

## Children in University Workplaces and Premises Policy

Last updated: 16 May 2017 (administrative changes only)

Policy Assigned to: Director, Human Resources

### Overview

The University is committed to being a family-friendly organisation and recognises that responsibilities associated with care of children may at times overlap with an individual's educational and work commitments. This policy outlines the circumstances in which children may be brought into University workplaces and premises. The policy aims to maintain equal opportunity for those with child care responsibilities whilst observing the University's work health and safety obligations. Staff may also refer to the [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#) which outlines the range of leave and flexible working arrangements available at the University to attract and retain staff members; to provide flexibility in meeting business needs; and to assist staff to manage their work and personal responsibilities.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, affiliates and visitors to University workplaces and premises, as well as to those staff and students, with children, living on University premises (e.g. residential colleges). The policy applies at all times, including weekends and after hours. This policy does not apply to organised, supervised activities for children held on University premises which may include Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness school holiday camps, child care centres located on or near University premises, the Social Inclusion Unit's Compass programs, Science programs and other similar activities. Where University staff, students and affiliates are involved in child-related work, this is covered by the University's [Working with Children Policy 2014](#).

### References

- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1997 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 \(Cth\)](#)
- [The University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017](#)
- [Work Health & Safety Policy 2016](#)
- [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy 2015](#)
- [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Resolution Procedures 2015](#)
- [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#)

### Policy

The University permits children in certain workplaces and premises, in limited and controlled circumstances, with appropriate permission and supervision, but prohibits children from areas of the University's premises that present hazards or significant risk.

The University recognises that child care responsibilities may impact on work and study and that bringing a child into the workplace or class is not an alternative solution to more appropriate child-care arrangements.

**The University reserves the right to direct that a child be removed from a workplace or premises where the presence of the child is causing an unacceptable health and safety risk or an unreasonable level of disruption or disturbance to others.**

## Guidelines

Parts of the University are accessible to the public and permission to enter them is not normally required. Examples of such areas include gardens and courtyards, cafes, cafeterias, chapels, reflection rooms, foyers and lobbies.

This policy outlines the limited situations in which children may be brought into University workplaces and premises, the approval process and other relevant procedures.

Managers and supervisors will give reasonable consideration to requests from staff and students to bring their children into University workplaces (including lecture theatres/tutorial rooms) where the request has been necessitated by unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances.

Where a request is approved, parents and carers will be responsible for the safety and supervision of their children whilst they are on University premises and are required to comply with University WHS policies and procedures.

## Definitions

**Child** means a person under the age of 18 years (other than an enrolled University student).

**Field trip** means any work, studies or research approved by the Head of School or nominated deputy on behalf of the University and conducted by staff or students at various field sites which may be on-campus, or at off-campus urban, rural, freshwater or marine locations.

**Laboratory** is a place of specialised work such as research, clinical or diagnostic evaluation teaching and/or learning, and other areas where hazardous substances (e.g. chemicals, biological agents or radiation) are in use.

**Premises** covers all University campuses (including lecture theatre/tutorial rooms), buildings, grounds, field and research stations, vehicles, farms, commercial operations and other locations under the University's control.

**Staff member** means a person who performs work for the University under a contract of employment on a full-time, part-time, or casual basis.

**Workplace** means a place where University staff members work or are likely to work in the course of their employment e.g. a campus, office, lecture theatre or tutorial room, research vessel, a field worksite or vehicle.

**Workshop** means areas involving the use and maintenance of electrical, electronic, and mechanical equipment and tools.

## Procedures

### **Request to bring children into University workplaces**

In extenuating circumstances, a parent or carer may be permitted to bring a child into the workplace. Approval should be obtained from the staff member's manager, supervisor or Head of School/Administrative Unit. It is the duty of the parent or carer to ensure that the child does not disrupt the working environment.

Staff who may occasionally need to bring their children into work for short periods of time to finalise or complete urgent work should discuss this with their supervisor. If the supervisor agrees, it will be unnecessary to gain approval for each occasion.

Parents or carers must not request colleagues and support staff to take temporary charge of children except under extraordinary circumstances.

