

Guidance Note GN 032

Safety of Children & Young Persons on College Premises

Updated June 2022

Children have access to College Premises under a variety of circumstances: on school visits; attending public lectures and exhibitions; taking part in sporting activities; attending the Early Years Education Centre; accompanying parents; or, simply passing through. This guidance note contains information on the health and safety responsibilities of Heads of Departments/ Divisions concerning visits by individual children accompanying parents who are members of the College. Advice on school visits, work experience, etc is covered in further Guidance Notes.

General

The College is subject both to health and safety legislation and to civil law in respect of its activities. Under health and safety legislation there are requirements for the identification and avoidance/reduction of risk. The College obviously has a wide range of hazards, but their common feature is that the precautions to prevent any risk of harm arising have been designed in the context of the characteristics of the population at risk, i.e. competent, informed adults. The presence of children or young persons within College premises could, in some cases, mean that the precautions which serve well for the usual population are no longer adequate for a range of reasons such as the size, inquisitiveness or immaturity of the children.

College Guidelines concerning children on College premises

The following guidelines describe the action that Departments/ Divisions should take in order to prevent children from being exposed to danger whilst on College premises.

Members of the College are not permitted to bring their children into College premises except for social purposes such as organised functions, en route to the College nursery or brief visits with newborn babies etc. which are restricted to low hazard areas and with the express permission of the Head of Department/Division.

The bringing of children onto College premises at other times should be at the sole discretion of the Head of Department/ Division. The Head of Department/ Division may implement more restrictive arrangements than those described in this document. A typical reason why a child may need to accompany their parent whilst at work may be for a 'bring your child to work day' or social visit..

The College working and study environment is not suitable for babies and young children and is therefore not an appropriate venue when a parent is working or studying on campus. The College

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has engaged the services of [My Family Care](#). This company can support with replacement childcare in an emergency when existing arrangements are disrupted or on a more permanent basis.

Members of the College wishing their children to accompany them in other exceptional circumstances should notify the Head of Department/ Division who may or may not grant permission.

The criteria for the granting of permission would follow completion of a risk assessment (which must be discussed with the parent and retained on file). Considerations include:

- the safety of the work area: not only the particular room to which the parent would be bringing the children, but also its proximity to hazard areas and whether access to the room from the building's entrance is safe;
- the effect that having children present could have on people working in the vicinity.
- the particular circumstances of the case, e.g. ages and number of children, duration and frequency.

In practical terms the above criteria can be interpreted as follows:

1. Children should not be allowed under any circumstances to accompany parents into high-risk areas, such as laboratories and workshops.
2. Children MAY be allowed into low hazard areas, i.e. those areas where the nature of any hazards present is similar to the domestic environment. Examples include: foyers, restaurants, social areas and lecture theatres (for public lectures).
3. Offices that are under the sole occupation of the parent could also be defined as low hazard, providing there are no hazards such as chemicals or equipment other than normal office equipment. Under these circumstances the parent should be fully aware of potential problems, and would be expected to remove or otherwise deal with them prior to their children being present.
4. Communal offices would not normally be deemed low hazard since the parent may not be in a position to be aware of all the hazards and take the necessary preventative action. There is also likely to be a larger range of office equipment and electrical devices present. There should be consultation with the line manager in order to confirm the acceptability of children being present.
5. In some circumstances sole occupancy offices may be located off laboratory or workshop areas. Furthermore, some offices open off corridors which themselves are part of a laboratory or workshop suite. Such situations may render the offices high hazard areas.

The public areas of the College's "public buildings" are considered as low hazard since the nature of any hazards present is similar to those which may be encountered in everyday life. There is consequently no restriction on children accompanying their parents in these areas, although the need for vigilance and supervision remains. Stairs and landings are hazardous areas for children under any circumstances, and although those at the College conformed to the various Building Regulations when built, they have not been designed with the protection of children in mind.

Responsibilities of parents

6. At all times whilst accompanied by their children, the parent is required to exercise sufficient supervision so as to prevent any hazardous situations from arising. This includes them being immediately available to intervene if necessary. Children must not be left unsupervised under any circumstances, and cover for any brief absences must be obtained. The parent would be required to pay particular attention during transit through the building, especially with small children, since the premises are designed for an adult population. Parents are advised to keep the child in a pushchair or held by the hand / safety reins at all times during transit,

Insurance

Although the primary objective is to avoid people being placed at risk, the College's civil liability is covered by insurance against any injuries sustained as a part of its activity. This would, amongst other things, indemnify a member of the College whose work activity affected a child of another member of the University, whether the child was or was not permitted in that area.