



Navigating Parenthood and Academia: Thriving as a Student Parent Guide



At the University of Southampton and Southampton University Students' Union, we are passionate about ensuring that all students can get the most out of their university experience but recognise that many students face barriers in achieving this.

To address this gap, we have created the Student Parent Guide - a resource to help you navigate student life at the University of Southampton with confidence and support. This guide has been co-designed with student parents to provide tailored information, advice and guidance to help you thrive personally and professionally whilst with us at Southampton.

Early Years Centre

Located in Building 41 (Highfield Campus), the Early Years Centre provides high-quality childcare for children aged 4 months to 5 years old.

The Centre offers a variety of educational and developmental activities in a safe, nurturing environment and it is staffed by qualified professionals who focus on early childhood development. You may be able to access

financial support for childcare, including government-funding for children aged 3 and 4, tax credits and other financial aid options.

Early Years Centre contact information:

Contact Number: 023 8059 3465

Contact Email: eycentre@southampton.ac.uk

How to Apply: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/earlyyearscentre/index.page>

Check if you are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare Credits: [Tax-free-childcare](#)

More information about nursery funding from Southampton City Council can be found here: [Funded early years education](#)



Speak up. Ask for help if you need it.



Financial Support

We understand that balancing academic goals with family responsibilities can be financially challenging and here you'll find information on a variety of funds, grants and loans tailored to meet the unique needs of student parents.

Student Support Fund

The Student Support fund is a limited pot of money for UK Home students (at all levels of study) who find themselves in financial difficulty.

Further information on the fund can be found here: [Student Support Fund](#) | [The Student Hub](#) | [University of Southampton](#).

If you require support to complete an application, contact the Financial Support team here: [Contact Us](#) | [The Student Hub](#) | [University of Southampton](#).

Alternatively, you can request support from the SUSU Advice Centre here: advice@susu.org.



Childcare Grant

UK Home students may be eligible for support with childcare costs (for children under 16, or under 17 with a disability). Find out more using this link: [Childcare Calculator](#).

Learner Support

For those aged 19 or over facing financial hardship, this fund can support with travel costs, accommodation, materials/equipment, laptop and Wi-Fi and childcare with an Ofsted-registered childcare provider. Find out more using this link: [Learner Support](#)

NHS Childcare Allowance

For NHS students/workers, you can access financial support for childcare costs. Find out more using this link: [Childcare Allowance](#)

Parents Learning Allowance

This allowance is available to help with the extra costs of studying for students with dependent children. Find out more using this link: [Parents Learning Allowance](#)

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Adult Dependants Grant

This grant provides support for those who have an adult depend on them financially. Find out more using this link: [Adult Dependants Grant](#)

“ Have a work-life balance, know your role as an academic and also a parent. Your family deserves your time and presence, just as much as your professional responsibilities do. ”

Wellbeing Support

Balancing academic responsibilities with parenting can be challenging. We provide here some essential tips and strategies for managing your time while maintaining your wellbeing.

Time Management

As a student parent, effectively managing your time is crucial to balancing academic, personal, and parenting responsibilities. Use the links below to learn how to prioritise tasks, create a flexible schedule, and stay organised. This can help reduce stress, stay motivated, and make the most of your time.

- [Time Management | Student Disability & Wellbeing | University of Southampton](#)
- [Time Management Resources for Parents Studying and Working from Home](#)

Tip!

The best time to do work is as soon as the kids have gone to school or after they have gone to bed.

“ Prioritise self-care and set realistic expectations, acknowledging that it's okay to ask for help and take breaks when needed. ”

Health and wellbeing

Maintaining mental health and wellbeing is essential for academic success and personal fulfilment. Explore the services we provide using the below link to help you manage stress and maintain a positive state of mind during your time at university.

[Mental health and wellbeing – Student Disability & Wellbeing](#)

Academic Support

Whether you are an undergraduate (UG) or postgraduate taught (PGT), or postgraduate research (PGR) student, there is comprehensive support you can receive at the university.

Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)

PATs, typically for UG and PGT students, are assigned upon your arrival. They are often an academic staff member from your subject area or a related field who provide guidance and support throughout your university journey, helping with both academic and personal challenges. Find out more using this link: [Your Personal Academic Tutor](#)

Academic Skills Service

The Library's Academic Skills Services offer a range of resources to help you develop essential academic skills. From writing proficiency to mathematical and statistical knowledge, these services are designed to support your transition through higher education and ensure success throughout your studies.

- Online academic training and workshops can be accessed using this link: [Online Training and Workshops](#)
- You can access the Library's study skill resources using this link: [Academic Skills Service](#)
- Throughout the academic year, the Library Academic Skills Service Team hosts Writing Cafés, Academic Skills Drop-Ins, and other events. These sessions provide informal, safe spaces where you can work on your assignments with support from the Academic Skills Service.
- If you are a doctoral student, you can access the PGR Development Hub for academic and professional development support using this link: [PGR Development Hub](#). Your research supervisor, along with the Faculty and the Doctoral College, are valuable support resources that you should utilise. Find out more using this link: [Doctoral College | University of Southampton](#).

