citizens Advice](#)

Students may also be eligible for a range of other government financial support options:

[Statutory Maternity Pay](#)

[Maternity Allowance](#)

[Sure Start Maternity Grant](#)

[NHS Heathy Start Scheme](#)

Advice on general financial matters and any entitlements can also be obtained from the Student Financial Support Team:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/studentfinancialsupport/>

PGR Students should speak to the Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA@Keele.ac.uk) for advice on implications for funding and to check if they are eligible for financial support.

Students receiving funding from external bodies should follow the guidance for their scheme or contact their funding body or sponsor for further advice.

10. RETURN TO STUDIES

Upon return from a Leave of Absence the student will be contacted by the University to re-register on their programme of study. Once a student's return is confirmed, they will also be contacted by their Student Experience and Support Officer to support their return.

Students are required to contact their funding body to ensure funding is secured before their return. Advice can be sought from the Student Financial Support Team and the Keele Doctoral Academy regarding this

11. ACCOMMODATION

Students living in university campus accommodation who find this is no longer suitable during their pregnancy should seek advice from their Student Experience and Support Officer who will be able to liaise with the accommodation team.

The University's student accommodation does not allow the accommodation of children of students.

12. BABIES AND CHILDREN ON CAMPUS

Babies and children are permitted on the university campus, however, must always be supervised. Under no circumstances are babies or children permitted to enter areas where there is a health and safety risk, such as laboratories. Students are not permitted to take their babies or children to teaching sessions or assessments. If students are breastfeeding or have a baby under the age of 26 weeks they will be provided with a breastfeeding facility on campus as they are protected under the Equality Act 2010. In this instance, students should contact their Student Experience and Support Officer who will discuss appropriate arrangements with the student's school.

13. BREAST FEEDING FACILITIES

Breastfeeding can be conducted anywhere on campus however; private facilities are available for breastfeeding or milk expression in the following buildings:

- David Weatherall
- Chancellor's Building
- Lennard Jones
- Huxley Building
- [Keele Day Nursery](#)
- Clinical Education Centre

Students requiring this facility, and the storage of breastmilk should contact their Student Experience and Support Officer at their earliest convenience.

14. CHILDCARE

Keele offers on campus childcare support at the Keele Day Nursery. For information on nursery fees, booking places and funding please contact the nursery or visit <https://www.keele.ac.uk/nursery/>

15. FERTILITY TREATMENT

The University recognises the physical and emotional impact of undergoing fertility treatment. If a student or their partner is undergoing fertility treatment, they are advised to contact their Student Experience and Support Officer for support.

Appointments due to fertility treatment should occur outside of teaching or placement time wherever possible, however if this is not possible, students should inform their Academic Mentor and Module Leader to agree arrangements for taking leave and catching up on missed work. Students should also record their absence on the attendance app, and this will be approved as an authorised absence.

Students experiencing physical and emotional difficulties and need additional time off from their studies, should inform their Academic Mentor/Research Supervisor or Student Experience and Support Officer. If the time off impacts their studies and assessments, then the student should record their absence on the Keele attendance app, and it will be registered as an authorised absence and make use of the 7-day automated extension process or submit a claim for exceptional circumstances to request another assessment opportunity.

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/examinations/ec/>

Students who have developed a long-term health condition due to the physical and emotional impact of undergoing fertility treatment (for example, depression or anxiety) may be eligible for Reasonable Adjustments.

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/lifeoutsideofstudy/disabilitysupportandinclusion/supportforstudents/reasonableadjustments/>

16. MISCARRIAGES, STILL BIRTHS AND NEO-NATAL DEATH

The University seeks to support any student who experiences miscarriage, still birth, or neo-natal death. Students who have experienced this should contact their Student Experience and Support Officer for support.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

The University is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of students facing pregnancy-related difficulties. Any information related to a student's pregnancy, maternity, paternity, or adoption plans will be treated with sensitivity and disclosed only to those individuals who need to know in order to provide support.

18. COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint, i.e., you are dissatisfied with the provision of a service by the University, you can submit this in writing so that the matter can be investigated and resolved. Student complaints are governed by [Regulation B7](#).
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/appeals-complaints-conduct/studentcomplaints/>

19. FURTHER GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

[The Alma Mater Fund Empowering Pregnant Students](#) 07849 088 244

[Advice and Support at Keele](#)

[British Pregnancy Advisory Service](#): Tel: 08712 00 22 23 / 08457 304030

[NHS Pregnancy Care Planner](#)

[Childcare Providers](#)

[Citizens Advice](#)

[Pregnant at Uni](#)

20. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

This Guidance shall be reviewed at least every three years.

University Executive Committee (UEC) has overall responsibility for the Guidance.

This Guidance will be available on Keele University Policy Zone.

21. ANNEXES

Annex A - Pregnancy Risk Assessment Template

Annex B - Student Pregnancy Support Action Plan

22. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Guidance
Owner	Director, Student Services and Success
Version Number	1.0
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	[Date form submitted]
Approval Date	24 September 2024

Approved By	University Executive Committee
Date of Commencement	24 September 2024
Date of Last Review	24 September 2024
Date for Next Review	24 September 2027
Related University Policy Documents	[List all applicable]
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	

Annex A

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Template

Name of student:	Faculty School:	Student type: UG, PGT, PGR
Student Number:	Course Title:	Year of study
Activity: <i>Template for completing a risk assessment for new and expectant mothers covering most common hazards</i>		Site: Campus CEC Guy Hilton Other (please specify) <i>(Please circle)</i>
People at Risk: <i>A student who is a new or expectant mother.</i> <i>Unborn child.</i>		Additional Information: <i>To be completed in line with the Pregnancy Support Action Plan and the Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Guidance.</i>
Academic Mentor name:		Review Date: (as applicable)
Signature		
Student Experience and Support Officer name:	Signature	
Student signature:		
Expected date due date date:		

Risk Evaluation

An individual risk assessment is completed for every new and expectant mother registered to study at the University. This should be completed and monitored by the Academic Mentor and Student Experience and Support Officer.

Each activity should have an existing associated risk assessment. That assessment should be examined whilst completing the individual risk assessment for the new and expectant mother. A decision should be recorded when additional action is required and when it is taken. This should be as specific as possible.

The assessment should be regularly reviewed by the Academic Mentor and Student Experience and Support Officer during the pregnancy and will need a complete review upon the new mother returning to study. The student should report any difficulties in either complying with the assessment or completing work between these reviews to their Academic Mentor. Students on a healthcare programme should ensure they are health compliant with regards to their professional standards before commencing any clinical aspect of the programme

If there is any difficulty in reaching agreement on appropriate control measures the Occupational Health Department should be consulted as soon as any issues arise.

A copy of the individual assessment should be given to every new and expectant mother.

Health & Safety Executive guidance regarding the safety aspects of working/studying as a new or expectant mother can be obtained from the [HSE website](#) or via the University's Department of Health and Safety.

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H,) Low Medium High or not applicable	Control Measures and Guidance	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
General Conditions e.g. Noise Extremes of hot and cold	<i>Miscarriage, foetal lesions and placental displacement</i>				

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H,) Low Medium High or not applicable	Control Measures and Guidance	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
Shock, vibration or movement					
Moving and manual handling of equipment or materials. General ergonomics	<i>Increased susceptibility to injury.</i> <i>Miscarriage</i>		<i>Each activity should be listed in the individuals risk assessment. If there is a significant risk from the activity, action should be taken. The control measures to be adopted for each activity during this period should be listed individually as appropriate. Heavy lifting should be avoided. Ensure comfortable seating.</i>		
Over-tiredness or pain due to long periods of standing.	<i>Development of varicose veins.</i> <i>Miscarriage.</i>		<i>A rest facility should be provided for the student to lie down if they so wish. Ideally, this should be a bed, located in a quiet, private, secure area, although this is not always practical.</i> <i>The minimum control would be the availability of a reclining chair with the ability to raise the legs.</i>		

