

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY UNIT**

### **POLICY NOTE: OHSU P15 (2002)**

### **CODE OF PRACTICE: CHILDREN ON UNIVERSITY PROPERTY**

#### **Introduction**

This Code of Practice sets out University Policy and arrangements and provides guidance on ensuring the safety of children on University property. University property includes all University buildings and grounds, and all property that is occupied by University staff for purposes connected with the activity of the institution. The Code does not deal with 'home working'.

This Code also advises on off-site activities lead by University Departments. The code is not applicable for buildings that are leased out by the University to individuals or organisations that have no association to the institution.

For the purposes of this Code of Practice children include infants and a child under the age of 16 years and Departments encompass all University Resource Centres.

#### **Index**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>General Issues</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Risk Assessments and Local Rules</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Specific Guidance:</b>
5.1.1	Science laboratories and Workshops
5.1.2	Work Experience
5.1.3	Children in Halls of Residence
5.1.4	Playgroups, Crèche, Nursery Facilities and Voluntary Groups
5.1.5	Children Attending Concerts and Events
5.1.6.	Sporting Events and Activities
5.1.7	University grounds
5.1.8	Children of Students and Visitors
5.1.9	Children of Staff
5.2.0	Contractors
5.2.2	Unauthorised Children
Appendix 1:	Example of a typical 'Risk Assessment'
Appendix 2:	Example of typical >Local Rules=

## **1.0 Background**

There is little doubt that children require general supervision whenever they are on University premises and that additional supervision and controls are required whilst they are in areas that may be considered potentially hazardous. This document seeks to assist Heads of Departments in meeting their responsibilities and provides guidance for all University members of staff on what should be borne in mind when they consider bringing children onto University property and whilst on Departmental lead activities.

The University has a duty through Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, and its subordinate Regulations, to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the safety of children whilst on University property and whilst participating in University led activities. For this purpose this Code of Practice provides guidance and advice on what control measures may be required to ensure their safety.

## **2.0 Responsibility**

The University, as the employer and the organisation in control of premises, has a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, students and visitors that may be affected by its undertaking. In accordance with the University Health and Safety Policy, day-to-day responsibility for implementing this Code of Practice lies with the Head of Department for all areas under his or her control.

## **3.0 General**

Within many Departments it may be commonplace to work with children or have children visiting the Departments areas of responsibility for all manners of activities. These could include:

- \$ Research involving children;
- \$ Teacher training practice/practical;
- \$ Schools visits;
- \$ Work and student experience;
- \$ Career and learning guidance;
- \$ Playgroups and crèche;
- \$ Children accompanying authorised visitors;
- \$ Temporary childcare difficulties of a member of staff;
- \$ Sporting events and activities;
- \$ Children staying in halls of residence;
- \$ Children attending functions and events run at the University; and
- \$ Children of students.

Many activities are unavoidable and in some cases are fundamental parts of teaching or research work.

As this Code of Practice deals with the control of authorised children on University property it does not deal in any great detail with the control of unauthorised visitors, however reference is made to general requirements upon the University.

In general, parents/guardian(s) should not bring children onto University property whilst at the same time undertaking formal activities as an employee or student of the University.

It should be noted that under no circumstance should children be permitted onto University premises without suitable and sufficient adult supervision and/or local controls.

#### 4.0 Risk Assessments and Local Rules

The Code of Practice, in line with the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, introduces a general requirement upon all Heads of Department to ensure that a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the hazards associated with children within their Department and to ensure that adequate controls are in place to secure the safety of children.

The risks associated with children on University property relate to the child=s perception of risk and the inherent dangers associated with many of the institutions activities and undertakings.

The purpose of local rules and risk assessments is to provide some written guidance on what should be done to control children having considered what harm could befall them whilst at the University. Local rules and risk assessments should consider the hazards associated with the activities of the Department, its environment and the potential for children to be harmed or put at risk.

