



Student Pregnancy Policy 2026 - 2028

Equality Impact Assessment: Askham Bryan College recognises the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and its duties under the Act. This document has been assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect staff, students or stakeholders on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Askham Bryan College is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a learning and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment.
- 1.2 The College believes that being or becoming pregnant should not, in itself, be a barrier to applying for, starting, succeeding in, or completing a programme of study at the College. Arrangements will be considered for a student in these circumstances; but those arrangements will be dependent on the course/programme and in some cases, may not be possible for health and safety reasons.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies across all sites, to all students.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Assistant Principal – Student Life will have overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and will be assisted by Safeguarding team. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and the Student Pregnancy Procedure will rest with the relevant course managers and heads of department, as appropriate.
- 3.2 So far as is reasonably practicable, the College will ensure that:
 - any student who becomes pregnant after accepting a place or during a period of study at the College is accommodated as far as practicable to allow them to complete their programme of study; and
 - appropriate support and guidance are made available through Curriculum and Student Services.

4. ADVISING THE COLLEGE THAT YOU ARE PREGNANT

- 4.1 Students who are pregnant should notify the College at the earliest opportunity, whether they are an applicant or an enrolled student, so that the College can decide how best to support that student. Enrolled students should speak to their course manager, or progress tutor, in the first instance.
- 4.2 Students who are pregnant should also:
- read this policy in order to understand the College's approach to supporting pregnant students;
 - ensure that they have a clear idea of what will be expected of them on their course of study in order to understand the potential impact of pregnancy related absence;
 - discuss any concerns they have relating to their pregnancy with their own healthcare professional and, as necessary, with Curriculum staff and Student Services.
- 4.3 Students are also encouraged to keep the College informed as to how their pregnancy is progressing, so the College can consider if it needs to change the way in which it is supporting them.
- 4.4 Arrangements will be as flexible as possible, providing academic standards are upheld.
- 4.5 There may, however, be elements of a programme of study that could present a health and safety risk to a pregnant student and/or their child. The College will not be able to arrange an appropriate risk assessment (see section 6) unless it is aware of the pregnancy.
- 4.6 If a student's pregnancy-related absence (for example, for antenatal appointments) impacts significantly on the student's studies, the College will only be able to take proper account of the reasons for absence, and exercise any discretion, if the College is notified of these.
- 4.7 In some cases, a student's pregnancy-related absence might be something that needs to be discussed with other organisations who are a stakeholder in their course of study, for instance, where a work placement forms part of the programme of study.
- 4.8 If a student is planning to take maternity leave from their studies during a period when they would be expected to be in attendance (see section 8), they must notify the College by the 15th week before the due date.

5. MEETING WITH THE STUDENT

- 5.1 A student who is pregnant should meet with their course manager or progress tutor to advise the College that they are pregnant and agree how best the College can support them.

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5.2 Careful consideration should be given to:

- agreeing periods of absence and making arrangements for the student to catch up on lectures/tutorials missed for pregnancy/birth related reasons to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage academically;
- adjusting, where possible, timescales/deadlines for assessed coursework or exam submission deadlines, although some deadlines may be outside the College's control;
- seeking approval for alternative means of assessment for the student if appropriate, subject to approval of the awarding organisation and the awarding organisation's requirements;
- the student taking some time out from their studies;
- consideration of a transfer to part-time study;
- consideration of how to re-integrate the student to the programme of study on return from any prolonged absence.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

5.3 At the meeting, it is essential that urgent consideration is given to undertaking a risk assessment.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Where the College is made aware that a student is pregnant, the student's course manager will carry out a risk assessment, supported, where necessary, by the College's Health and Safety team. It will be for the course manager, however, to complete the risk assessment as they are best placed to assess the risks faced by the student.
- 6.2 A Student Pregnancy Support Plan must also be completed and agreed with the student and signed by both the course manager and the student. This must be saved to CPOMS. The student's parents will be informed, unless there are safeguarding concerns or the student is over 18.
- 6.3 The Student Pregnancy Support Plan must be reviewed by the course manager as the pregnancy progresses and on the student's return to study or at key points of the academic year (e.g. prior to examinations and field trips), as appropriate and there must be ongoing discussions between the course manager and the relevant head of department about the support to be provided to the student. Where necessary, those discussions will also involve the Student Services team.
- 6.4 For all students it is important that the health and safety implications of their pregnancy are given serious consideration, and where the risk assessment highlights health and safety issues, staff should seek advice as soon as possible from the College Health and Safety team and or Assistant Principal – Student Life.

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- 6.5 If it is not practicable to alter the study conditions to respond to the risk(s) highlighted by this assessment, or if such an alteration would not avoid any identified risk(s), the student may need to take time out from their study to ensure they avoid those risks – although a concerted effort should be made by the College to manage the health and safety risks and find alternative ways of allowing a student to continue their course in any situation where a temporary withdrawal is not in line with the student's wishes. The Assistant Principal – Student Life should be notified, especially where it is felt that any proposed adjustments are not reasonable.
- 6.6 If the student is dissatisfied with the College's response, then they have the right to make a formal complaint to the College.

