Green Templeton College

Guide for students bringing children to Oxford

August 2018
Contents

Page

3 Welcome
4 Accommodation and setting up home
5 Childcare (age 0-5)
6 Schools (age 5-18)
8 After-hours childcare/baby-sitting
8 Extra-curricular activities
9 Medical care
10 Transportation
11 Where to get help and advice
11 Financial support
12 Social
13 Useful contacts and links

Note about links

GTC has recently moved much of its student information to an intranet. This will be accessible to you once you have completed the admissions process and have received a Single Sign On for University IT Services. Links in this document are provided for the website and are live at the time of publication, but if you are referring to this document later in the academic year you may find that pages have changed or are missing. In this case, log in to the intranet from the GTC homepage and navigate to the College Office section, where you should find the information you are seeking.

Cover photo: Kate Coffey
All photos used by permission of photographers and parents
Welcome

As you are probably already aware, Green Templeton College (GTC) is a graduate-only college. This, together with our specialisations in medical research and management training, means that GTC’s students are more likely to come to us later in life and to bring along their spouses, partners and children.

We aim to be a family-friendly college and we are working actively to improve our support for student parents. We acknowledge that returning to study with your family can be challenging; our aim is to help where we can, and beyond this, to signpost you to appropriate external advice.

Feedback from past student parents (highlighted in the text) about their experiences in Oxford shows that it will be important for you to be aware of much of the following information. Note that you may need to take action before you come to Oxford or soon after you arrive. In general, the best advice is always to follow up issues as early as possible.

We welcome constructive feedback at any time about how GTC can better support its student parents. If you would prefer to provide this anonymously, we run a Student Feedback Questionnaire each year in February where you can offer comments about all aspects of the College’s provision.

Dr Alison Stenton, Senior Tutor
Alison Franklin, Academic Registrar
Accommodation and setting up home

GTC owns a number of 2- and 3-bedroomed houses on Observatory Street bordering the main College site, which are let to student couples and families. They have small back gardens, most of which have access directly into the College grounds. The College also owns a block of flats, Rewley Abbey Court, close to the Said Business School, which includes a number of 2-bedroomed flats that may be suitable for couples with a baby or small child.

All students may have up to two years in College accommodation (subject to availability); this applies to student parents as well. We try to ensure that we have suitable housing available for students with families when they first arrive in Oxford, as we believe that it is easier for continuing students already based in Oxford to find a suitable family property in the city’s competitive rental market than it is for incoming (and often international) students to do so remotely. In order to achieve this, we will not usually accommodate a student family for more than two years, with the exception that if (unusually) any houses remain unallocated by July, families may be able to stay on for an extra year. This means that if you are on a long programme (e.g., a DPhil) you should plan to move house at some point during your course. The Accommodation Manager can help with information about the private rental market but will not undertake property searches for you.

College accommodation is fully furnished but does not include items specific to babies and children (cots/cribs, bed rails, stools, high chairs, etc). The exception is safety gates, which can be provided on request (contact the Accommodation Manager).

Other items can be bought new from (for example):
- amazon.co.uk / smile.amazon.co.uk (items can be delivered to the Porters’ Lodge)
- Argos (New Inn Hall St or Botley Road)
- Mothercare (Oxford Retail Park, Cowley)
- John Lewis (The Westgate)
- large edge-of-town supermarkets such as Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury’s.

For second-hand items, try:
- the National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/branches/events/nearly-new-sales
- Emmaus www.emmaus.org.uk/find_shop/filter/Oxford (mention that you are a student)
- Daily Info (Oxford-based advertiser) www.dailyinfo.co.uk
- Gumtree www.gumtree.com
- Freecycle (previously Freecycle) www.ilovefreegle.org

Take care when buying second-hand baby and child items as they may not conform to current safety regulations.

There are also many charity shops in the area; previous students have found shops in the areas of Summertown (Banbury Road) and Headington (London Avenue and Windmill Road) can be good for children’s items.

