

POLICY ON THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN ON UNIVERSITY PREMISES



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1. Introduction

The design of buildings and the precautions to prevent accidents and injuries within the University have in general been designed with the adult population in mind. These precautions could in some cases be inadequate for children because of their inexperience, size or inquisitiveness. It is important to remember that a greater duty of care is owed to children than to adults.

2. Policy

Children are prohibited from university premises other than in circumstances as outlined in section 6 “Exceptions” and section 9 “Work experience”.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Senior ‘Key’ Person as defined in the University Health and Safety Manual to ensure that an appropriate compliance strategy is in place for areas under their control. The compliance strategy should include a procedure for the construction of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

4. Application

The policy applies to staff, students, contractors and visitors to the university who may wish to bring children onto the premises.

5. Definition

Children are persons under 16 years of age.

6. Exceptions

Children are permitted in the following areas, subject to the provision of effective supervision by a responsible adult and a suitable and sufficient risk assessment having been constructed:

- a) Facilities specifically designed for children.
- b) Events open to the general public (these might include theatre productions, exhibitions, open days etc.).
- c) Facilities which are open to children (this might include swimming pools and sports facilities).
- d) Organised educational visits by children.
- e) During a brief visit to areas defined as low risk by a risk assessment.

7. Risk Assessment

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment will need to consider the following:

- a. Age – The age of children is an important consideration (especially when assessing the risks identified in the 'All areas' section below).
- b. High risk work areas – (laboratories, workshops, kitchens and studios)
The risk of injury and how this is to be effectively controlled.
- c. All areas - The risk of falls from stairs, landings and windows. The risk of injury from glass and glazing (the results of building surveys undertaken by Estate Planning Services must be used in the risk assessment exercise).
- d. Supervision – The provision of effective supervision. The level and type of supervision will be dependent on the degree of risk.
- e. Information – The provision of relevant information e.g. notices posters, leaflets and verbal instructions.

The assessment must reach a conclusion regarding whether or not the risk control measures are considered effective. If the risk control measures are not considered effective then children must be prohibited.

The risk assessment must be signed and dated.

8. Notices

The following notice should be posted at the entrances to each university building:

CAUTION

**University buildings are not designed for children under 16.
Children must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult.
Access to high-risk areas is by prior arrangement only.**

9. Work experience

The University will consider requests from children for work experience. Managers who wish to act as placement providers must undertake an induction and plan the work activities that will be undertaken. Risk assessments must be reviewed and amended where necessary. The assessment must consider that children require a greater duty of care and that some work activities such as operating dangerous machines in workshops or kitchens is prohibited by law.

10. Support

The Health and Safety Unit can assist assessors in the construction of suitable and sufficient risk assessments.

11. Useful Links and Further Information

- Information from HSE's Policy Unit on managing health and safety on work experience: a guide for organisers

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/policy/workexp.htm>

- Young people at work - a guide for employers (HSE (G) 165 (rev))
ISBN 0-7176-1889-7
This book is available in the MMU on line library

- Office for Standards in Education

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

Appendix – Standards relevant to the safety of children

This is only an extract of some of the standards relevant to the safety of children. Risk assessment must be based on advice given in building surveys undertaken by Estate Planning Services.

Falls (especially from staircases and landings)

- Guarding is required to prevent falls from a distance likely to cause injury (for example guarding is required on stairs where there are 2 or more risers).
- Guarding is not suitable for children under 5 years old if it has spaces which allow a sphere of greater than 100mm to pass through it.
- Guarding is not suitable for children if it encourages climbing (for example if it has horizontal rails).
- Guarding should be 1100mm high on landings and 900 - 1000mm high on stairs.
- Guarding within 530mm in front of fixed theatre or gallery seating should be either 800mm high **or** may be 750mm high **if** it has a sill which renders the total dimension at least 975mm.

Where there is a risk of children falling from windows then openings should not open more than 100mm.

Glazing

Glass in critical areas must **either** resist breakage **or** break safely **or** be protected against breakage (i.e. be guarded).

Critical areas are:

- from floor level to 800mm in internal and external walls and partitions
- from floor level to 1500mm in a door or side panel close to the door

Glass in small panes is exempt from this requirement. The smaller dimension of small panes must be less than 250mm and the total area must be less than 0.5m². The glass must be not less than 6mm thick unless it is leaded glass in which case 4mm thick is acceptable.

Glazing in critical areas should be manifest in order to avoid accidental contact.

Childcare

Provision of non-domestic childcare to under 8 year olds for more than 2 hours a day and more than 5 days a year must be **registered** with Ofsted. If the provision is 5 days or less per year it must be **notified** to Ofsted.

Advice on childcare is available from Ofsted and from Local Authorities. Note that temporary crèche facilities may be provided by the local authority (e.g. facility available at Manchester Town Hall).