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H, Low Medium High or not applica ble	Control Measures and Guidance	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
Impairment of dexterity, agility co-ordination, speed of movement reach, balance.	<i>Increased risk of accidents. Fatigue.</i>		<i>Any modification required will have to be detailed. These may include modifications to workstations the need for longer rest breaks or avoidance of other tasks, details of which should also be recorded. Particular attention to be paid to tidiness & storage.</i>		
Excessive mental pressure.	<i>Stress and high blood pressure.</i>		<i>Hours of work and workloads should be examined on an individual basis. An individual may be less able to cope in these circumstances although this should not be assumed.</i>		

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H,) Low Medium High or not applicable	Control Measures and Guidance	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
Use of chemicals / Drugs.	<i>Damage to unborn fetus.</i>		<i>Where chemicals are used these should be assessed. Any mention of concentrations being harmful to women of childbearing age or expectant mothers should be immediately referred to DOHS and their use prohibited until cleared for use.</i>		
Aspects of pregnancy which may affect work.	<i>Morning sickness, backache, varicose veins, haemorrhoids frequent visits to the toilet, size, tiredness.</i>		<i>Effects will have to be assessed on an individual ongoing basis in relation to work activities</i>		
Chemical exposure to known materials with a workplace exposure limit	<i>Possible effects on both mother and unborn child</i>		<i>Ensure COSHH assessments have been carried out.</i>		
Infection	<i>Possible effects on both mother and unborn child.</i>		<i>It is particularly important that the precautions that are already required to reduce risks of</i>		

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H,) Low Medium High or not applicable	Control Measures and Guidance	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
Risks due to routine work activities such as handling body fluids Hepatitis A Hepatitis B, C, D HIV.			<i>cross infection are strictly adhered to by the expectant mother.</i> <i>The infection risks that the expectant mother is exposed to must be reinforced in the individual's risk assessment.</i>		
Animal diseases plus diseases arising from contact with soil.	<i>Transmission to baby giving rise to serious consequences.</i>		<i>The activities below should <u>not</u> be carried out:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>handling animals</i> • <i>Estates gardening activities</i> 		
Infection risks due to illness within the community Human parvovirus B19 Rubella virus* Chickenpox* Other biological agents, cytotoxic drugs	<i>Expectant mother contracting disease and passing it to unborn baby.</i>		<i>If student has not been immunised, advise immunisation*</i> <i>Non-immunised pregnant students are advised not to be in contact with known cases.</i> <i>*where appropriate via GP.</i>		

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H, Low Medium High or not applica ble	Control Measures and Guidance	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
Radiation	<i>Possible effects on both mother and unborn child.</i>		<i>Take advice from the University's Radiation Protection Advisor or locally the Radiation Protection Supervisor</i>		
Infection risks pre 26 weeks and after 26 weeks pregnant due to COVID-19*	<i>Expectant mother contracting disease and becoming very unwell.</i>				
When mother returns to work, failure to identify the control measures which may still need to apply.	<i>Mental stress and Injuries arising from moving and handling</i>		<i>The provisions of the expectant mother's risk assessment should be revisited when a new mother returns to study. If required, facilities should be arranged for expressing milk in private (not in the toilet!) and storage of it afterwards in a fridge.</i>		

Risk Assessment Template

Health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy, breastfeeding or within 6 months of giving birth, and the risks to which students could be exposed to require assessment. Students should be encouraged to notify the university as early as possible so that this assessment can be conducted as evidence suggests that the first 13 weeks of pregnancy is a critical time for the unborn child.

