

Michigan Law Student Parent Support Policies

I. INTRODUCTION

The Law School is committed to supporting new and expectant parents. We encourage students to use our office as a resource as they manage the demands and responsibilities of law school and parenthood. In recognition of these challenges, the Michigan Law Student Parent Support Policies (SPSP) are designed to assist law students during pregnancy and immediately following birth or adoption. The purpose of these policies is to make it possible for a student to maintain full-time status, along with all the benefits of such status, while facilitating the return to broad participation in academic and student life.

II. ELIGIBILITY

The Student Parent Support Policies apply to full-time Michigan Law students who are in good academic standing, and who are making satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree. The policy covers the situation of students who experience a child birth or the adoption of a child for whom the student has parental responsibilities. These eligibility requirements cover all provisions of the SPSP.

III. ACCOMMODATIONS & SUPPORT

A. Generally

If there is a pregnancy or parenting-related issue that could affect exams, attendance, or classroom participation, please [contact the Office of Student Life](#) to discuss possible accommodations. These accommodations may include: assistance with navigating course load and scheduling; extension of paper deadlines; exam accommodations, including exam deferrals, breaks during exams, and/or separate testing environments; and leaves of absence. Accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis and determined by individual circumstances.

B. Pregnancy-related Absences

If you will be pregnant during the semester, the Office of Student Life will reach out to your current professors to encourage them to accommodate pregnancy-related absences, as necessary. Please note, however, that ABA rules prescribe limitations on the amount of class that can be missed in a given semester while satisfying the requirement of regular class attendance.

After the birth or adoption, you may also have needs that conflict with regular class attendance. The Office of Student Life will work with you to advise about ABA limitations as well as accommodations, such as class recordings or note-taking.

If you wish for classes to be recorded during your absences, the Office of Student Life can reach out to your professors directly or help you approach that communication yourself, at your choice. Be aware that, per our [class recording policy](#), the final decision regarding recording classes is at the professors' discretion; some professors have shared these preferences in the past, and the Office of Student Life can advise you on course selection (if you would want these preferences to factor into your curricular choices) or help you communicate proactively with faculty members.

C. Parental Leave

If you or your partner will give birth or adopt during the semester, there are several leave possibilities available to you. All [leaves of absence](#) must be approved by the Office of Student Life, and we will assist you in weighing all relevant considerations. Note, for instance, that all work for the degree must generally be completed within five years after the date of first enrollment, and no longer than seven years.

If the birth or adoption is likely to take place mid-semester and you are aware prior to the start of classes, you may seek permission to take the semester off; as with all approved leaves, you may do so without any negative effect on any institutional aid. Similarly, you may request a leave of absence following the birth or adoption.

If the birth is likely to take place during or very near to exams, parents have the option to receive 6 weeks of exam deferment, starting from the date of the birth or adoption. Birth mothers have the option to receive 8 weeks of deferment, starting from the date of the birth. Students should consult the Office of Student Life to discuss specific considerations and implications, including: deadlines implicating anonymous grading; number of graded units for honors eligibility (63); and state bar exam deadlines.

If desired, the Law School will provide pumping accommodations (generally, 30 minutes for every 3 hours of exam time).

All deferments will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Student Life, and the Office of Student Life will also arrange for deferments with professors on your behalf.

D. Parent Support

Private nursing rooms are available in the basement of Jeffries Hall, and are equipped with refrigerators for storing milk. You will need to request permission to gain access to the room, and the Office of Student Life can help facilitate that.

Regarding *parking options* for birth mothers, the first step is to ask a physician for an accessible parking placard. With that, a student can go to Parking Customer Services (523 S. Division Street, attached to the Thompson Street parking structure) and get a free “Blue” permit for the dates for which the placard is issued. Most physicians usually issue the accessible parking placard. If the physician does not issue the placard, then a student may want to use [Paratransit](#). A student can park anywhere on campus and the van provides door-to-door service between the parking location and the Law School.

Parents seeking a lighter class load following the arrival of a new child are encouraged to speak with the Office of Student Life.

New parents who need additional assistance or other accommodations are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Student Life.

To follow up on any of the above policies, or if you think they will apply to you, please reach out to Dean Zearfos at szearfos@umich.edu. Other offices you may wish to consult include the Office of Career Planning (e.g., questions related to interviewing or other career considerations), Financial Aid (to discuss your personal budgetary and other financial circumstances), and University child care [resources](#).