GTC’s Graduate Common Room (GCR) committee produces a Rough Guide which includes information for student parents (including things to do with your children locally, many of them free) and other details which will come in handy when you are setting up in Oxford, including the location of supermarkets and other grocery shops. The GTC Facebook page is a useful first port of call for specific questions about accommodation and GTC specific parental enquiries: https://en-gb.facebook.com/greentempletonoxford/
**Nurseries and daytime childcare (children aged 0-5)**

Unless you have a partner or other family member with you who will be staying at home, you will need to think carefully about how your children are to be cared for while you are studying.

Nursery places are in short supply in Oxford. Although the University has a number of subsidised nurseries, there are long waiting lists for places – sometimes up to 18 months. You should be prepared to make private nursery/childcare arrangements in your first year in Oxford; if you will be here for more than one year, we recommend putting yourself on the nursery waiting list as soon as possible if you think you may need it in the future (you can apply from three months before your official start date). See [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/nurseryinformation/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/nurseryinformation/) for details and an application form.

You may also apply to nurseries run by other colleges – Balliol, St Anne’s, Somerville and Wolfson – although their own students will be prioritized. You should do this directly through the relevant college. See the Nurseries FAQ at the above University webpage for links.

There is a large financial commitment (subsidised full-time places will cost £998 per month in 2018/19; private nursery places can be considerably more), and it is possible that even if you can afford to pay the fees, you will only be able to obtain part-time care.

Children aged 3-4 are entitled to the equivalent of 15 hours of free childcare through the Nursery Education Fund. See [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/free-early-education-3-4-year-olds-0](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/free-early-education-3-4-year-olds-0) for more details.

For more information about University provision, see [www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/why-oxford/families-and-childcare](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/why-oxford/families-and-childcare).

For more information about external nurseries, see [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/nurseries](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/nurseries) and [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/applying-nursery-place](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/applying-nursery-place).

**Previous student parents have suggested** seeking childminders or nannies. These may have childcare qualifications of various levels and type. There are several websites for locating these, for example through the council at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/home-childcarers-nannies-au-pairs-and-babysitters](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/home-childcarers-nannies-au-pairs-and-babysitters), or privately on sites such as [www.childcare.co.uk](http://www.childcare.co.uk).
Schools (children aged 5-18)

If your child or children is/are 5 years or older (or will turn 5 during the coming academic year), you will need to consider school places. Securing a school place for your child in Oxford is not as simple as writing to the local council and being added to the register at the nearest school. You can find details of the process, schedule, and online application form at https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/transferring-or-moving-different-school.

We strongly recommend that you apply as early as possible and do not leave this until you are about to depart for Oxford, as school places (particularly for younger children) are in short supply. Because of this, you should be prepared for the fact that the school your child is allocated to will not necessarily be very near your accommodation.

The council’s website currently notes that “if your application is received from the week commencing 11 July, it is highly unlikely that your application will be processed before mid-September.” An added complication, however, is that, if you are moving from overseas and your child requires a visa in order to enter the UK, you will need to provide a copy of the visa with your application and your application will not be considered without this in place. As you are only able to apply for your visa three months before your course start date, realistically this means it is likely that your child will not have a school place at the beginning of the school year (early September).

You may also wish to refer to the Frequently Asked Questions at https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/school-admissions-faqs.

Primary (aged 4-11 years), infant (4-7 years) and junior (7-11 years) schools

Council admissions pages: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/admissions-infant-and-primary-schools
And: https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/admissions-junior-schools

List of local primary schools (including comparison facility): www.oxfordmail.co.uk/ii/primary_schools.in.Oxford/

Secondary schools (aged 11-18 years)

Council admissions page: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/secondary-school-applications

List of local secondary schools (including comparison facility): www.oxfordmail.co.uk/ii/all_secondary_schools.in.Oxford/

This list includes a number of independent (fee-paying) schools. The closest secondary schools to central Oxford are Cherwell, Cheney, and Oxford Spires. Matthew Arnold is a little west of the city.