In some circumstances and where appropriate, working from home may be an option. This should be discussed with and agreed to by the supervisor. (Refer to the [Working from Home policy](#).)

### **Children in lectures/tutorials**

In extenuating circumstances, a parent or carer may be permitted to bring a child to lectures/tutorials. In such cases, permission from the person conducting the lecture/tutorial must be obtained.

### **Children in non-teaching areas**

Subject to any relevant University regulations that may apply, it may be permitted for children to accompany a parent or carer in non-teaching areas such as the library or student association premises. Parents or carers are responsible for the behaviour of their children in these circumstances.

### **Factors to take into account when considering a request**

Factors which should be taken into account in considering a request include:

- length of time involved
- frequency of attendance
- age of child
- number of children
- risk to the child, e.g. suitability of the environment, hazards, subject matter of class attended
- available space, e.g. is the classroom already at capacity?
- potential for interference with others.

Parents or carers are directly responsible for the behaviour of children under their care and must ensure that no disturbance is caused. Children and parents or carers may be asked to leave should they cause a disturbance.

### **Areas prohibited to children**

There are some areas of the University which are intrinsically hazardous and to which, for health and safety reasons, children cannot be permitted to enter except when under supervision for approved University activities such as School visits, Open Days and Summer Schools. Prohibited areas include but are not limited to:

- laboratories and laboratory preparation areas
- workshops
- farms, without appropriate supervision
- animal holding and treatment areas
- photographic laboratories
- printer/copier rooms
- kitchens and other food preparation areas
- fitness centres, without appropriate supervision.

Other areas may be identified as unsuitable for children following risk assessment authorised by the manager responsible for the area or activity concerned. Wherever possible, signage will indicate the risk status of the area.

Students will not be permitted to take children into examinations. If students are unable to attend an examination due to the sudden illness of a child or dependent, or failure of childcare arrangements, they may apply for Special Consideration in accordance with University policy – see [Coursework Policy 2014](#).

**Field trips**

Children may accompany parents or carers on research and teaching field trips only with documented prior approval, which must be:

- sought on a case-by-case basis in relation to each field trip
- in writing provided by the Head of School
- in consultation with Audit and Risk Management (Insurance) and/or WHS Advisors

There must be a risk assessment conducted to address the presence of children on a field trip. Suitable risk control measures must be adopted. Where appropriate, children must be included in the safety induction for the field trip, or specifically instructed in field trip safety requirements by the supervising adult.

**Children as passengers**

Children of University staff and students, and members of the public, must not be carried in University vehicles, equipment and boats except with prior approval of the Head of School/Administrative Unit.

**Sick children**

Sick children, particularly children with known infectious diseases, must not be brought into the workplace or onto campus. Appropriate leave (carers or annual) must be taken in such cases.

# Administration

## 1. Background

Original policy reviewed and redrafted in 2010 by the HR Relationship group in consultation with Occupational Health and Safety, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Audit and Risk Management, the Office of General Counsel, Faculty Managers, SRC and SUPRA. All University staff had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy. This policy was updated in April 2014 to reflect the Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017 and to include a reference in the scope section to the [Working with Children Policy 2014](#) and a reference in the procedures section to the [Assessment Policy 2011](#). This policy was updated on 19 March 2015 to change the reference from the *Assessment Policy 2011* to the *Coursework Policy 2014*. This policy was updated in May 2017 to correct references to internal policy documents.

## 2. Policies, procedures etc. which are now superseded by this document and its attachments

Policy on Children on University Premises 1996

## 3. Management Responsibility

Director of Human Resources

## 4. Implementation Responsibility

Heads of School/Heads of Administrative Units

## 5. Dates

Approval (version 1)	7 June 1996
Effect	7 June 1996
Review	2010
Approval (version 2)	6 October 2010
Effect	6 October 2010

## 6. Approval

Version 1	Professor D Anderson, Vice-Chancellor
Version 2	Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal

## 7. Signatures

### Approved by:

Name

Dr Michael Spence

Position

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Date

6 October 2010