Please refer to the **Student, Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Guidance and the Pregnancy Support Action Plan** when completing this risk assessment. The risk assessment should be regularly monitored and reviewed taking into account possible risks that may occur at different stages of the pregnancy.

The level of risk to which a student is exposed will depend on the requirements and nature of the course. For **many courses and related activities, the risk will be low**; the following are more likely to present greater risks.

- General conditions; “working” alone, “work” at heights, travelling, fatigue.
- Physical activity; including lifting, handling and carrying, compressed air environments, vibrations.
- The use of chemical agents including paints, pesticides, mercury, lead, carbon monoxide, and cytotoxic drugs.
- Biological agents; exposure to infections disease, laboratory work, animals, healthcare provision

In some cases where significant hazards are present the activity may need to be avoided in totality (Avoidance) by timetabling adjustments / other flexible approaches in accordance with the University’s **“Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Guidance”**.

Special considerations are required if the student is scheduled to undertake Fieldwork, Study Abroad or Work Placement.

The Risk Assessment should consider any medical advice the student has received.

Existing workplace / activity risk assessments may already identify any risks and suitable control measures to protect students of childbearing age and risks to new and expectant pregnant students, **but this should not be assumed as being the case**.

It is recognised that students may wish the information to be treated in confidence and this will be respected, except where it is judged necessary to take expert advice.

Annex B

Student Pregnancy Support Action Plan

STUDENT DETAILS	
Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Student Number	
Course title and Year	
School	
Academic Mentor	
Consent to contact Next of Kin? (Record details if yes)	
KEY DATES	
What is the student's due date?	
How many weeks pregnant was the student when the University was notified?	
INFORMING OTHER STAFF AND STUDENTS: Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy and when would the student like them to be informed?	
Name and Title	Date
RISK ASSESSMENT (please attach a copy to this form)	
Has an assessment been conducted which covers (where relevant):	
The student's course	
Course placements or study abroad	
Examinations or other assessments	
Field trips	
Return from maternity-related absence	
Breastfeeding	
Where changes are required to minimise risk, who is responsible for ensuring these are implemented?	
PREGNANCY-RELATED ABSENCE	
Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study?	
Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the	

student's ability to undertake their course?	
If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	
ASSESSMENT	
Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to their pregnancy or maternity?	
If so, provide details:	

What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
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MATERNITY-RELATED ABSENCE	
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How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take?	
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When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence?	
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When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence?	
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Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course requirements?	
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If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
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FINANCIAL SUPPORT	
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Has the student been informed about sources of financial support or been referred to the Financial Support Team for advice?	
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Specify and follow up required:	

