

CHILDREN ON UNIVERSITY OF READING PREMISES

INTRODUCTION

The University of Reading has a common law and statutory duty to protect all those who come onto our premises. As a higher education establishment the main users of our premises are over the age of 18. However there are many reasons why children or young persons may be present on campus. While wishing to support and promote legitimate educational activities, the University is a place of work, and its buildings are generally not designed for children.

LEGISLATION

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 imposes a duty on employers and those responsible for premises, to ensure that their premises are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to others. The University's responsibilities cannot be delegated in their entirety to those adults who bring or allow children onto campus and who are responsible for supervising them e.g. parents.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, defines a young person as anyone under the age of 18 and a child as anyone below the minimum school leaving age (currently 16). There is a specific requirement in the regulations to consider young persons/ children in an employer's risk assessment, where necessary.

POLICY

- i. Where it is intended that children or young persons should visit the University, such as for organised educational or social events, a risk assessment must be prepared by the School/ Function. The risk assessment must include consideration of the activity; the location; the safety of the built environment for children, and in particular for children under the age of five, if appropriate; any specific safety or health risks that would make a child or young person more vulnerable; the level and nature of supervision; the immaturity and vulnerability of children and young persons in unfamiliar surroundings; and the possibility of disruption that may disturb work, study or other activities at the University.
- ii. The inappropriate attendance of children in the workplace is discouraged. Notwithstanding this, all buildings which have open access to children must include consideration of children in the risk assessment for the building. The Head of School/ Function must approve the assessment.

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- iii. Children must never be allowed to enter "high hazard" areas such as research laboratories or operational workshops unaccompanied. Older children may be allowed to enter laboratories or workshops for educational reasons e.g. work experience, subject to a suitable risk assessment, and only with the specific permission of the laboratory or workshop supervisor. They must be under direct supervision and there must be no work in progress which presents a specific danger to children e.g. work with radiation. In an office or other low risk environment, prior permission must be obtained from the local manager.
- iv. Responsibility for supervision during informal visits lies with the adult (parent, guardian etc.) who brings the child onto university premises. Adequate control and supervision must be exercised over children at all times while they are on university premises to ensure the safety of the child and to minimise disruption to others at work or study. Failure to do so may result in the parents/guardian and child having to leave the premises. It is not acceptable to consider bringing a child into work as an alternative to child care.
- v. In residential accommodation, University staff responsible for taking bookings for groups that include children must ensure that the accommodation, including any sleeping accommodation such as in Halls of Residence, is suitable for children.
- vi. Where buildings are being designed or refurbished, consideration should be given to whether children are likely to visit the building frequently, in particular for official visits e.g. to attend a public lecture/ performance/ event. Where this is the case, Building Regulations should be complied with, where they impose an absolute requirement with regard to designing for children. Consideration should be given to other aspects of the Building Regulations where good practice suggests provision should be made for children.

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Chair, Health and Safety Committee
Deputy Vice Chancellor
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Version control

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