Local rules and risk assessments must consider the following issues:

- § The circumstances where children may be permitted within building(s) which the Department occupies and on Departmental led off-site activities;
- § The level of adult supervision, including their experience and capabilities\*;
- § The organisation of processes and activities where children may be affected;
- § The fitting-out and layout of the area or workplace;
- § The extent of the health and safety information provided, or to be provided, to the children concerned and/or their supervisors;
- § Prohibited areas (these may include science laboratories, hazardous storage areas, workshops and plant rooms and will always include Radiation Laboratories and Containment Level 2&3 biological laboratories);
- § Physical characteristics, such as potential falls from height and potential of items in communal areas that could cause harm. *Staircases in particular should be considered as potentially hazardous and it must be considered that any openings between spindles/balustrade are assessed to ensure that no child may fall between them (100mm)\*\*;*
- § Numbers of children to be permitted;
- § First aid and emergency arrangements;
- § Emergency arrangements and evacuation procedures;
- § The purpose and necessity for permitting children onto University property; and
- § The practicalities and implications of imposing a comprehensive prohibition of children within buildings or areas (blanket prohibitions are not encouraged as they are unlikely to be entirely enforceable).

*\*Please also note that Adult/child ratios should reflect the level of assistance necessary to safely evacuate and control children in the event of an emergency as well as for the visit/activity.*

*\*\*Please note that the majority of University buildings are **not** designed to accommodate children and therefore it is imperative that the suitability of a building for accommodating children is assessed thoroughly during the risk assessment process.*

## Risk Assessments

The risk assessment must also take into account the inexperience, lack of awareness of potential risks and the immaturity of children and must consider all envisaged circumstances.

Guidance on how to undertake a risk assessment can be found in the University Guidance Note OHSUG1 (Revised 1996) - Guidance Notes on Risk Assessments. Further guidance can also be found within the University Policy Note OHSU P9 - Young Persons at Work; where children are expected to undertake practical activities.

An example of a typical theoretical risk assessment is given as Appendix 1 of this Code of Practice. *This should be used as a guide to what is required but it must be considered that the example is not suitable and sufficient for Departments and must be supplemented by the specific requirements for the areas assessed.*

## Local rules

Local Rules should be no more than a list of common sense statements that clearly and effectively state the ***dos and don'ts*** for the area, activity or building. They should not be complex or unclear and should be written in such a way as they are easily understood and can be followed by all.

An example of >Local Rules for the Control of Children' is given in Appendix 2 to this Code of Practice. *This should be used a guide to what is required but it must be borne in mind that the example is not suitable and sufficient for Departments and must be supplemented by the specific requirements for the areas it is to cover.*

## **5.0 SPECIFIC GUIDANCE**

### **5.1.1 Science Laboratories and workshops**

Science laboratories and workshops are inherently dangerous working environments and in being so must be considered as a potentially hazardous environment for all children. When permitting children into these areas, the risk assessment and local rules must, in addition to those generic issues that are listed above, consider the following:

- § the nature, degree and duration of any potential exposure to physical, biological and chemical agents;
- § the form, range and use of work equipment and the way in which it is handled;
- § how control can be ensured and how children can be kept away from potentially dangerous areas, equipment or substances; and
- § the activities within the workshop or laboratory that may cause possible harm.

The level of supervision and the potential hazards in nearby areas must be considered in detail, for example:

*Where children are to receive a Science >Taster= Demonstration consideration should be given to clearing benches of all potentially hazardous chemicals and biological samples etc which are not to be used during the demonstration or practical. Consideration should also be given to isolating services on benches etc where there is a risk of unauthorised interference by children.*

*Also consideration should be given as to whether children are actually capable of safely sitting on the high stools that are normally found in science laboratories.*

### **5.1.2 Work Experience**

Guidance on health and Safety of Young Persons Whilst on Work Experience is provided by the University Policy Note OHSU P9.