“ It can be easy to forget your responsibility as a parent, especially in stressful assessment periods. Don't ignore them and put them before your studies. ”

Special Considerations and Pause in Study

The University offers various support options for students facing exceptional circumstances. If you need to take maternity, paternity, or a temporary leave of absence. There are clear guidelines on how to apply for a Pause in Study, and how to resume your studies smoothly upon return. Additionally, for those encountering difficulties with exams or assignments due to unforeseen circumstances, the Special Considerations policy ensures you receive the necessary support to manage your academic responsibilities.

Find out more information about maternity/paternity leave or temporary leave of absence:

UK Home Students: [Pause in Study](#)

International Students: [Authorised Absence](#)

Need an extension for your completing your assignment, find out more using this link: [Special Considerations](#)

Practical Support

Balancing university life with parenting can be challenging, but the University offers extensive support to help you manage both.

Accommodation

We offer a variety of accommodation options to suit different needs. For example, there are family houses and halls specifically designed for students living with a partner or children.

Additionally, the Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing (SASSH) provides a council-backed service to help you find safe, high-quality accommodation with flexible terms.

For any housing-related issues, the Students' Union Advice Centre offers free, confidential support and can be contacted at advice@susu.org

More information can be found at the following links:

- Accommodation for couples and students with children: [Accommodation: couples & families](#).
- Student accommodation in Southampton: [SASSH](#).
- SUSU independent support - Housing. [SUSU - support & housing](#).



University Health Service

The University Health Service (UHS) at the University of Southampton is an NHS primary care practice located in Building 48 (Highfield Campus). The UHS offers a comprehensive range of healthcare services, including:

- General Medical Services: Routine check-ups, treatment for illnesses, and management of chronic conditions.
- Mental Health Support: Access to mental health nurses and counselling services.
- Specialist Clinics: Contraception clinics; Dietitian services.
- Vaccinations: COVID-19 vaccines, travel vaccinations, and other necessary immunisations.
- Physiotherapy: Services to help with physical rehabilitation and injury management.

For more information, you can visit their [click here to visit their website](#) or contact them at +44 (0)23 8055 75311.

New and Expectant Parents' Room

For those needing a quiet place to rest, nurse, or have a private moment, the New and Expectant Parents' Room (based in Building 6, Room 1133), Highfield Campus) contains areas for resting, socialising and privacy and can be used by students, staff and visitors. To gain access to the New and Expectant Parents' Room, you can contact Security (on 023 8059 3311) for the door code.

The University have a number of facilities across campuses, including accessible toilets which include changing facilities. [Click here to access the University's online campus maps](#) to locate these. Additionally, hot water is free of charge in all University and SUSU catering outlets.



Choosing a School

When selecting a school for your child, Southampton City Council offers several resources which you can access using the below links:

- [School Applications: Information on education in the UK](#)
- [School Admissions: Information on admission criteria](#)
- [School Performance: Details on school performance and Ofsted reports.](#)

Events & Networking

Engaging with university life offers numerous opportunities to connect with others and build a strong support network. The University of Southampton and SUSU host a variety of events and activities throughout the year, providing the opportunity to meet new people and get involved.

Clubs and Societies

SUSU offers over 200 clubs and societies that cater to a wide range of interests. Whether you're into sports, arts, culture, or academics, there's something for everyone. Joining a society is a great way to meet new people, discover new hobbies, and make the most of your university experience. Find out more using this link: [SUSU - Clubs & Societies](#)

Engage with other student parents. They can be the best source of information for navigating daily life, and your 'shoulder to cry on' when things go wild.

Family-friendly Activities

The University organises various family-friendly events throughout the year. This includes the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival, which features interactive activities for all ages. SUSU also offers several family-friendly events, including cinema screenings and craft sessions throughout the year.

To stay updated on these events, check the University and Students' Union Events Calendar, and follow SUSU on social media. Find out more information using the links below:

- [Events Calendar](#)
- [Southampton Science and Engineering Festival](#)
- [SUSU - What's On at the Students' Union](#)



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Student Community

Connecting with other student parents can be incredibly valuable. These connections can provide mutual support and serve as a first point of contact for advice and friendship.

SUSU has a Student Parent and Carer network, a student-led network open to all levels of study, providing a space to connect with others who understand your challenges, share experiences and resources, and advocate for better support at the University of Southampton. Find out more information using this link: [Student Parent and Carer Network](#)

There is also the PGR Student Parents Network Society - a dedicated group that offers tailored support and networking opportunities for doctoral student parents. This group can be a great resource for sharing experiences and advice. Find out more information using this link: [SUSU - PGR Parents Network](#)



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www.susu.org
www.southampton.ac.uk