Standard qualifications obtainable at secondary school are the GCSE (usually studied between ages 14 and 16) and the A-level (usually ages 16 to 18). Be aware that if you are moving into the system in the middle of either of these periods it may be difficult for your child to catch up and this may restrict their choice of subjects. Entry to A levels is generally dependent on achievement in GCSEs.
A current student writes: “Parents of sporty kids need to know that the season starts right at the beginning of the year [ie. September] – don’t wait till the winter to start looking at winter sports.”

School uniform

School uniform and equipment can be bought at Marks & Spencer, H&M, Primark and often at the Sainsbury’s or Tesco superstores (see p.4), as well as the more expensive specialist shops.

A former student advises: “Make sure you get the list for your particular school before you buy: some styles will not be appropriate.”
After-hours childcare/baby-sitting

Depending on your course, you may be required to attend sessions in the late afternoon and evening. Additionally, many College activities take place in the evenings (to avoid clashes with course requirements). You may need to find babysitters, after-schools clubs or other childcare in order to maintain your commitments as a student. We recommend that you look into this before you need it as it may not be easy to find in an emergency. See www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/out-school-clubs-and-holiday-playschemes for a directory of before and after school clubs.

If your children are at school, you should also be aware of and make provision for the week-long half-term breaks which will fall in the middle of each of the Oxford terms; see https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/school-term-dates-and-holidays. Student parents continuing from a previous year may be able to help you find out what sort of care may be available. Depending on the age of your child(ren), there are several holiday activity clubs running in and around Oxford, for example www.oxfordactive.co.uk, http://funtech.co.uk/ and www.oxfordmontessori.co.uk/forest-farm-create/. More options can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/out-school-clubs-and-holiday-playschemes.

GTC is not able to provide any childcare or baby-sitting facilities. GTC staff do not routinely undergo Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS; formerly Criminal Records Bureau or CRB checks). Please do not ask or expect staff members to supervise children, as they are not permitted to do so.

There are several websites for locating childcare or baby-sitters, for example through the council at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/home-childcarers-nannies-au-pairs-and-babysitters, or privately on sites such as www.childcare.co.uk.

Extra-curricular activities

Several student parents have noted the benefits of a family membership at local leisure/sports centres. For example:

- Local leisure centres
  (www.oxford.gov.uk/homepage/173/leisure_centres_and_swimming_pools) offer student and under-16 concessionary rates and memberships. There are also free swim sessions for under-16s with proof of residency in Oxford (www.oxford.gov.uk/freeswim).
- The University’s Iffley Road Sports Centre offers children’s swimming lessons in the vacations (http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/swimming/swimming-lessons/).
- Nuffield Health: The Oxfordshire Health and Racquets Club (Woodstock Road, www.nuffieldhealth.com/gyms/oxfordshire/services/childrens-creche-and-junior-programme) offers a crèche and a range of junior activities.

For music tuition, students have recommended https://www.firsttutors.com/uk/music/ and www.musicteachers.co.uk. Oxfordshire County Music Service also provides a range of lessons for young people in schools, usually during school hours: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/music-lessons.
Medical care

All resident members of your family are entitled to free NHS medical care. Unless you are already settled in Oxford and happy with your current GP, please register with the College Doctor, Dr Debbie Waller, at the 19 Beaumont Street practice (www.19beaumontstreet.com). Each member of your family is welcome to register with Dr Waller; please complete a separate registration form for each individual.

A link to the online registration form can be found on the New Students webpage (www.gtc.ox.ac.uk/admissions/for-offerholders.html), and the form can be completed before you come to Oxford. You can also go to the surgery in person to register once you are in Oxford, although this is likely to be time-consuming at a time when you will be particularly busy.

International students should note that you will have to take each family member’s passport in to the surgery to complete registration.