CHILDCARE	
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Has the student been informed of the University childcare facilities or those in the local area?	
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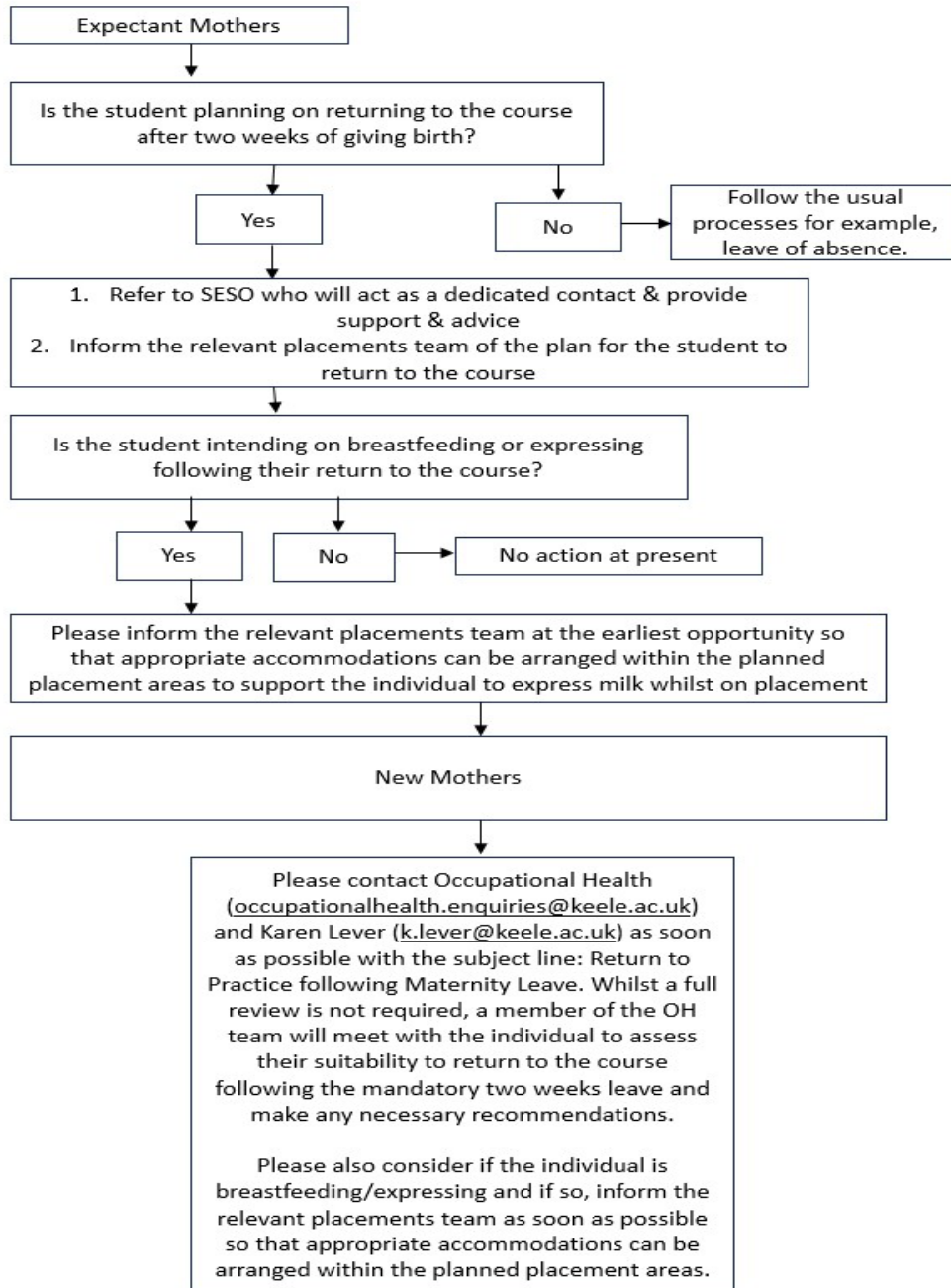
Is the (UK) student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlements?	
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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS / THOSE WHO STUDY ABROAD	
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Have international students or those who study abroad been informed about:	
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The need to check visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity?	
Possible airline restrictions?	
STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT	
Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy?	
Has the placement provider conducted a risk assessment?	
Is the placement provider aware of the University's policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?	
Will the student be able to complete their placement?	
If not, what alternative arrangements will be made?	
Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider?	
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	
Has the student been informed about how to apply for exceptional circumstances in the event their pregnancy, maternity or parental responsibilities affects examinations and assessments?	
FURTHER INFORMATION	
Any other information or comments:	
SIGNATURES	
Agreed by Academic Mentor and SESO	
Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	
Agreed by student	
Name	
Signature	
Date	

New and Expectant Mothers Flow Chart



We have private breastfeeding facilities on site at Keele University: [Pregnancy and maternity - Keele University](#) and a range of support for new and expectant parents: [Student parents - Keele University](#)

We are aware that decisions and circumstances may change suddenly. If a student changes their mind about length of leave or decision to express for example, then this will be fully supported. Please ensure that all the relevant teams and people are kept updated about any changes in decisions. Please also be aware that students **must** take a minimum of two weeks leave following birth.