



**THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY**

WASHINGTON, DC

## **Statement of Support for Students with New Children**

George Washington School of Medicine is committed to supporting students' pregnancies, births, adoptions, and child custody changes while in medical school. Our goal is to assist students in the perinatal/post adoption period while facilitating timely and realistic completion of their medical degree. Given the complex and evolving process of having children in medical school, this statement is designed to outline considerations involved in taking parental leave, but it cannot encompass every scenario. Open and timely communication is foremost for developing a reasonable leave that meets both the parent's goals and observes academic policies.

Students who plan to become parents in medical school are advised to speak with their advisory dean and the dean of student affairs as soon as possible, especially if they are considering a leave. This meeting should include, at minimum, a discussion of the following topics:

- Determine the length of their leave of absence.
- Determine if a leave of absence is necessary
- Facilitating completion of missed coursework
- Graduation dates based on the time and coursework that is missed
- Health insurance
- Financial Aid continuation

Students are also encouraged to speak promptly with the Financial Aid office. Requests for leave should be initiated at least three months prior to the expected birth/adoption, if possible. If unexpected circumstances arise (ex: emergency custody or preterm birth), the student should contact their deans and course or clerkship directors immediately.

The variation in curriculum throughout the four years of medical school dictates different accommodations depending on the year of school when the birth or adoption occurs. At times, students may be recommended, but not required, to take a leave of absence, particularly during the pre-clerkship phase when there is less curricular flexibility. During the Fundamentals of Clinical Practice (MS3 year) and Transition to Advanced Clinical Practice (MS4 year), students

may often use built in time off in the schedule, while graduating on time. The faculty at GW School of Medicine are committed to working with students to honor a student's wishes to graduate on time or specific academic goals, whenever possible. Depending on the length of leave, it may be noted on a student's MSPE under Academic History as: "X took a personal (or medical) leave of absence from (date) to (date)." The student may choose to designate their leave with further detail such as: "X took a medical leave of absence for maternity/paternity leave from (date) to (date)."

The Parental Leave Policy will be extended to students without regard to their age, sex, or gender and for any situation in which a new child is brought into a student's care, including but not limited to childbirth, adoption, foster care, or custody change.

Both raising children and medical school are exciting journeys. If students wish to incorporate parental leave as part of their path to becoming a physician, they are encouraged and should feel comfortable reaching out to faculty to discuss their options.

**Resources (Last updated September 2023):**

**A student should contact Dean Goldberg in addition to one of their three assigned advisory deans: Dean Norris, Dean Ghosh or Dean Davis. Students are also encouraged to contact the financial aid office.**

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**MD Program Financial Aid:**

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**Lactation Policy and Support:**

<https://compliance.gwu.edu/breastfeeding-and-lactation-support-policy>

**Lactation room in Ross Hall:**

Ross Hall, 2300 I St NW, #203A1: Available to faculty, staff and students with access to Ross Hall.