

Safety of Children & Young Persons

Scope of this policy

The University is subject both to health and safety legislation and to civil law in respect of its activities. Under health and safety legislation there are requirements for the identification and avoidance/reduction of risk. The University obviously has a wide range of hazards, both between and within Schools/Departments, but their common feature is that the precautions to prevent any risk of harm arising have been designed in the context of the characteristics of the population at risk, i.e. competent, informed adults. The presence of children or young persons within University premises could, in some cases, mean that the precautions which serve well for the usual population are no longer adequate for the inexperience and immaturity of young workers or children who are brought into buildings.

Definitions of young people and children by age:

- **A young person** is anyone under 18 and
- **A child** is anyone who has not yet reached the official minimum school leaving age (MSLA). Pupils will reach the MSLA in the school year in which they turn 16.

This guidance covers two main areas:

1. [The Employment of Young Persons](#)
2. [Bringing children onto University Premises](#)

1 Employing Young Persons (including apprentices)

Although the definition of Young Person is given as above, Schools/Departments should also consider the safety of others who may be new to the working environment such as school leavers already aged 18 and those fresh out of further education who may have had no or limited work experience.

When employing a young person under the age of 18, whether for work, work experience (see separate [University policy](#)) or as an apprentice, the University has the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare as they do for other employees.

1.1 Responsibilities

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the University has a responsibility to ensure that young people employed by them are not exposed to risk due to:

- lack of experience
- being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or
- lack of maturity

In each School/Department where young persons are employed, the young person's line manager is responsible for ensuring the considerations given below are taken into account and that risk assessments and training schedules are modified to suit. Where there is significant employment of young persons, e.g. a group of apprentices are taken on each year, the school/department should formulate local policy and guidance on the safety arrangements that managers must put in place.

1.2 Safety-related Considerations

Each School or Department employing young persons must take into consideration:

- the layout of the workplace
- the physical, biological and chemical agents they will be exposed to
- how they will handle work equipment
- how the work and processes are organised
- the extent of health and safety training needed
- risks from particular agents, processes and work

Whilst the above are clearly straightforward in a low-risk environment such as an office or classroom, more in-depth consideration of the risks is needed in higher-risk environments such as laboratories, workshops or fieldwork sites and the Schools/Departments employing young persons must review risk assessments to take the above into account. In some cases, it may be best to produce a specific risk assessment for the young worker(s).

1.3 Induction and Training for Young Persons

The initial key control measures are likely to involve induction, training and supervision. Schools and Departments will need to consider the content of their safety induction and training programme for Young Persons and the timely provision of this is crucial if the Young Person is to be involved in practical work activity (particularly workshops and laboratories) at an early stage.

1.4 Specific issues to consider (Reference [HSE information](#))

The line manager for the young worker needs to consider whether the work the young person will do:

1. is beyond their physical or psychological capacity:
 - a. this could be as simple as checking a young person is capable of safely lifting weights and of remembering and following instructions.
2. involves harmful exposure to substances that are toxic, can cause cancer, can damage or harm an unborn child, or can chronically affect human health in any other way:
 - a. be aware of substances a young person might come into contact with in their work, consider exposure levels and ensure legal limits are met.
3. involves harmful exposure to radiation:
 - a. ensure a young person's exposure to radiation is restricted and does not exceed the allowed dose limit.
4. involves risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training:
 - a. a young person might be unfamiliar with 'obvious' risks.
 - b. one of the key ways to ensure the above is well managed is to consider the need for tailored training/closer supervision.
5. has a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration

In most cases, young people will not be at any greater risk than adults and for workplaces that include these hazards it is likely there will already be control measures in place.

Please note:

A **child** must never carry out work involving the above risks, whether they are permanently employed or under training such as work experience.

A young person, who is not a child, can carry out work involving these risks if:

- the work is necessary for their training;
- the work is properly supervised by a competent person;
- the risks are reduced to the lowest level, so far as reasonably practicable.

Providing supervision for young workers and monitoring their progress will help managers identify where additional adjustments may be needed.

The School/Department must let the parents or guardians of any **child** know the possible risks and the measures put in place to control them. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and suitable, including verbally.

1.5 Working hours and young workers

Working hours are not governed by health and safety law. Young people and children have different employment rights from adult workers and are subject to protections in relation to the hours they can work.

