

To Vice-President/Deans, Heads of Schools, HoFAs, Heads of School Administration, Directors of Administration, Heads/Directors of JRUL, Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery, Jodrell Bank Visitor Centre

From Dr David Barker, Head of Compliance and Risk

Date 28 August 2007

cc Registrar & Secretary, Prof M Case, Dr S A Robson, School Safety Advisors, Safety Representatives

Reference Safety Circular 10/2007

University Procedure : Safeguarding Children on University Premises

Please find attached a new University Procedure. I would be grateful if you would distribute it within your areas. It is issued under our new arrangements for streamlining policies and procedures, and describes a framework for managing the presence of children, primarily to protect children from harm, but also to ensure that good and consistent practice is implemented across the campus.

The need for such a procedure has been clearly illustrated by two recent incidents where teenagers were injured and taken to hospital from organised events taking place on University premises. The procedure has been approved by the University's Risk and Emergency Management Group and Risk Committee and endorsed by the University's Health and Safety Committee.

In time, we intend to incorporate this procedure into an overarching policy on child protection which will cover the topic in a more comprehensive manner. It is not the intention of this policy to prevent children from being present on campus, nor to make the process overly-bureaucratic. However, given recent events, it is imperative that the presence of any child on campus is covered by a properly considered Risk Assessment.

If you have any queries regarding this procedure, then I can be contacted on david.barker@manchester.ac.uk (ext. 55798).



Dr David Barker
Head of Compliance and Risk

Health and Safety Services

Procedure on Safeguarding Children on University Premises

Introduction

This document sets out University procedure and provides guidance on ensuring the safety of children on University property. University property includes all University buildings and grounds that are occupied by staff for purposes connected with the activity of the University. It should be read in conjunction with the suite of documents dealing with all aspects of child protection at the University. It is in addition to the general health and safety policy and procedures which deal with the University's duty of care to staff, students and visitors including children, and the range of health & safety statutory responsibilities, including the need for risk assessments.

For the purposes of this procedure, the legal definition of "child" in health and safety legislation is used. A child is someone under school leaving age (generally under 16 years of age). Children are known to be vulnerable to accidental injury because of their lack of experience and knowledge of working environments. This is recognised in common law and statute, and the duty of care towards children is consequently greater.

Exemptions to this procedure

This procedure is not intended for buildings where children are normally present or invited as visitors such as Jodrell Bank, Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery, Botanical Experimental Grounds or for halls of residence or catering outlets used by the public.

It does not apply to circumstances where children are brought onto premises as part of a structured and supervised visit (eg work experience, public lectures, clinical purposes, or degree and other open days, etc).

However, in all cases exempted from this policy, a risk assessment must be carried out and recorded under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The risk assessment must address the vulnerability of children in unfamiliar circumstances.

The University's risk assessment form and notes are at

<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance/RiskAssessmentForm.doc>

The HR website provides links to various policies on family friendly working arrangements and support, at <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/policies/familyfriendly/>

Arrangements

The University of Manchester welcomes and encourages supervised visits by young people to a higher education environment, and provides a wide range of educational activities for children and young persons most notably at Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery, Botanical Experimental Grounds and Jodrell Bank.

However, many university buildings have not been designed with children in mind, and do not comply with current building regulations applicable when the presence of children is anticipated. There are physical hazards (such as widely spaced guarding on stairwells and mezzanine floors, or open loading bays), and places of work which require awareness of specific hazards of all kinds (such as laboratories, workshops, etc). Also, staff and students do not expect to encounter children whilst moving a variety of goods around common parts and corridors, and vision panels are seldom full door height.

For these reasons, in order to comply with common law, and the University's duties under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and other statutes, it is neither advisable nor appropriate for anyone to bring children into University buildings.

If, under exceptional circumstances, children are brought into University buildings, they must be accompanied and appropriately supervised by their parent / guardian at all times. The University discourages staff from requesting work colleagues to supervise their children, as asking others to fulfill a supervisory role may not be welcomed by the other person and/or may trigger the requirement for a check to be made with the Criminal Records Bureau,.

For young (and particularly, for mobile) children, the supervision must be very close and continuously attentive. For older children more discretion may be exercised, but in any case, the degree of supervision should be based on a risk assessment carried out before the visit. A competently completed risk assessment will normally exclude children from laboratory and workshop environments, and from other areas where awareness and understanding of hazards and their controls is required.

Depending on their local hazards and arrangements, individual HOSs and managers may wish to make additional stipulations covering issues such as

- approval of risk assessments (for example, requiring them to be submitted for their own approval)
- preparation of generic risk assessments
- the option of allowing staff to work at home, where this is compatible with work commitments
- signing in/out procedures and informing key personnel, and
- prohibiting the presence of children in specific areas of high risk

All members of staff have a general duty of care towards children who could be at risk of injury, and should take action if they observe children who are not appropriately supervised. Normally, observations should be reported to the HOS or their nominee, or to the school safety advisor.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Procedure on Safeguarding Children on University Premises
Date approved:	(tbc)
Approving body:	Board of Governors
Implementation date:	(tbc)
Version:	1.0
Supersedes:	
Previous review dates:	
Next review date:	Upon any significant change, and development of overarching policy on child protection
Equality impact outcome	Medium
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 University of Manchester Statute XII(g) University of Manchester Statute XIII, Part III to do with disciplinary procedures for members of staff General Regulations, Regulation XVII, 3(f) and 5(a) to do with misconduct of students
Related Policies:	Overarching policy on child protection - tbc
Related Procedures and Guidance:	
Policy owner:	Dr S A Robson, Director of Health & Safety Services
Lead contact:	Dr M J Taylor, University Safety Advisor
Further information:	