If you have children under the age of 5, ask to make an appointment with a health visitor to talk about scheduled routine check-ups and vaccinations. If your child does not have a Personal Child Health Record or ‘Red Book’ you can obtain one through the health visitor. It is helpful to bring a copy of your children’s vaccination records with you to your first visit with the health visitor as vaccination schedules vary across countries.

See also the general information on ‘Registering with the College Doctor’ in the Induction Guide (on the New Students webpage above), and the Medical Care webpage on the College website (www.gtc.ox.ac.uk/college-life/student-welfare-committee/medical-care).
Transportation

Bicycle

Cycling is very popular in Oxford and many locals transport their children on bikes either in child seats or trailers. There are many cycle shops in Oxford; the closest to the college are Walton Street Cycles (www.spoke.co.uk) and Summertown Cycles (www.bike-zone.co.uk).

Sustrans, a charity enabling people to make sustainable travel choices, provides good information about cycling with children (http://www.sustrans.org.uk/change-your-travel/children-and-families/cycling-kids).

The Broken Spoke Bike Co-op offers cycle training for both adults and children – see http://bsbcoop.org/what-we-do/cycle-training/ and the cycle training FAQs. The University can help with the costs of training – see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/bike/ for more info.

Bus

Buses in Oxford are clean and safe and offer marked areas for prams and pushchairs. Individual tickets or day passes can be purchased on the bus in cash. Weekly, monthly or yearly passes can be purchased online at www.oxfordbus.co.uk/key/, or at an Oxford Bus Company Travel Shop (3rd floor of Debenhams on Magdalen Street, or 44-45 High Street). Children under 5 ride free, and children 5-15 are half-fare.

Car

We do not recommend that you bring a car to Oxford or purchase one here. If you need to hire a car while you are here, there are a number of car hire companies in the city including Zipcar. It is possible to park at some of the College’s annexes for a small daily charge (subject to availability, booking essential). If you live on Observatory Street you will need to obtain street parking permits from the local council at the online Parking Shop (https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/parking-permits).
Where to get help and advice

In college surveys, some student parents have reported a lack of understanding of their situation within the formal University system. Students who feel that they have not received fair consideration from their department or faculty, division, supervisor, etc should always feel able to come to the College for assistance and advice about how to proceed. The main points of contact are: Alison Franklin (Academic Registrar), James McBain (Academic Administrator), Dr Alison Stenton (Senior Tutor) and Professor Richard McManus (Welfare Dean). In addition, your College Adviser may be able to help.

For informal help and peer support, the College's GCR usually appoints at least one ‘Couples and Families Rep’. Other GCR Committee members such as the Welfare Officers or the International Officer may also provide help or signpost you to the right person or organization.

The Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) has a Student Parent and Carer Officer, and provides advice and support for students with families at http://ousu.org/advice/life-welfare/student-parents/ and through a Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/oxfordstudentparents/. It has also published a ‘Student Parent Handbook’ available at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/childcare/documents/Student_Parent_Handbook_facebook.pdf

We understand that being a student and a parent at the same time can present significant challenges. We welcome constructive feedback at any time about how GTC can better support its student parents. If you would prefer to provide this anonymously, we run a Student Feedback Questionnaire each year in February where you can offer comments about all aspects of the College’s provision.

Financial support

The College is a registered charity whose purpose is to help all its students be successful academically. This means that we are limited in the direct support we can provide for the benefit of non-members, including students’ families. Our support tends to be provided indirectly through facilities, for example family-sized accommodation, and the ability to bring family members to many college events.

At present the College’s scholarships (as with the majority of University awards) are based on a stipend appropriate to a single student. Even if you are notionally fully funded by one of these awards, you will undoubtedly have extra expenses to budget for. The University provides a guide to some of these, available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts/living-costs-for-dependants.

You may be entitled to Government benefits. You will find a directory of official information about these at www.gov.uk/browse/benefits. You may also find information provided by the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group at www.taxguideforstudents.org.uk/ helpful.