More information is available from Human Resources

1.6 Other regulations

Children below the minimum school leaving age (MSLA) must not be employed in industrial workplaces such as factories, construction sites etc., except when on work experience.

Children under 13 are generally prohibited from any form of employment. Local authorities have powers to make bye-laws on the types of work, and hours of work, children aged between 13 and the MSLA can do.

2 Children brought onto University Premises

2.1 Scope of this section

This section aims to provide guidance for Schools/Departments on the circumstances under which children and young persons, i.e. those under 18 years of age, may be allowed to accompany their parents on to the premises. Arrangements to ensure the safety of children and young persons on University premises. The following guidelines describe the action which Schools/Departments should take in order to prevent children from being exposed to danger whilst on University premises. For the purposes of this Policy, the term "children" also includes young persons, i.e. 16 to 18 year olds.

Members of the University should be discouraged from bringing their children in to University premises except for social purposes such as organised functions or brief visits with newborn babies etc. which are restricted to low hazard areas.

2.2 Responsibilities

The bringing of children onto University premises at other times, a typical example is their accompanying the parent/carer whilst at work due to child care difficulties, should be at the sole discretion of the Head of School/Department who may implement more restrictive arrangements than those described in this document.

Members of the University wishing their children to accompany them under such circumstances should notify the Head of School/Department who may or may not grant permission. Please see the form which may be used for this purpose ([LINK](#)).

2.3 The criteria for the granting, or otherwise, of permission would include:

- The safety of the work area, not only the particular room to which the parent/carer would be bringing the child(ren)
- The proximity to hazardous areas and whether access to the room from the building's entrance is safe.
- The effect that having children present could have on people working in the vicinity. For example, distractions can have resultant safety implications.
- The particular circumstances of the case, e.g. ages and number of children, duration and frequency.

Guidance on interpreting the above criteria:

1. Children should not be allowed under any circumstances to accompany parents in to high risk areas. High risk areas are those where hazards may be encountered which are not present in the domestic environment. They include laboratories, workshops, catering style kitchens and the vicinity of the Farm buildings at Sutton Bonington;
2. Children MAY be allowed into low hazard areas, i.e. those areas where the nature of any hazards present is similar to the domestic environment. Examples include foyers, restaurants, social areas and lecture theatres (public lectures). The public areas of the University's "public buildings", i.e. Portland Building, Libraries, are also low hazard.
3. Offices which are under the sole occupation of the parent could also be defined as low hazard, providing there are no hazards such as chemicals or equipment other than normal office equipment. Under these circumstances the parent should be fully aware of potential problems and would be expected to remove or otherwise deal with them prior to their children being present;
4. Communal offices would not normally be deemed low hazard since the parent may not be in a position to be aware of all the hazards and take the necessary preventative action. There is also likely to be a larger range of office equipment and electrical devices present. There should be consultation with the line manager in order to confirm the acceptability of children being present.
5. In some circumstances sole occupancy offices may be located off laboratory or workshop areas. Furthermore, some offices open off corridors which themselves are part of a laboratory or workshop suite. Such situations may render the offices high hazard areas.

6. The public areas of the University's "public buildings" are defined as low hazard since the nature of any hazards present is similar to those which may be encountered in everyday life. There is consequently no restriction on parents being accompanied by their children in these areas, although the need for vigilance and supervision remains.

2.4 Responsibilities of parents / carers

At all times whilst accompanied by their children, the parent is required to exercise sufficient supervision so as to prevent any hazardous situations from arising. This includes their being immediately available to intervene if necessary. Children must not be left unsupervised under any circumstances and cover for any brief absences must be obtained. The parent would be required to pay particular attention during transit through the building, especially with small children, since the premises are designed for an adult population.

Stairs and landings are hazardous areas for children under any circumstances, and although those at the University conform to the various building standards, they may not have been designed with the protection of children in mind. Routes which involve passing through high risk areas must be avoided.

[Authorisation Form](#) for request permission to bring children into University Buildings.

2.5 Insurance

The University's civil liability is covered by insurance against any injuries sustained as a part of its activity. This would, amongst other things, indemnify a member of the University whose work activity affected a child of another member of the University, whether the child was or was not permitted in that area.