7. MATERNITY LEAVE

- 7.1 A student who gives birth to a child will be eligible to take maternity leave.
- 7.2 Students may take up to 3 consecutive terms (FE) or 2 semesters (HE) of maternity leave. Terms of maternity leave must be taken consecutively and any unused terms may not be taken at a later date.
- 7.3 Students who give birth may therefore choose to suspend their studies, normally for no more than one year, before recommencing their course, assuming the course is still running. If the course is no longer running, then the College will discuss suitable alternative options with the student.
- 7.4 Students should be allowed to decide when they start their maternity-related absence in agreement with their course manager. If students wish to, they should not be prevented from studying up to their due date, or from starting their maternity-related absence a full term or semester before their due date, where practicable. It is usual, however, for leave not to commence before the 29th week of pregnancy.
- 7.5 Where possible, the leave period should be timed to take account of the academic requirements of the course (e.g. assessed project work, placement requirements) and should commence at the end of rather than partway through a term/semester. Where a student is close to their due date and unable to study as planned, the College may, in consultation with the student, allow the student to start their maternity-related absence earlier than planned or, if appropriate, explore alternative methods through which they can meet the course requirements
- 7.6 Students enrolled on Higher Education programmes should utilise the relevant mitigating circumstances policy and procedures to support them in their studies if extensions, deferrals or interruptions of studies may be required.
- 7.7 New mothers must not return to college earlier than 2 weeks after the baby's birth.

8. PATERNITY LEAVE

- 8.1 Students are permitted to take 2 calendar weeks' paternity leave either at the time or within 3 months of the birth. This will not entail dispensation to miss exams.
- 8.2 Students, however, will also be eligible for a longer period of suspension, in line with the arrangements made for students who are pregnant. This will normally last one full year so that the student may recommence their studies, if the course is still available, at the same point at which they suspended.
- 8.3 In both circumstances, the student should first speak to their course manager or progress tutor and agree their period of suspension from studies with them first, before taking either 2 weeks paternity leave or an extended period of paternity leave.

9. TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

- 9.1 Whilst it will be the student's decision whether to continue with their pregnancy or not, the College can support that student in making that decision, if they want that support and want to, for instance, speak to someone confidentially about that decision, or the College can direct the student to external organisations instead who could provide the necessary advice and support.
- 9.2 Students who decide to terminate their pregnancy may need time off from study for tests before and to recover, after a termination.

10. MISCARRIAGE, STILL BIRTHS AND NEONATAL DEATH

- 10.1 A miscarriage is when a baby (or fetus or embryo) dies in the uterus during pregnancy. In the UK, that definition applies to pregnancies up to 23 weeks and 6 days, and any loss from 24 weeks is called a stillbirth (<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk>). Neonatal deaths occur shortly following birth.
- 10.2 When a still birth occurs, or the baby dies shortly after birth, the student should be entitled to the same length of maternity related absence and wellbeing support as a student whose baby is not stillborn.
- 10.3 Students are encouraged to inform the College in the event of a miscarriage, still birth or neonatal death. If this happens, a meeting should be arranged with the student to establish the support they are receiving and the support available from the College.
- 10.4 The College recognises that each individual will be affected differently by a miscarriage and encourages staff to treat each circumstance on an individual basis, with sensitivity and respect.
- 10.5 Consideration, however, will need to be given as to the impact of the miscarriage on the student's ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations.

11. PLANNING FOR RETURN TO STUDY

- 11.1 Students on maternity leave or paternity-related absence, where this is longer than 2 calendar weeks, should be encouraged to maintain occasional contact with their course manager so that arrangements may be made for their eventual return to study.
- 11.2 Before a student returns from a period of maternity or paternity-related absence, consideration should be given to their requirements on return. The student's study options and the continued support provided by the College (including, where appropriate, any support provided by the Inclusive Services team) should be discussed with the student in developing their Support Plan, and the support plan should be confirmed with the student prior to their return. A risk assessment should also be carried out.
- 11.3 As well as considering a change to mode of study, other considerations will include:
- ensuring a smooth return;
 - continued contact – the student should be told who their key contact is if they encounter any difficulties;
 - other parents – the option could be provided of putting the student in contact with other student parents on their return to study.
- 11.4 If ill-health prevents a student from returning to College after completing their maximum period of maternity leave or paternity-related absence, this should be treated as sickness absence and notified accordingly.
- 11.5 Students may be required to extend their period of suspension at the discretion of the College with supporting medical evidence.
- 11.6 If a student is unable to return to study due to the illness of their child, they should speak to their course manager or progress tutor about a further suspension of study.

12. BRINGING CHILDREN OR BABIES TO THE COLLEGE

- 12.1 Children and babies are not normally permitted in teaching situations because they may cause a distraction to the parent/carer and to other members of the class. There are also restrictions in high risk areas such as workshops and laboratories etc.
- 12.2 Children may, however, be brought into social spaces of the College if necessary; however, they remain the responsibility of their parents.

