

## Guidance Notes on Bringing Children onto Aston University Premises

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Aston University is an institution of higher education and research with a large staff/student population and, as such, its buildings have been designed and built for use by adults. Many of the hazards present (eg the building layout, the equipment/machinery, the chemical/biological materials etc) would, in most cases, be considered non-child friendly. In addition, children are more vulnerable to environmental exposure: they are naturally inquisitive and are normally inexperienced.
- 1.2 The University recognises that, under certain circumstances, there will be times when staff and students have no alternative but to bring their children (or children under their responsibility) to the University. This guidance document attempts to balance this need with the requirements of health and safety regulations; it does not, nor is it its intention, to prevent staff or students bringing children on its premises, but to ensure their safety and the safety of others should they be present.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, forms the regulatory framework for health and safety throughout the UK. In particular, it imposes duties on the University to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, those who are not employees (ie the general public), can use the premises without risk to their health or safety. Similarly, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, require the University to make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of non-employees who may be affected by its undertaking and to ensure that appropriate safety management systems are in place.
- 2.2 From an insurance perspective, the University insurers have confirmed that the children of staff and/or students fall under a general visitor category, and the institution's legal liability cover will operate, should the children suffer a loss arising from the responsibilities and/or activities of the institution for which it could be held to be legally liable.
- 2.3 Any queries about insurance cover should be raised with Alan Hawkesworth on 0121 204 4387 email [a.p.hawkesworth@aston.ac.uk](mailto:a.p.hawkesworth@aston.ac.uk).

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 Children are defined as being aged from 0 to 18 years
- 3.2 This guidance is only concerned with children of staff or students coming onto University premises. It excludes children who are simply travelling across the campus. It also excludes children who may be present for other reasons such as:
- Subject of a study or as a client/patient (or a child of a client or patient) eg Health clinics; Aston Day Hospital or Aston Brain Centre
  - University Nursery
  - “Open” days and similar events
  - Work experience
  - Social occasions eg Christmas/leaving parties etc
  - Sports events

These are subject to separate arrangements.

### **4. General Considerations**

- 4.1. Apart from problems with child care arrangements, a member of staff might bring in a new baby to show work colleagues, a student may have a child with them when returning or renewing a library book or submitting a piece of course work. A parent/guardian might already be at the University when the child needs to be with them. In this last case, the child must remain at a suitable location with the person bringing them in until they are collected by the parent/guardian.
- 4.2. Regardless of the reason for bringing the child to the University, it should be viewed as a short term solution and where longer term arrangements (eg annual leave, unpaid leave, working from home, absence from lectures or practicals) are necessary, they must be made with the approval of the appropriate school/department or tutor. In some cases the ‘Compassionate Leave/Emergency Care of Dependants Leave Agreement’ or the ‘Parental Leave Agreement’ could be applicable for staff. For further information, see the Human Resources web site.

### **5. General Procedures**

- 5.1. Executive Deans/Heads of Departments have ultimate responsibility for Health & Safety within the areas they control. They will therefore need to decide whether to permit children in their areas. If permission is granted, it is likely they will delegate the day to day responsibility to other responsible persons (eg line managers for staff and academic supervisors for students). However, regardless of what administrative arrangements are agreed locally, it is important to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken and that adequate control measures are in place.
- 5.2. Children should be excluded from:
- Laboratories
  - Workshops

- Lecture theatres/seminar rooms
- Meeting rooms
- Computer rooms
- Silent study areas such as the Library
- Kitchens/rest rooms
- Plant rooms
- Any other area considered to be medium to high risk

- 5.3. Schools/Departments may consider this guidance does not fully meet their requirements or may wish to include additional exclusions or other control measures. In this case, a local procedural document should be prepared which follows the principles set out below:
- Where possible parents or guardians should seek and obtain prior permission from schools/departments before bringing children on University premises
  - Children must be under constant supervision by the parent or guardian or by someone delegated by the parent or guardian to supervise them
  - Making adequate arrangements for the supervision of children is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian
  - Children must not impede the work of others; they should be kept in the parent/guardian's work area and they must not inconvenience or endanger staff, students or other visitors
  - Children must not be allowed to play in areas such as corridors, lift lobbies or staircases. They must also be kept away from windows
  - Children must never operate lift machinery or ride unaccompanied in lifts
  - Children who have previously been disruptive or parents or guardians who do not follow this guidance (or school/department procedures) could be asked to leave and could be refused access in the future
  - Where space restrictions limit the number of people able to make use of particular facilities, then the needs staff or students must always take priority

## **6. What To Do Next**

- 6.1. Schools/Departments should decide whether or not to permit children in their area of responsibility.
- 6.2. Schools/Departments should identify those areas from which children should be excluded (see Section 5) and those areas where children could be permitted.
- 6.3. Protocols should be developed and communicated to staff/students outlining what they need to do to request permission to bring children into their area.
- 6.4. Schools/Departments need to identify which managers/supervisors are responsible, on a day-to-day basis, for permitting children to their area.

- 6.5. Schools/Departments will need to complete generic risk assessment and ensure that arrangements are in place to assess and deal with dynamic risks:
- **Generic Risk Assessment** – highlights commonly identified hazards (ie things with the potential to cause harm) and outlines the control measures/precautions (ie ways of reducing the likelihood of the hazard causing harm).
  - **Dynamic Risk Assessment** – a continuous assessment of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident, in order to implement the control measures necessary to ensure an acceptable level of safety.

**Version Control:**

Reference Number	Version No	Date	Executive Lead	Author	Consideration by	Notes
CHIL/2016/1	1	11/03/2016	CEO	J Tyrrell (Associate Director of HR)	Consultation with TUs, SU, Student Services	No previous guidance  Issued in March 2016