

# Policy

---

**Title:** Children and young people in the workplace

---

**From:** Human Resources/Employee Relations

**Date:** 9/2/15

---

## Introduction

The University of Southampton recognises that there are a wide variety of circumstances in which children (under the age of 16 years) and young people (aged 16-18 years) may come onto our sites and/or use the University's facilities as visitors. The University has a legal duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of its employees, students and other visitors, including children and young people, using our premises.

This policy has been developed to ensure reasonable and proportionate judgements can be made regarding access for children and young people in the workplace. It applies to all University employees.

## Policy

It is the policy of the University of Southampton that children should not normally be brought into the workplace or onto University premises unless it is for one of the valid reasons shown below. The University recognises that, from time to time, exceptions may be made and in these circumstances would ask that staff ensure:

- that prior permission from the line manager is sought to bring children onto site,
- that they are fully supervised by a responsible adult for the time they are on site,
- that University Health & Safety rules are adhered to at all times, and
- that the time the child or children are on site is kept to a minimum.

This policy applies across all University premises, including car parks and other outdoor areas. Children must not be left alone in parked vehicles at any time.

## Implementation

1. There are a number of legitimate reasons for children or young people to be on University premises. These include:
  - When attending the University operated Early Years Centre, crèche, sporting facilities, restaurants and shops
  - Where a mother has arranged for her child to come in for the purposes of breastfeeding
  - When on visits organised by the University, schools, departments or other recognised bodies, where significant risks associated with planned activities and foreseeable incidents must be assessed by the organiser, for example to attend the Nuffield Theatre, a lecture or display
  - When on school organised "work experience" periods with specific departments, where significant risks associated with planned activities and foreseeable incidents have been assessed and safe working procedures have been produced, if appropriate
  - When visiting the University as part of an educational experience in liaison with an appropriate member of University staff, where they are accompanied by teachers or other staff members from their own school, or when attending a formally arranged interview (e.g. for an Apprenticeship vacancy), where a member of University staff is responsible for their attendance and safe conduct.

In each of these situations, specific policies may apply to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure adequate induction and supervision of the child or children at all times and that appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken to ensure that potential hazards are identified and controlled as far as is reasonably practicable.

2. In all other situations, the presence of children on University premises is discouraged and should only occur exceptionally, and then only in low risk work areas and where their presence does not disrupt the normal operations of the University, its staff and students. Examples may include:
  - Brief social visits by parents with newborn babies or young children to speak to work colleagues
  - Accompanying their parent(s) to specific ceremonies or events, whether public or private, not involving hazardous activities, areas or equipment
  - Accompanying their parent (who is a University employee) to work on a brief visit, for example, when visiting for short periods (normally not expected to exceed 30 minutes) to pick up work or carry out a short term, low risk activity
  - Accompanying their parent (who is a University employee) to work for short periods (normally not expected to exceed 30 minutes) due to childcare difficulties or similar until alternative arrangements can be made, but only at the discretion of the relevant line manager and with their prior permission.
3. University premises are not designed to accommodate children and the precautions in place to control risks for the normal population are unlikely to be appropriate for children, due to their physical size, inquisitiveness, immaturity and inexperience.
4. Children **must not** be brought into the workplace for extended or frequent periods, or as an alternative to making proper arrangements for their care, which could include after-school activities, arrangements with other parents/child-minders or flexible working arrangements.
5. In the event that children are brought onto work premises, then:
  - The parent is fully responsible for the behaviour and actions of the child or children whilst on University premises
  - The parent must consult with their line manager or Head of Faculty/Professional Service about the acceptability of children being present in the workplace, even for short periods
  - The parent will be responsible at all times for the supervision of their child/children during the period that the child/children are on the work premises and will be responsible for exercising sufficient supervision to prevent any hazardous situation from arising
  - If the parent is required to leave the child or children at any time, alternative supervision by a suitably responsible adult must be arranged for that period. **Regardless of their age, children must not be left alone under any circumstances.**
  - Children must not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of the work area or the work of other employees
  - Children are not permitted to use any University equipment including computer equipment
  - Unless on a University organised work experience programme or work placement, "Open Day" event or other activity that has been adequately risk assessed by the event organiser, **children must not be allowed to enter high risk areas of the University** or areas where hazardous activities are being undertaken, hazardous equipment is accessible, hazardous substances are being used or if their presence may cause harm to the child or children. This includes areas such as:
    - laboratories
    - computer laboratories
    - kitchens or bar areas
    - workshops, studios or other areas where tools or machinery are located or used, even when not currently in use
    - any areas where chemicals, dyes, cleaning fluids or other substances covered by COSHH regulations are in use or stored

- storage cupboards
6. The Line Manager, Head of Department or other appropriate senior manager can instruct the parent to remove the child or children immediately from the work area if they have any concerns about the safety or supervision of the child or children, or if their presence is causing a distraction for others.
  7. Whilst overall responsibility for the policy implementation and review rests with the University Executive Group, day to day monitoring and enforcement of the policy lies with local Faculty/Professional Services management in their relevant areas of responsibility, supported by University Security Services if necessary.
  8. The University's disciplinary procedures may be followed if a member of staff fails to comply with this policy.

**Other useful links**

[www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/index.htm)

[University policy on Compassionate and Domestic Leave](#)

[University policy and further information on Flexible Working](#)

**Maintaining this policy**

This policy will be kept up to date and amended accordingly to reflect any changes in response to revised legislation and applicable standards and guidelines.

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years.

DATE	REV No	CONTENT	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY
February 2015	1	New policy	L Allen	JNC - January 2015