If you think you are eligible for benefits but are struggling to apply because you do not yet have a National Insurance number, you can apply for one at www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number.
Social and community

Mailing-list

There is a mailing list for student parents at GTC (gtc-families@maillist.ox.ac.uk). To join, please send a request to the GCR Couples and Families reps: couples-families@gtcgcr.org).

Family-friendly events

There is normally a Student Parents welcome event on the weekend at the end of Induction Week with current students and other College members bringing up children in Oxford. Partly to help you settle in, partly to answer your questions about family issues which can be confusing at times. Spouses/partners and children welcome!

During the year a number of events are organized by the College and the GCR which are specifically targeted at families or open to all. These include the Summer Garden Party, Halloween party, an Easter Egg hunt, and regular Sunday Brunches including specific Family Friendly brunches with arts and crafts activities for children. Other events may also welcome children but it is best to check with the organizers first, particularly if they take place in the evening.

Meals at GTC

Children are welcome to attend lunch; however please note that children under 12 years old are not permitted in the servery because of limited space and hot surfaces. A children's portion is available for 50% of the full price. A high chair is available on request.

Formal dinners are not recommended for small children or babies in arms, but older children may attend dinners.

The College gardens

Children are welcome to play in the College gardens, but they must be supervised by a parent or carer at all times. Please note that some of the College buildings are historical in nature and were not designed with children in mind. There are a number of hazards (such as steep staircases and stone steps), which may have uneven surfaces because of their age, as well as horticultural machinery, glass at low level (greenhouse and associated cold frames), and open access to both Woodstock Road and the College car park. There is also a border containing 'medicinal plants', most of which are poisonous, which is located behind the squash court; please ask the gardener, Michael Pirie, or another member of staff to point this out to you if you are concerned.

The College Gym

Children under the age of 16 are not permitted in the Gym for insurance reasons. Children of 16 or over who wish to use the gym equipment will be required to complete an induction session and follow the user guidelines.
Oxford University Newcomers’ Club

This is an organization run by volunteers to welcome newly-arrived spouses and partners of University members; it holds a weekly ‘Newcomers with children’ social group (www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk).
Summary of useful contacts and links

In College

Academic Registrar       Alison Franklin       alison.franklin@gtc.ox.ac.uk
Senior Tutor             Alison Stenton       alison.stenton@gtc.ox.ac.uk
Welfare Dean             Richard McManus      richard.mcmanus@phc.ox.ac.uk
Accommodation Manager    Nick Martin         nick.martin@gtc.ox.ac.uk
Your College Adviser     See information on arrival at GTC or contact James McBain for reminder.
GCR Couples and Families Reps (2017/18)
                        Satoshi Araki       satoshi.araki@gtc.ox.ac.uk
                        Summer Qassim        summer.qassim@gtc.ox.ac.uk

GTC New Students webpage: http://www.gtc.ox.ac.uk/admissions/for-offerholders.html
GTC Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/greentempletonoxford/

In the University

Families and childcare (collection of useful links): www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/why-oxford/living-oxford/families-and-childcare

Living costs for dependants: www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts/living-costs-for-dependants

Oxford University Students Union (OUSU) Student Parents and Carers Officer: parentsandcarers@ousu.ox.ac.uk

https://www.facebook.com/groups/oxfordstudentparents/ - good for informal advice, meetups, sales/giveaways.

Oxford University Newcomers’ Club (for spouses/partners of University members; they hold a weekly ‘Newcomers with children’ social group):
www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk

Externally

19 Beaumont Street Medical Practice (the College Doctor): www.19beaumontstreet.com

Oxfordshire County Council:
https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/transferring-or-moving-different-school

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/applying-nursery-place

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/school-term-dates-and-holidays
https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-family-information-service-oxonfis - Family Services Directory - provides information about childcare, family support and activities

**Daily Info** is the single best guide to Oxford, including What’s On, second-hand sales, services, restaurants, etc: [www.dailyinfo.co.uk](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk)

If you have (or are expecting) a baby, start here: [www.dailyinfo.co.uk/oxford/guide/babybase](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/oxford/guide/babybase)