

Student Parent Toolkit

By Elizabeth Appiah-Kusi (with assistance from the IoPPN Family Network and the KCL Family Society)



IoPPN Family Network



Students with families when they start their course

As a parent at the IoPPN you, more than anyone, will learn the skill of juggling university work, family commitments and your own needs. Studying will be just one aspect of your busy life that must be moulded around the sometimes unpredictable rhythms of family life.

The good news is that there are a number of avenues of support for student parents.

Support for student parents

King's Student Advice

Mary Flaherty is a member of Student Advice and is tasked as the specific advisor for Student Parents and runs the Student Parent Network offering support and events for student parents.

Contact here on mary.flaherty@kcl.ac.uk

"My name is Mary Flaherty and I have recently taken on the role of Specialist Student Parent Advisor within the Student Advice Services.

This role aims to offer targeted support to students who either have children when they begin their studies or for those students who become parents during their time here at Kings. I will be available to offer advice and guidance around the varied and complex issues that face parents who are bringing up a family and juggling their studies, very often with a backdrop of financial challenges.

Therefore I hope to be able to offer practical advice around what funding and financial assistance is available to Student Parents as well as guidance around managing pregnancy and a successful return to your studies after becoming a parent. We are becoming increasingly aware of the specific needs of Student Parents and as well as offering practical support we are also hoping to run some family orientated events that will give Parents an opportunity to incorporate their family life into their Student experience.

Ultimately I am looking forward to supporting Student Parents to make their times at Kings a successful and enjoyable one and I very much look forward to meeting you."



IoPPN Student Forum Family Network

This is a student led society for individuals with 'extra family responsibilities (student parents/carers etc). It runs regular meet ups and helps the forum to make their events family friendly. They are also a point of call for advice. Contact Elizabeth Appiah-Kusi elizabeth.appiah-kusi@kcl.ac.uk for details.

"My name is Elizabeth Appiah-Kusi and I run the IoPPN Student Forum Family Network.

The Family Network is for individuals with family responsibilities (student parents/carers etc). Whether you have a family, you want to start a family, you are part of a family, you look after a family member or just think you fit in better with family-oriented people then look no further... It runs regular meet ups and helps the Student Forum to make their events family friendly.."



King's Family Society

This is a ratified KCLSU student society aimed at bringing together students who have extra family responsibilities. We want to work together to bring about policy change to support these students and to make the University a more inclusive and family friendly space. Contact Elizabeth Appiah-Kusi elizabeth.appiah-kusi@kcl.ac.uk (President) or Andreia Reis Do Carmo Andreia.reis_do_carmo@kcl.ac.uk (Treasurer) for details.

"My name is Andreia Reis and I run the KCLSU Family Society.

The Family society is a network of students with additional family responsibilities who try to make King's a lively and inclusive space for families of all sorts and types. We propose activities which are family friendly and try to represent students with additional responsibilities at King's to bring about positive change in policy to provide support for this group. We represent a social network to provide practical and emotional support to students who need it."



Education Services

Education Services should be contacted for anything that may affect your studies and if they can't help should be able to point you in the direction of someone who can help.

Child Friendly Facilities

Main Building

Changing Facilities

There is a changing table in the disabled toilets on the first floor of the main IoPPN building (before you get to HR).

Mothering Room

There is a mothering room which is available to use for students and staff who are pregnant, and for those who need to use it after returning to studies after having their babies:

At the Denmark Hill campus there is a dedicated mothering room which provides facilities for breast/bottle feeding or expressing milk. There is a nursing chair and secure fridge available. The room can be accessed on weekdays between 9am and 5pm. To arrange access, please contact a member of the IoPPN HR team. If you would like to access the room regularly, a refundable £10 deposit will secure you a key. Visitors or general one-time use can also be accommodated.

Location: Room G0.08, Family Therapy, Port-a-Cabin on the Green, Institute of Psychiatry

To arrange access: HR office, IoPPN Main building, second floor, room M2.21

Chaplaincy

Jane Speck at the Chaplaincy has very kindly offered the use of the lovely new Chaplaincy rooms for Student Parents who need to have meetings with Supervisors, colleagues or Personal Tutors but have their children with them for reasons such as Nursery closure, breakdown of childcare etc. There will be a box of toys available. If you need to use this room, please email Jane in advance:

jane.speck@kcl.ac.uk with the subject title "Chaplaincy Student Parent" so that Jane can make sure the room is suitable before you come with your child. You will of course need to supervise your child at all times while using this room. The Chaplaincy can be found in room W1.19.

