GUIDANCE NOTE

The Safety of Children and Young Persons on University Premises

Many staff and students combine parenting and work or educational responsibilities and this means that there are occasions when they may wish to bring their children onto University premises. On these occasions it must be borne in mind that the University is an institute of adult learning and the buildings and grounds of its premises are not designed with children in mind.

This guidance applies to Children (and Young Persons) up to the age of 18 years, except those in full-time or part-time education or employment at the University of Sheffield and those mentioned in section B below.

A. The Legal and Liability Position

1. Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the University has responsibilities for those who are not its employees but who may be affected by its activities.

2. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the University must consider the risks associated with all its activities, and in particular to those who are especially vulnerable, e.g. children and young persons.

3. Under the Occupiers Liability Acts the University has a “duty of care” to visitors, with more care being owed to a child than an adult.

4. Should a child or young person be injured whilst on university premises, in circumstances where the University would be held legally liable, the University's liability policy will normally respond.

B. Valid Reasons for Children or Young Persons to be on University Premises

1. When attending University operated crèche, playschool, nursery school or sporting facilities.

2. 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.
3. 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 produced if appropriate.

In each of these situations satisfactory arrangements must be in place to ensure adequate induction and supervision of the children and activities undertaken by the relevant University (department or section), OR event organiser.

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 operation of the University. Examples would include: -

1. Brief social visits by parents with newborn babies or young children.

2. Accompanying parent to specific ceremonies or events, whether public or private, not involving hazardous activities, areas or equipment.

3. Accompanying parent (University employee) to work on a brief visit, e.g. when visiting for short periods to pick up work or carry out a short term low risk activity.

4. Accompanying parent (University employee) to work for short periods due to childcare difficulties or similar into a low risk environment until alternative arrangements can be made, but only at the discretion and direction of the Head of Department.

As stated previously 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 or inexperience. Children should not be brought into the workplace for extended or frequent periods or as an alternative to making proper arrangements for their care - this could include after-school activities, arrangements with other parents / childminders or flexible working arrangements.

**C. Risk Control Measures**
In the event that children are brought onto work premises, then:

1. The parent must consult with their Head of Department about the acceptability of children being present, even for short periods.

2. The parent will be responsible at all times for the supervision of their child(ren) during the period the child(ren) are on the work premises and will be responsible for exercising sufficient supervision to prevent any hazardous situation from arising.

3. Children must not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of the work area or the work of other employees.

4. Children must only be allowed into low-risk areas and must never be allowed to enter any area where hazardous activities are being undertaken, hazardous equipment or hazardous substances are being used or if their presence could cause harm to the child(ren).

5. Children must not be allowed to touch any work-related equipment, article or substance or item of waste deposited in a bin or other waste receptacle.

6. The Head of Department, Health & Safety, Security and the Building Facility Manager can instruct the parent to remove the child(ren) immediately from the work area.

7. Children under 16 years of age must not be allowed to ride on the Arts Tower Paternoster and must be accompanied whilst using any other University lifts.

8. In the University's Libraries children under 16 years of age must accompanied by a parent or adult.