

Operational Policy and Guidance

Children and Young People in the Workplace

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy and Guidance has been developed to provide clarity regarding the presence of children and young people in the workplace whilst maintaining a professional working environment.
- 1.2 The University is committed to supporting the career progression of staff with caring responsibilities and acknowledges the importance of helping staff balance their professional responsibilities with their caring responsibilities by offering a range of flexible working and leave policies.
- 1.3 The University of York 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.
- 1.4 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.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The University recognises that, in some circumstances, visits by children to workplaces may be beneficial and/or necessary eg. for breastfeeding. Circumstances in which it is normally safe or appropriate to allow children to visit are detailed below.
- 2.2 This policy applies across the University workplace which includes but is not restricted to the following:
 - Offices
 - Laboratories
 - Kitchens and 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
 - Capital works/project or refurbishment/construction areas
- 2.3 University premises are not designed to accommodate children and the precautions in place to control risks for the studying/working population are unlikely to be appropriate for children.

3. Implementation

- 3.1 Children and young people are welcomed onto University premises to:
- Use University facilities including the Nursery, sporting facilities, restaurants, cafes, shops and green spaces
 - For the purpose of breastfeeding
 - Attends events organised by the University, schools, departments or other recognised bodies, including for the purpose of research (significant risks associated with planned activities and foreseeable incidents must be assessed by the organiser)
 - Attend school organised “work experience or planned visits” periods (specific departments, where significant risks associated with planned activities and foreseeable incidents have been assessed and safe working procedures have been applied)
 - To visit 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
- 3.2 In each of the situations at 3.1, specific policies apply to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure adequate 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.
4. In all other situations, the presence of children in University workplaces should only occur exceptionally, only in low risk work areas, where their presence does not disrupt the normal operations of the University, its staff and students and for brief periods of time (not normally expected to exceed 30 minutes). Examples include:
- Social visits by a parent, carer or guardian with newborn babies or young children to speak to work colleagues
 - Accompanying their parent, carer or guardian to specific ceremonies or events, whether public or private, not involving hazardous activities, areas or equipment
 - Occasionally accompanying their parent, carer or guardian (who is a University employee) to work for brief periods due to childcare difficulties or similar until alternative arrangements can be made
 - Accompanying their parent, carer or guardian, so that they may attend a key meeting or other important work activity

If a member of staff is in a difficult and unforeseen situation that necessitates their child being present beyond the circumstances described above, the child's presence must be agreed with the Head of Department or their nominated representative. This does not for example include reasonably foreseeable events such as school holidays.

5. In the event that children are brought into the workplace in line with the provisions detailed above, the parent, carer or guardian is fully responsible for the behaviour and actions of the child or children whilst on University premises and is responsible for exercising sufficient supervision to prevent any hazardous situation from arising. The parent, carer or guardian should ensure that:
 - they are fully supervised by a responsible adult for the time they are in the workplace
 - University Health & Safety rules are adhered to at all times
 - the time the child or children are in the workplace is kept to a minimum
 - regardless of their age, children are not left alone under any circumstances
 - children are not allowed to disrupt the normal operation of the workplace, the work of other staff and do not normally come into contact with students or customers of the University
 - children do not use any University equipment including computer equipment, except when taking part in an official activity, such as research, or a work placement
 - appropriate Safeguarding arrangements are considered

6. High Risk Areas
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 including:
 - areas where hazardous activities are being undertaken
 - areas where hazardous equipment is accessible
 - areas where hazardous substances are being used
 - areas where their presence may cause harm to the child or childrenThis includes areas such as:
 - 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
 - capital works/project or refurbishment/construction areas

7. 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 include flexible working arrangements including emergency unpaid leave. Staff should not bring their child/children into work if they are not well enough to attend school for however brief a period of time.

8. The Head of Department/nominee or other appropriate senior manager can instruct the parent, carer or guardian to remove the child or children immediately from the workplace 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.

9. Whilst overall responsibility for the policy implementation and review rests with the University Executive Board, day to day monitoring and enforcement of the policy lies with local Departmental management in their relevant areas of responsibility, supported by the Health, Safety and Security Department if necessary.
10. The University's policy detailing its commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in so far as they are engaged in university-related activities and services may be found at:
<https://www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/studentssupportservices/Safeguarding%20Policy.pdf>