13. CHILDCARE

- 13.1 Childcare facilities are not available at any of the College centres.
- 13.2 Where childcare issues prevent a student from attending classes in person, teaching staff are asked to supply any available materials that may help the student in making up for missed work.

14. BREASTFEEDING AND EXPRESSION OF MILK

- 14.1 There are no restrictions on feeding (bottle feeding, breastfeeding or expression of milk) in general public areas at the College.
- 14.2 At present, there are no rooms specifically designated for the purposes of breastfeeding. Students should agree local arrangements with their course manager for the temporary use of rooms close to their main areas of study.
- 14.3 Wherever possible students should endeavour to schedule feeds outside teaching or examination time. Where the student believes this is not possible this should be discussed with their course manager. Consideration will be given to such reasonable alternatives as may be available.

15. BABY CHANGING FACILITIES

- 15.1 The availability of baby changing facilities varies site to site. Further details are available from the College's Student Services team.

16. SUPPORT

Student Wellbeing

- 16.1 All students can access confidential emotional support with any issue, including pregnancy, maternity, termination, etc, from Student Services, which offers a range of support including counselling.

Financial Support

- 16.2 FE and Apprenticeships students who have given birth and who require financial support are asked to contact the Student Finance and Welfare Officer.
- 16.3 Students who are pregnant will also need to consider how changes to their studies might affect their student funding and are advised to speak to the Student Loans Company or their loan provider/source of funding of their circumstances.

17. COURSE WORK AND EXAMS: EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

- 17.1 Students who are pregnant who feel that this could have an impact on their coursework or exams, should speak to their course manager. The College will use its best endeavours to ensure that the proper support is put in place for the student, subject to any guidance and or limitations that may be imposed on the College by the awarding organisation.

18. STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

- 18.1 Campus accommodation is only available for single occupancy. Any student who becomes a parent whilst at College and is in residential accommodation will not be able to remain in the accommodation. The College will authorise an early release from their licence agreement in these circumstances.

19. WORK PLACEMENTS

- 19.1 If the student is required to undertake a placement and declares their pregnancy before placement, then the Work Placement Coordinators will need to consider what additional measures could be put in place to support the student. If the pregnancy is declared during placement, then the placement provider will need to be informed.
- 19.2 In both instances, the College will need to liaise with the placement provider to ensure that a risk assessment is carried out and the student is properly supported.
- 19.3 There may be times when a work placement has to cease/be suspended because it may not be safe to continue with the work placement.

20. APPRENTICESHIPS

- 20.1 If the student is on an apprenticeship and declares their pregnancy before the apprenticeship is due to begin, then the College will need to consider what additional measures could be put in place to support the student, with reference the Apprenticeship Main Provider Funding Rules, relevant to the version and calendar year of sign up.
- 20.2 If the pregnancy is declared during the apprenticeship, then the employer and the College will need to be informed. The apprentice will also need to check their contract/agreement with their employer.
- 20.3 In both instances, the College will need to liaise with the employer to ensure that a risk assessment is carried out and the student is properly supported, which may include a Break in Learning and study to be resumed at a later date.

21. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 21.1 The Assistant Principal – Student Life will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 21.2 This policy and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be reviewed every 2 years by the Assistant Principal – Student Life and the Student Services team, assisted by the Legal and Compliance Adviser.

22. SUPPORTING/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Pregnancy Procedure
- Student Accommodation Policy
- Work Placement Policy (FE)
- Work Placement Procedures (FE)
- Vet Nursing Work Placement Procedures
- HE Work Placement Policy
- HE Work Placement Procedure
- Support for Study Policy
- Support for Study Procedures
- HE Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure
- Complaints Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- HE Students Complaints Policy
- Rider Safety Policy

23. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

23.1 In all aspects of this policy the College will comply with the following legislation:

Equality Act 2010
Health and Safety legislation

24. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date of Issue: 2nd October 2026
Approved on: 22nd September 2026
Next review: April 2028
Owner: Assistant Principal – Student Life
Author: Assistant Principal – Student Life
Publication requirements: PUBLIC

APPENDIX A FURTHER SUPPORT

General advice

NHS Choices - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/>

The Government has also produced a guide to childcare. This is available at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages>

Support before, during and after antenatal screening

Support is available from Arc (Antenatal Results and Choices) www.arc-uk.org or on 020 7713 7486

Their helpline is answered by trained staff Monday to Friday, 10.00am-5.30pm.

Miscarriage, Still Births and Neonatal Death

Support is available from the Miscarriage Association <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk>

Also from Tommy's - <https://www.tommys.org/>

Babies born premature or sick

Support is available from Bliss <https://www.bliss.org.uk/>

Termination

Support is available from Marie Stopes (<http://www.mariestopes.org.uk/>) and the Family Planning Association (www.fpa.org.uk)

Fees and Financial Support

Advice and guidance are available from Arwen Stephenson, Student Finance and Welfare Officer

Telephone: +44 (1904) 772271

Email: arwen.stephenson@askham-bryan.ac.uk

HE students: please contact the HE Office.

Student Services

Telephone: +44 (1904) 772201/772338

<https://www.askham-bryan.ac.uk/student-services/>