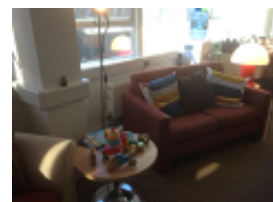
"The Chaplaincy is a resource for the whole community at King's, offering pastoral support, a listening ear, and a safe space. You don't have to have a spiritual crisis or be a Christian to see a Chaplain: we are practiced listeners and have a wealth of experience in supporting people through relationship, work and study difficulties, spiritual and vocational issues. You can drop in whenever you find the door open, or you can make an appointment by email or phone.

The Denmark Hill Chaplaincy is in the loPPN building, and it has sofas, a coffee machine, a toy box if you have your child with you, and a dedicated Quiet Room. You can use it any time to relax, have a rest (or a sleep!), or find someone to talk to.

Denmark Hill Chaplaincy: loPPN W1.19 (directly under the café diner)

Ext. 0044

Email chaplaincy@kcl.ac.uk, or jane.speck@kcl.ac.uk"



Ortus

The Ortus prides itself as a community resource and wants everyone to enjoy and make use of the facilities and so have ensured that Café at the ORTUS is family and child-friendly. Mums and dads can enjoy a healthy bite to eat whilst kids enjoy:

- clean wooden educational toys
- a selection of children's books
- high chairs and baby-changing facilities

Undergraduate Students

Student parents and parents-to-be are also supported via the Personal Tutor System. Personal Tutors take an active interest in students' academic progress and university experience, and their general welfare. The Tutor would also recommend that the tutee makes use of the Mitigating Circumstances procedure to secure extensions to or deferrals of assessments where necessary.

Taught Master's

Research Students

Supervisors should be mindful of your responsibilities and allow for flexible working. Please discuss this with your supervisor. Children can get ill, so it is reasonable that you take time off when your children are ill. Also take advantage of the support offered by the personal tutor system. Please consider joining or contacting the King's Doctoral Student Association <https://www.kclsu.org/studentreps/kdsa/> <https://www.facebook.com/kdsa.kcl/> <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8452205> who are an Independent body who work with the University to uphold the rights of research students at King's. The Family Network is integrated within this structure.

Students who are pregnant/partners are pregnant when they start their course or become pregnant while studying

Once you have your babies, please refer to the section "Students with families when they start their course for more information.

All students are responsible for information their supervisor, personal tutor and the Education Support Team of pregnancy with enough time to make appropriate arrangements. This may include organising interruption of studies and adjusting work and study environments as needed to support pregnant students. Your department and supervisors is then responsible for making relevant staff aware of their responsibilities and also for completing a risk assessment for an expectant mother. The IoPPN is responsible for ensuring expectant parents are accommodated as far as practicable in completing their programme of study and ensuring they are treated fairly and with respect.

You should be supported in taking time off for maternity, paternity or adoption leave and you should be permitted to attend maternity appointments or those of your partner. If you feel you are not being treated fairly, speak to your personal tutor or to the Family Network or Family Society. Everyone is eligible to take maternity, paternity and adoption leave as outlined in IoPPN policy. There is no requirement for you to take time out of your programme for maternity leave if you do not wish to but it recommended that new mothers do not return to work for at least 2 weeks after birth.

Undergraduate Students and Taught Master's

If a tutee (or a tutee's partner) were to become pregnant, the Tutor would arrange a meeting with the tutee to discuss matters relating to and arising from the pregnancy, e.g. ensuring the tutee has access to appropriate health support, helping the tutee to plan their work schedule around the pregnancy, birth and early parenthood, or options regarding interruption of studies. The Tutor would also recommend that the tutee makes use of the Mitigating Circumstances procedure to secure extensions to or deferrals of assessments where necessary. (Note that while pregnancy per se does not constitute a mitigating circumstance, 'pregnancy-related illness' and, in the case of unexpected pregnancies for example, 'acute personal difficulties', would be relevant mitigating circumstances.)

Tutees that become pregnant, or a tutee whose partner becomes pregnant, during study, are encouraged to notify the Personal Tutor in the first instance. The Personal Tutor offers an entry point into KCL's support services, as well as offering direct support to students. If for any reason the tutee does not wish to contact the Personal Tutor, she or he could also use alternative entry points, such as The Compass or Student Services.

