

## Tips for parents: supporting students to start university

Starting university is a big step for both students and their parents. With this in mind, here are some tips for parents to support the transition.

### Provide reassurance

You can also let the student know that it is completely normal to feel nervous about making the transition to university. It is a big step, but they have earned their place and the institution has excellent support services to help them.

### Encourage independence

Please encourage the student to be as independent as possible. This does not mean that no one is looking out for them or that they cannot ask for help. It means that they should actively engage with support and if they are having any issues, whether personally or academically, they should take action and talk to someone. This could be their tutor, the Pastoral Support Tutor or the Disability Advisor. If the student is not sure who to speak to, they can ask at the Student Hub helpdesk or use the contact details at the bottom of this document.

### Understand protocols for sharing information

There are times when you might want to talk to us about the student. We always welcome contact from parents or those with parental responsibilities. However, we are legally obliged to act in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 2018* and to bear in mind that anyone over the age of 18 is considered an adult. This means that the students' information is their own and it is their choice as to whether and how they want to share it. Therefore, unlike schools or sixth form colleges, universities cannot, without the student's express permission, disclose anything to you about how your son or daughter is progressing, academically or personally. Exceptions may be made, however, in some very serious circumstances where risk outweighs confidentiality. In these situations, we might call the parent, or the student's named emergency contact, with the student's permission wherever possible.

In some situations, the student may choose to give us permission to speak to their parents about something. The best way to do this is for the student to email the university from their own email account explaining that they are giving permission for someone to speak to their parent. It is helpful if the student states *what* they are giving permission for parents to be spoken to about and *why*.

While we can talk to parents with the student's permission, parents cannot talk *for* or *on behalf* of the student. The student would still be the person we are working with, and they would still need to talk with us directly about what they needed.

### Students with disabilities

If the student has indicated on their application that they have a disability, they will be contacted directly during the summer and offered a meeting. This can be in person, over

the phone or via Teams or Zoom. The meeting is a chance to ask any questions and can also be used to:

- Draft a Reasonable Adjustment Agreement
- Provide advice and guidance on applying for [Disabled Students Allowances \(DSA\)](#)
- Tour the site to identify any accessibility issues

Parents can attend the meeting with the student providing the student confirms via email that they are happy for the parent to attend.

## Attending meetings with students

Where a student wishes for a parent to accompany them, the following guidelines are designed to ensure we make the most of parental involvement while supporting students to grow in confidence and take ownership of their studies:

- Staff will direct their questions to the student in the first instance.
- Time should be allowed for the student to think and respond, bearing in mind the student may take longer than usual to respond due to the formal setting of the meeting.
- The student may wish to ask a parent for help with explaining themselves or providing additional information. However, the parent should not speak for the student.
- Additional information from parents is welcomed. However, parents should avoid answering for the student or interrupting the student.

## Useful contacts

University Studies phone number: 01284 716 341

University Studies email: [universitystudies@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk](mailto:universitystudies@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk)

More information: [Student Support | USWSC - University Studies at West Suffolk College](#)