

Children in the Workplace

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Purpose

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, there must be a safe and healthy working environment for all workers, students, contractors and visitors, including children. This includes ensuring that there is no risk of exposure to hazards. There are some workplaces where it will never be safe to allow children on site.

UCOL recognises that staff members and students may have responsibilities for family/whanau which from time to time may result in the need to bring a child into the workplace. To support the family/whanau responsibilities, UCOL allows children in the workplace with limited exceptions as defined in this Policy. This enables staff members and students to fulfil their obligations to family/whanau and their work or study related commitments.

UCOL buildings have not been designed for use by children. They have physical hazards such as stairwells, balconies etc., in addition to high risk areas such as laboratories, workshop areas and kitchens, which are unsafe for children of all ages. For this reason it is not advisable to bring children on to a campus, except for very young immobile babies who are still being nursed.

When a child is brought onto a UCOL campus, they must be accompanied and appropriately supervised by an adult at all times. For young and mobile children, supervision must be very close and continuously attentive. For older children, more discretion may be exercised, depending upon the surrounding hazards.

Other than by invitation of UCOL, (e.g. open days, organised visits), children are not to be taken into medium or high risk areas such as laboratories, workshops and kitchens.

It is important that children do not disrupt the work performance of the parent or caregiver, or the learning of students and delivery of lectures. We recommend that alternative arrangements for care of children be made during lecture times.

Scope

This policy applies to all areas of UCOL. It has special relevance to staff members, contractors and students who are parents or carers of children.

Children who are attending UCOL as part of programmed learning or other facilitated events are expected to be supervised whilst on campus as part of the event so they are not covered by this policy.

Employee, Student and Contractor Obligations

All staff members, students and contractors who are parents or carers of children must be aware of and comply with the requirements of this policy.

All parents and caregivers who bring children on to a UCOL campus are required to:

- Be sensitive and respect the needs of other employees, students and others.
- Not expect other employees to care for the child.
- Take responsibility for the behaviour and the safety of the child.
- Supervise the child at all times.
- Ensure the child does not act in an unsafe way or interrupt the work or learning of others through their actions or noise levels.

Other Requirements

- Children are never permitted in areas of the workplace where there are designated health and safety risks or hazards.
- Employees, and students must not bring sick children to the workplace under any circumstances. Care for sick children should be arranged under the employee's entitlement to sick leave and other forms of leave (e.g., annual leave, unpaid leave).

Exceptions

1. Children may be allowed to visit the workplace for a specific event (e.g., a "take your child to work" day) when invited by UCOL or a manager with the authority to issue such an invitation. This exception applies also to organised visits by supervised groups of children.
2. A child may visit the workplace for a short time when there is an unexpected disruption to school attendance or child care arrangements. In that situation, the child should be confined to a safe area of the workplace, until the employee parent or caregiver is able to make alternative arrangements.
3. A child may arrange to meet the employee parent or caregiver at the workplace before going to a medical or other appointment. The employee concerned will need to have made a prior arrangement for time off work.
4. A manager may allow an exception to the policy for a temporary, unforeseen emergency. Factors to be considered by the manager include the age of the child, how long the child needs to be in the workplace, the work environment in the employee's area, and any possible disruptions to the work of the employee and others.

5. A sick child will not be allowed to come to work with an employee or student.

Public Spaces

All public spaces such as atriums and grounds are open access and children are welcome at all times. Children under the age of 14 must be supervised at all times by either a parent or caregiver. UCOL requests that parents and caregivers give due consideration to others using these public spaces and ensure that children are kept safe at all times.

Work and Learning Spaces

Staff

Only when emergency circumstances exist, such as when alternative caring arrangements have not been possible, are staff allowed to have a child for whom they are the parent or caregiver accompanying them while performing UCOL related work or using UCOL resources. This must be on an exception basis and should only be for the part of the day required, (one day at the most) until alternative care arrangements can be made.

Parents or caregivers who bring children into the workplace must ensure the child is directly supervised and under the control of him/her or another adult at all times. The child must not cause disruption to the work of the parent or others present at the same location.

If another staff member is requested to supervise the child, their prior agreement must be obtained as well as that of their manager and it must not cause disruption to their work. Even if another staff member is supervising the child, the responsibility for the child at all times remains with the parent or caregiver who brought the child into the workplace.

A staff member who is facilitating student learning may not have a child, for whom they are responsible, present in a teaching environment unless both the lecturer and the class attendees have approved their presence and learning is not disrupted.

A staff member bringing a child on to any UCOL Campus must restrict that child's location to safe areas, i.e. areas that are not classified as medium or high risk (e.g. the Atrium or office space), and ensure they are supervised and under control at all times. The age of the child will dictate the level of supervision required and UCOL expects staff to use practical judgement with regard to the hazards of their workplace.

Students

Only when emergency circumstances exist, such as when alternative caring arrangements have not been possible, are students allowed to have a child for whom they are the parent or caregiver accompany them while attending UCOL related learning or using UCOL resources. This must be on an exception basis.

A parent or caregiver bringing a child on to any UCOL Campus must restrict that child's location to safe areas, i.e. areas that are not classified as medium or high risk (e.g. the Atrium or office space), and ensure they are supervised and under control at all times. The age of the child will dictate the level of supervision required and UCOL expects students to use practical judgement with regard to the hazards within UCOL.

The parent or caregiver must ensure that the child is supervised and under control at all times. A student may not have a child, for whom they are responsible, present in a teaching environment when student learning is being undertaken without the approval of the lecturer and all class attendees. The child must not interrupt learning.

The preferred option is for the student to arrange with their lecturer to defer the scheduled activity and therefore avoid the need for the child to accompany them into the learning environment.

Exclusion Areas for Children

Unless access to one of these areas is arranged as part of an organised school visit designed for educational or promotional purposes the following areas of UCOL will be out of bounds to children (whether of staff or students) at all times:-

1. Laboratories
2. Workshops (Trades and other workshops)
3. Kitchens (includes Hospitality areas)
4. Dangerous goods area/stores
5. Any other area deemed to be a Restricted Access Area (see Restricted Access Area Procedure and each campus's Restricted Area Access Register).

While UCOL has responsibility under The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 the parent or caregiver has primary responsibility for the wellbeing of children they bring into the workplace, they must ensure that any child brought into the workplace is not exposed to harmful or dangerous situations during the visit.

Parents and caregivers must ensure the children under their care comply with UCOL's computer use policy.

Definitions

Child or Children:

- From new born to official school leaving age.
- Covers dependent children or relatives of employees who are working at UCOL or students that are studying at UCOL.
- This policy does not apply to any person aged 15 years or over who is lawfully engaged to perform work for UCOL.

Workplace:

All property and vehicles owned by or the responsibility of UCOL where employees of UCOL are involved in UCOL related work and any site or vehicle an employee is attending or using for work purposes which is not UCOL property or a UCOL vehicle.

Relevant Legislation

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Children's Act 2014

Related Documentation

- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Restricted Area Access Procedure](#)
- [Leave Policy](#)
- Wellbeing Policy