



University of
Chester

Protocol Regarding Babies or Children on University Premises

Purpose and Scope

This protocol provides a framework for managing the presence of children (including babies) on University property. The University is predominantly an adult environment and this protocol is intended to ensure that risks relating to children are minimised, whilst allowing children to participate in relevant University activities and events under appropriate supervision.

This should be read in conjunction with the University's Safeguarding Policy. It is in addition to the general Health and Safety Policy and procedures which are concerned with the University's duty of care to staff, students and visitors including children, and the range of health and safety statutory responsibilities, including the need for risk assessments.

For policy relating to the admission of students under 18, please refer to the University's Under 18's Code of Practice.

Definitions

University premises includes all University buildings and grounds that are occupied by staff and students for purposes connected with the activity of the University.

For the purposes of this protocol, 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.

Approach and Key Principles

The University of Chester welcomes and encourages supervised visits by young people to a higher education environment, and provides a wide range of educational, sporting and wellbeing activities for children and young persons, for example through the Outreach Team. However, many university buildings have not been designed with children in mind. These are buildings which require awareness of specific hazards of all kinds (such as laboratories). Also, staff and students do not expect to encounter children whilst moving a variety of goods around common areas 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 Act 1974 and other statutes, the

University does not normally expect staff and students to bring their children onto campus. Where children are brought onto campus by visitors, this is normally expected to be as part of a scheduled outreach, conferencing or similar event, with associated event risk assessments in place that explicitly allow for the presence of children.

The University recognises that there may be occasions where a member of staff or a student has to bring their child onto campus. However, this should not be done on a regular basis and children must be accompanied and under close and continuous supervision by their parent / guardian at all times. Examples of appropriate, occasional visits, may include staff and students bringing their children onto campus for brief informal visits such as to show a new baby to colleagues, or as part of a scheduled event that is specifically designated as family-friendly. **Students are not allowed to bring their children into lectures, seminars, work placements or any other teaching activities.**

Exemptions

This protocol does not apply to circumstances where children are brought onto premises as part of a structured and supervised visit (e.g. Outreach Activities, Marketing and Recruitment activities such as Open Days and conference activity which may include the provision of accommodation to families etc) or where children are accompanied in public access areas. The University Nursery has its own safeguarding procedures and protocols, as does Sports and Active Lifestyle, where their activities relate to the provision of organised activities for under 18s.

However, in all cases exempted from this statement, a risk assessment must be carried out and must address the vulnerability of children in unfamiliar circumstances.

Support

Members of staff can contact their line manager or HR Business Partner for advice relating to childcare arrangements and flexible working. Students can contact the Wellbeing and Mental Health team for support in this area. Our University is breast feeding friendly in all cafes and public access spaces and, private rooms for breast feeding are available on request.

Should any safeguarding concerns arise regarding the presence of children on campus, these should be reported to the relevant departmental Safeguarding Coordinator, or to a Safeguarding Operational or Strategic Lead (see Safeguarding Policy for contact information).