### **5.1.3 Children in University Residences**

The control of children within University residences is the responsibility of Director of Croeso Welcome Bangor (CWB). Croeso Welcome Bangor shall undertake a risk assessment and produce and implement local rules to reflect the risks and hazards associated with permitting children to stay within University residences.

### **5.1.4 Playgroups, Crèche, Nursery Facilities and Voluntary Groups**

The Head or Manager of playgroups, Crèche and Nurseries are responsible to their Head of Department for ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments and local rules are in place to safeguard the health and safety of children and infants whilst in their control and whilst on University property.

Student Volunteer groups working with children shall ensure, through the Sabbatical Officer, that suitable and sufficient risk assessments and local rules are in place to safeguard the health and safety of children and infants whilst in their control and whilst on University property.

All risk assessments and local rules must consider Local Authority standards and requirements, levels and competence of supervisors, access and egress arrangements to, from and within their building(s) and the general environmental conditions.

### **5.1.5 Children Attending Concerts and Events**

The Department arranging a concert or event, which may include children in attendance, must ensure that suitable and sufficient arrangements and controls are in place to ensure their safety whilst on University property.

In normal circumstances children attending events on University property will do so in the company of a parent or suitable adult - this should be borne in mind when considering controls.

Where events are specifically organised for children the controls and levels of supervision must reflect envisaged adult/child ratio and the hazards associated with the event.

Events undertaken and arranged by external individuals or organisations on University premises shall normally be co-ordinated through Croeso Welcome Bangor. Croeso Welcome Bangor will ensure that adequate controls are to be implemented and that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been undertaken for the event. Where events are arranged by other academic or support Departments the Department arranging the event shall be responsible for ensuring that an adequate risk assessment has been undertaken and that adequate controls are in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children.

### **5.1.6 Sporting Events and Activities**

The safety of authorised children within University Sports Halls and on sporting fields and courts are the responsibility of the Director of Physical Recreation; unless the event or activity is arranged by another University Department.

The Director of Physical Recreation shall ensure that suitable local rules are in place and that a risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of children whilst undertaking sporting activities and whilst within/on University property-where this is arranged through Physical Recreation. Local rules shall include levels of supervision necessary and should list any prohibited activities.

Where Departments have arranged sporting activities for, or to include, children the Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been undertaken and where necessary local rules put in place, to ensure the safety of children. Local rules and risk assessments must consider levels of supervision and the hazards of the activities involved.

### **5.1.7 University Grounds**

Children regularly play on University grounds and to some extent it is not possible to prevent such use, however it is accepted that the University is responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all persons on its property.

Where public access is permitted and customary the University, through the Estates Department or Physical Recreation, as appropriate, shall do all that is reasonable to ensure that the areas are suitable for purpose and do not pose a significant risk to health and safety.

### **5.1.8 Children of Students and Visitors**

Students with children are responsible for ensuring that they comply and follow local rules provided by their Department or the Department that they are visiting.

No unsupervised children are permitted within University buildings unless so agreed, following a risk assessment, by the appropriate Head of Department.

Children of Students staying in University residences shall be subject to the controls stipulated by Croeso Welcome Bangor.

### **5.1.9 Children of Members of Staff**

Individual members of staff wishing to bring children onto University property are primarily responsible for the supervision and safety of that child or children. Each Department is responsible for introducing suitable procedures which authorise, or otherwise, members of staff to bring children onto University property.

No unsupervised children are permitted within University buildings unless so agreed, following a suitable risk assessment, by the appropriate Head of Department.

### **5.2.0 Contractors**

Contractors working on University property are not permitted to be accompanied by a child unless

previously agreed with the appropriate Head of Department in writing or whilst on arranged work experience and whilst as an >employee= of the contractor. The contractor, and University Department in control of them, is responsible for ensuring that their risk assessment takes into account University controls and restrictions.

### **5.2.1 Unauthorised Children on University Property**

Many of the University=s car parks and roads are frequently utilised by children as a playground or short-cut and it is therefore necessary to ensure that all that is reasonably practicable has been done to ensure their safety.

