

# Children on University Premises

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The University has a “duty of care” for the health and safety of all visitors to its premises. In general University premises are not designed with the attendance of children in mind, this procedure details steps to ensure the safety of children brought on to University premises. The procedure is primarily aimed at “unplanned” / ad hoc attendance of children. It is not intended to restrict the attendance of children at planned events.

## 2. SCOPE

2.1 These arrangements apply on all occasions when children are present on University premises and are effective from 1 August 2014.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

<b>Child/children</b>	Applies to persons between birth and age 16 years and school children up to 18 years of age.
<b>University Premises</b>	Includes all buildings, grounds, roadways, vehicles and other means of transport
<b>Supervising Adult</b>	An adult who brings a child onto University premises for an event that is not a “planned event”
<b>Planned Event</b>	An official event or occasion for which arrangements to deal with children have been specifically considered

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

### Vice-Chancellor

- 4.1 On behalf of the Council the Vice-Chancellor has executive responsibility to ensure, that the requirements of the health and safety

legislation and the University health and safety policy are complied with. The Vice-Chancellor will ensure that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned and accepted at all levels within the University.

### Deans / Heads of Schools / Administrative Departments and Research Institute Directors

- 4.2 Deans / Heads of Schools / Administrative Departments and Research Institute Directors are responsible for the implementation of this procedure within their functional area.

## 5. PLANNED EVENTS

- 5.1 Children may be on university premises for a number of official events and/or occasions, such as:
- When using University sporting facilities;
  - 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;
  - When on school organised “work experience” periods with specific departments;
  - Graduation ceremonies;
  - Staying in University accommodation.
- 5.2 In each of these situations satisfactory arrangements must be in place to ensure adequate supervision of the children and activities undertaken by the relevant University department, school or event organiser. Where appropriate this includes the appointment of an Event Safety Controller and completion of risk assessments. With all these events it is crucial to ensure compliance with the University’s Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

## 6. OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN CHILDREN MAY BE PRESENT

- 6.1 In all other situations, the presence of children on University premises should only occur in **exceptional** circumstances, and then only in low risk areas. In such circumstances children must not be admitted to laboratories, workshops, studios, kitchens or other hazardous areas.

Examples would include:

- Brief social visits by parents with new-born babies or young children;
- Accompanying parent to specific ceremonies or events, whether public or private, not involving hazardous activities, areas or equipment;
- 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;
- Accompanying parent to Library facility or other open access area.

- 6.2 In these cases an adult who brings a child onto the university premises is personally responsible for the care and supervision of that child for the time that the child is onsite. As such the University requires that the child must remain under the supervision of that adult at all times.

- 6.2 Children should not be brought into the workplace for extended or frequent periods or as an alternative to making proper childcare arrangements.

- 6.3 The University has a range of flexible working arrangements to assist new and expectant mothers. Facilities are provided on each campus for rest and to encourage breastfeeding:- Jordanstown O6C74, Belfast 82A23, Coleraine H128A and Magee MD015B, although the University supports breastfeeding in any low risk area.

## 7. UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

- 7.1 Due to the open nature of our premises, unaccompanied children can gain access to our campuses, e.g. as a short cut. In these circumstances it is the University's duty to ensure that access can only be gained to low risk areas. If children are observed entering a higher risk area, e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios, kitchens or other hazardous areas, or behaving in a way that is likely to cause a danger to themselves or others, then their presence or behaviour should be challenged by staff. Where it is considered that this action could exacerbate the situation the matter should be reported to security staff as soon as possible, who may consequently contact PSNI or other agencies.

## **8.      DISRUPTION OF UNIVERSITY BUSINESS**

- 8.1      In addition to any health and safety requirements, in order to ensure the efficient running of University business, any adult who brings a child onto our premises will be responsible for ensuring that the child does not in any way disrupt the normal work of the university. Therefore, although the risk may be low, children are not normally permitted to be at lectures, seminars or other teaching activities. Likewise in other areas, e.g. libraries, the supervising adult may be asked to remove a disruptive child from the premises.