An interruption of studies works by putting a student's registration status on hold for a year, allowing them to take a year away from their studies and re-enter their degree programme where they left off. To interrupt studies, the student must submit a Change of Registration Status form online, which is then forwarded to a senior member of staff for approval. The student can choose to interrupt at any point during the year and return one year later. Or, they may choose to interrupt midway through the year and begin the year afresh in the following September.

Research Students

Maternity Leave

A 6 months' interruption of studies for maternity leave will be approved automatically and the date of submission extended. Students can also apply for up to 6 further months and, again, the date of submission will be extended. The Education Support Team must be informed in advance of the intended dates of leave.

Students should not normally be permitted to interrupt their studies for more than 12 months in most circumstances, or for less than one month. However, College regulations do allow for a maximum interruption of 2 years and it is recognised that this may be necessary in certain circumstances, but compelling evidence will be required to support an application.

International Students

International students studying on a Tier 4 Visa should be aware that an interruption of studies will require them to return home for the duration of their break. They will need to apply for a new Visa ahead of their return to study. This will involve paying a Visa application fee to the UK Border Agency.

Paternity/Partner Leave (including same sex partners)

Students can take up to 10 days' paternity leave automatically (which will not affect the date of submission). They may also take up to 13 weeks within 12 months of birth or whatever is permitted by government legislation. If the additional time is taken, the date of submission will be extended by

the appropriate period. The Education Support Team must be informed in advance of the intended dates of leave. The funders which follow RCUK guidelines will fund paternity/shared parental leave as per the maternity guidelines.

Who do I inform?

Education Services

You should contact Education Services. They will tell you all of the things you need to do in terms of your course which may include an interruption of studies form. They also require a copy of the MATB1 form which your midwife should be able to provide you with. Fathers who envisage a paternity leave should also speak to Education Services. If you are working in environments where there is a need for a risk-assessment or changes to your duties (e.g. wet labs, PET scanning etc) you should inform your supervisor or the lab manager as soon as possible.

Personal Tutor

There is no signature required by the personal tutor, but you may feel more comfortable informing your personal tutor who may be able to support you through your pregnancy.

Supervisor(s)

When you submit your interruption of studies form, your supervisors are required to sign it. Supervisors will also need to discuss with you how to manage your studies. Depending on the project you work on, data may be collected while you are away or the project may stop. It is important to discuss this at an early stage so that everyone knows the plan going forward.

Funding

Funding for your maternity leave varies greatly depending on how you are funded.

Employees

If you are also a staff member, you will be covered by the University Occupational Maternity Leave Scheme and as long as you have been continuously employed for 26 weeks at the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth. Maternity funding does not come out of the project budget but from a King's wide fund.

MRC Funded Students

MRC follows RCUK guidelines for terms and conditions of funding. These guidelines state:

“The Research Organisation must make suitable arrangements for coping with absences of students for illness, maternity leave, Ordinary Paternity Leave, shared parental Leave, adoption leave, extended jury service and holidays.”

“Research Council funded students are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity or shared parental leave. The first 26 weeks should be paid at full stipend rate. The following 13 weeks should be paid at a level commensurate with employee entitlements to statutory maternity pay. This is c. 41% of the minimum doctoral stipend. The final 13 weeks are not paid. Partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave on full stipend. Partners may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave; this may include paid and unpaid leave, depending on the individual circumstances,

any paid leave should be at full stipend. There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.”

“The Research Organisation should advise the student of the terms and conditions under which maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave and stipend is given and what duration of study is required on return to study after such leave in order for the student to keep the whole value of funding paid during the period of leave. This may be calculated on a sliding scale. The Research Organisation should have in place a policy that requires it to make every effort to recover the value of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption funding from students who decide not to return to study after maternity, paternity, shared 13 Revised November 2016 parental or adoption leave.”

Wellcome Funded Students

Wellcome will supplement grants by the cost incurred in meeting an individual’s stipend while on maternity, paternity or adoption leave. The official end date of the grant may also be extended for the period equivalent to the leave taken.

Graduate School Funded Students

Graduate School funding generally falls in line with the RCUK guidelines on maternity and paternity leave (see above).

Faculty Funded Students

Faculty studentships follow MRC guidelines (see above).

Department Funded Students

This is decided by each individual department. Education Services advise that departments should make provision for maternity/paternity leave but ultimately the decision lies with the department.

ESRC Funded Students

The ESRC allows for up to 6 months paid maternity leave, they require that students re-join their course in the subsequent year at the stage which they left. This is to ensure they complete elements of training. This normally requires six months of paid maternity leave followed by six months of unpaid leave.