The responsibility for ensuring that University grounds are safe for the purpose for which it is designed is that of the University through the Estates Department.

### **5.2.2 Parental Permission**

Where there is a requirement, departments shall ensure that parental/guardian permission is obtained which would authorise a child to participate in a University led activity. Care should be taken to ensure that such 'parental permission' is suitable for purpose and for the specific activity to be undertaken. Advice on content and requirement should be obtained from the Insurance Officer and the departmental ethics committee, where appropriate.

Example of a typical Risk Assessment

*This appendix should be used as a guide on what could be included within a risk assessment. It must be borne in mind that this example is not suitable and sufficient for Departments and must be supplemented by the specific requirements for the areas it is to cover. This appendix is an example only and should be considered as such.*

**Risk Assessment for:** **Children within the ##### Building.** This assessment does not cover any specific activity - activities must be assessed individually as appropriate; please also see specific risk assessment for Teaching Laboratory No1.

**Hazards Identified:** The building houses many chemical and biological laboratories, for both teaching and research. The building also encompasses many items of electrical and mechanical equipment and machinery.

Access into some potentially hazardous areas is unrestricted and the contents of the building are not particularly suitable for children.

There are many items of loose equipment and materials stored throughout the building none of which is entirely protected from child access.

The building is a heavily occupied building and occupancy is in the region of two hundred people at peak times.

Welfare facilities are not suitable for small children.

**Control Measures:** Local rules have been established governing children within the ##### building. These take into account the above-identified hazards and stipulate the authorisation and control requirements for the Department of ##### and the ##### building.

No staircases or corridors have unprotected falls or edges and the building is inspected for health and safety standards regularly (at least each quarter).

Lighting and emergency systems are adequate throughout the building.

First Aid provision is adequate throughout the normal working day and should be assessed separately for out of normal working hours.

**Risk:** Providing control measures are followed and specific activities are assessed individually the risk to children entering communal areas of the building is considered low - providing adequate supervision is in place at all times.

The risks to children within the building without following the control measures stipulated is considered moderate to high.

**Further Actions:** Ensure all staff and students are aware of and abide by the controls stipulated and monitor compliance.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....



### Example of typical >Local Rules=

*This appendix should be used as a guide on what could be included within a set of local rules. It must be borne in mind that this example is not suitable and sufficient for Departments and must be supplemented by the specific requirements for the areas it is to cover. This appendix is an example only and should be considered as such.*

### **Children within ##### Building**

It is the policy of the Department of ##### that children are only permitted within certain areas of the \*\*\*\*\* building following authorisation from the Head of Department and in-line with the following local rules.

Please Note: this building has not been designed to accommodate children nor does the activity of the Department lend itself easily to providing an entirely safe environment for children unless suitable controls are put in place.

The Local Rules stipulated below are produced in order to seek to control children within the Department and seek to ensure their safety whilst on University property.

- Only authorised children are permitted within the \*\*\*\*\* building.
- **Students** wishing to visit the Department with their child or children must firstly report to their Tutor or the Departmental Secretary and seek authorisation, children must not be left unattended at any time or visit any controlled area.
- A member of **staff** may be accompanied by his/her child, or children, in exceptional circumstances only. Children must not be left unattended at any time or visit any controlled area within the Department.
- Children are not permitted within any laboratory other than Teaching Laboratory No1 on the first floor. Access to this laboratory is authorised only following a suitable risk assessment of the activity.
- Children are not permitted within any chemical or biological storeroom or area.
- Children must be adequately supervised at all times and must never be left unattended.
- Supervision ratios for children must be at least 6:1
- Children may not operate any item of machinery or equipment unless an adequate assessment of the risks has been undertaken.
- No children are permitted to access this building outside of normal working hours except as specifically approved by the Head of Department following a suitable assessment of the risk.

**For the purpose of this procedure children are defined as persons under the age of 16. The control of persons over the age of 16 is governed by the Departments policy on Visitors.**