



POLICY ON SUPPORT FOR FAMILY CARE

Background

The SSMU has a history of and constitutional mandate¹ to take leadership on issues of equity and social justice. This dedication has been demonstrated in the creation of an Equity Policy² for the SSMU. This Equity Policy addresses the anti-oppressive stance the SSMU has towards issues of discrimination based on sex, race, socioeconomic class, origin, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability. The SSMU recognizes that this Equity Policy, in its current form, does not explicitly recognize the discrimination and exclusion faced by Students with Dependents, and aims to address this issue through this policy. Additionally, the SSMU recognizes that the visibility of Students with Dependents is very low, potentially driving the assumption that these issues are irrelevant to McGill's undergraduate student population.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all:

1. Staff, volunteers and elected representatives of the SSMU.
2. Activities and events hosted and promoted by the SSMU.
3. Written or graphic material, which is published, distributed, or endorsed by the SSMU.

Definitions

Childcare: Refers to services that ensure the supervision of children.

Dependent: Refers to a person who is financially, emotionally, legally and/or physically dependent on another individual.

Family Care: Refers to all matters pertaining to Childcare, Elder Care and Dependents.

Student with Dependent: Refers to any student with a Dependent, as well as Student Parents collectively. This includes, but is not limited to, caring for an elderly family member, a sick family member, and financially supporting others remotely.

Student Parent: Refers to a student who is pregnant or who has one or more children.

¹ SSMU Constitution 2016-02-04

² SSMU Policy and Plan Book 2016-10-15



Stakeholder: Refers to any person or group that has an interest in the outcome of a decision or event related to Family Care within the University or that has expertise in said area.

1. Consultation

The SSMU recognizes the importance of developing relationships with Stakeholders that are grounded in open communication and respect. Furthermore, the SSMU acknowledges that meaningful advocacy can only be done in consultation with these communities. The SSMU, through the Office of the Vice-President (Student Life), shall achieve this by:

- 1.1. Ensuring that each academic year, the contact information of all relevant Stakeholders is compiled into a central document, namely University units and other student groups, related to Family Care within the McGill University community. This document shall serve to facilitate consultation and institutionalize support and shall be updated on an annual basis and shared with relevant Stakeholders.
- 1.2. Consulting all relevant Stakeholders in Family Care at the University, including, but not limited to the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity Subcommittees on Women, Family Care and Disabilities, the Post-Graduate Students' Society, and any interested students with Dependents.

For matters involving Family Care at the University which are not covered within this policy, the Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall consult the aforementioned Stakeholders.

2. Support for Student Parents

The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall ensure that support for Student Parents shall remain a priority for the SSMU. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that:

- 2.1. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and the Family Resources Coordinator shall advocate for increased support for current and future efforts to research regarding the barriers faced by and needs of Students with Dependents, in addition to the expansion of childcare services in Quebec.
- 2.2. The Office of the Vice-President (Operations) shall endeavour to increase the accessibility of the William Shatner University Centre for undergraduate Student Parents and their children through the implementation of one or more child-friendly spaces for Student Parents and their children, pending available financial resources.



- 2.3. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall endeavour to establish consistent childcare service to Student Parents in need, pending available financial resources.
- 2.4. The SSMU Executive Committee shall ensure that all SSMU-run events held in the William Shatner University Centre have childcare available, if requested at least 24 hours in advance.
- 2.5. Service provision and advocacy efforts undertaken by the SSMU must take into account the unique needs of Student Parents who are single, Indigenous, queer, trans, disabled, racialized, of a lower socioeconomic status, and international student parents, due to additional barriers faced by these groups both institutionally and societally. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall collaborate with these self-identified student parents to ensure consultation shall be provided in addressing these needs.
- 2.6. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall work with the University to ensure that pertinent demographic information regarding Students with Dependents is maintained and assessed on a regular basis to determine where additional support is needed and how the University can ensure the retention of Students with Dependents.
- 2.7. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs), Family Resources Coordinator and President lobby the University to create a Family Resource Office.
- 2.8. The Funding Committee will consider whether funding-seeking Student Groups will be making childcare services available at their events, upon request.

3. Support for Students with Dependents

The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall ensure that support for Students with Dependents shall also remain a priority for the SSMU. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that:

- 3.1. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall lobby the University to institutionalize better support for Students with Dependents, including but not limited to, a University-wide leave of absence policy for all Students with Dependents and a more accessible medical note policy for staff and Students with Dependents³.

³ https://www.mcgill.ca/daycare/files/daycare/cpe_mcgill_health_protocol_2012_09.pdf See pages 4-11 for examples of when a parent has to keep their child home from daycare, but may not go to a doctor for a medical note (if a



3.2. The Offices of the President and Vice-President (Student Life) continue to work towards removing the barriers for undergraduate Students with Dependents from participating fully in and accessing SSMU activities and services, including, but not limited to, SSMU Legislative Council and its committees, Clubs, Services and jobs at the SSMU.

3.3. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) and Family Resources Coordinator shall collaborate with local organizations, such as Head and Hands and The Yellow Door, to support student caregiving projects, as well as McGill-specific organizations such as Midnight Kitchen or QPIRG-McGill, who could provide support in projects directed towards children and elderly persons⁴.

4. Reporting

The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall report to Legislative Council each semester on the status of the mandates in this policy. This report shall be made available to all interested relevant Stakeholders.

fever is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit). This applies to elderly care as well, given the vulnerabilities to health that both young children and elderly persons face.

⁴ <http://headandhands.ca/programs-services/young-parents-program/>
<http://www.yellowdoor.org/generations.html>
<https://midnightkitchencollective.wordpress.com/24-2/>
<http://qiprgmcgill.org/>