

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PARENTS¹

NOVEMBER 2019

This guideline outlines the support available for students who are parents at the Otago Medical School (OMS) and clarifies OMS policies and procedures as they apply to student parents.

The first point of contact for all support matters for student parents and any queries pertaining to this document is the Associate Dean Student Affairs at your campus.

Withdrawal from Course for Parental Responsibilities

Students who are parents (“student parents”) are able to withdraw from the medical course for parental reasons, such as for example, leading up to and following the birth of a child. Withdrawals of up to one year are generally approved. Under exceptional circumstances, withdrawal for more than one year may be approved.

Any student wishing to withdraw from the medical course is advised to discuss this decision as early as possible with the appropriate Associate Dean of Student Affairs (or Dean of School). The full “Withdrawing from the Medical Course” policy can be found [here](#).

Where possible, for student parents who withdraw part-way through the academic year, and if the student requests it, efforts will be made to enable re-entry into the course at a similar point in the following calendar year. To accommodate any changes in the curriculum while the student was on leave it may be necessary for the returning student to undertake some bridging work. Even though part of the year may be completed at different times, it is not possible to pass just part of a year. As for all students, to pass the year a student parent will require a satisfactory performance during the whole year. In the event that the student’s performance is not satisfactory for part of a year, and provided the student is not liable for exclusion, the student would need to repeat the whole year

Student Parents in the 3rd Year Class Division

Student parents can request exemption from being balloted in the division of the medical class during 3rd year. Prior to the ballot taking place, the Student Affairs Office will email the 3rd year class to seek applications for exemption under this policy. From this point, it is the responsibility of the student parent to notify the Student Affairs to confirm they wish to be exempt.

¹ Version: 17 November 2019

Developed as a collaboration between OMS exec and NZMSA. This version approved by OMS Deans, ADUSAs and ADMEs

Short Notice Leave

Leave is administered through the MB ChB Leave Policy which can be found [here](#).

Examples for which student parents may obtain leave in accordance with these guidelines include but are not limited to; caring for an unwell dependant, loss of childcare at short notice, pregnancy related illness, miscarriage/bereavement/stillbirth.

Attendance of Dependants at Teaching

Student parents are allowed to bring children to lectures and non-clinical classes if childcare provisions have unexpectedly become unavailable, or where the child is very young or requires breastfeeding. It is expected this would not be a regular occurrence and the lecturer/tutor should be informed prior to, or at the beginning of, the class. The student is responsible for the behaviour of the child and should excuse themselves if the child becomes disruptive to the rest of the class. It is the right of the student parent to breastfeed in class should the need arise or may be excused from class to breastfeed. Unwell children are not permitted to accompany parents to any teaching session. Note that in ELM non-clinical learning sessions are generally pod-cast.

Accessing Feeding Facilities

Students in both ELM and ALM, will have access to feeding and expressing facilities within the school/hospital. In the three main medical school campuses these facilities will feature at minimum a comfortable chair, a sink, a small fridge and a lockable door with complete privacy. These should be suitable for male or female parents. At satellite sites, the quality of these facilities are the responsibility of the host District Health Board.

Feeding facilities at each Otago Medical School campus:

Christchurch - Main UOC building. Dedicated parenting facilities are planned for the new building

Dunedin (ALM) - Ground Floor, Dunedin Hospital, (key at Patient Affairs Reception)

Dunedin (ELM) - Ground Floor, Dunedin Hospital, (key at Patient Affairs Reception)

Wellington - Ground Floor, UOW Medical School Building (across from reception)

If there are any issues with access to these feeding facilities, student parents should contact their Associate Dean Student Affairs.

Out-of-centre Placements

Student parents are required to attend out-of-centre placements as part of the completeness of their medical training. When student parents are required to attend out-of-centre placements during the year, they are encouraged to negotiate these placements at the beginning of the year with course administrators to suit their personal circumstances and efforts will be made to accommodate these. Student parents are expected to arrange their own childcare during these placements.

Assessment/Examination Procedures

Students who are pregnant or breastfeeding meet the criteria for allowances in examination and assessment circumstances. These extend, but are not limited to: extra time, separate room, time and privacy to breastfeed or express breast milk, extra bathroom breaks, snacks etc. Allowances can be applied for through the usual pathways as defined in the [MB ChB Assessment Policies and Procedures](#) (Section 1.12.3 *Alternative Arrangements for students with a disability, impairment, medical condition or injury that significantly affects performance*).

As might occur with acute illnesses, student parents who feel their performance in an assessment is impaired due to illness in pregnancy or significant family-related illness/events around the time of an assessment may apply for special consideration. This process is defined in the [MB ChB Assessment Policies and Procedures](#) (Section 1.12.1 *Special Consideration for students with temporary conditions affecting performance*).

Entitlement to Further Support

Students are entitled to involve support people or seek advice from them. These support people will be allowed in meetings with the medical school, but please make contact in advance to arrange adequate space/time. This extends, but is not limited, to extended family, community support workers (mental health nurses, Plunket nurses etc.), Maori support staff (MHWDU, Te Huka Mātauraka etc.), other cultural support people, mentors and friends.