

Children in University Activities Procedure

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| Policy code: | CG1058 |
| Policy owner: | Director, People and Culture |
| Approval authority: | Chief Operating Officer |
| Approval date: | 25 January 2024 |
| Next review date: | 15 April 2024 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Purpose | 1 |
| Scope | 1 |
| Legislative Context | 1 |
| Definitions | 2 |
| Actions | 2 |
| Requests to Bring Children to University Activities | 2 |
| Responsibilities of Parents/Carers/Guardians | 4 |
| Removal of Approval | 4 |
| Advice and Assistance | 4 |
| Supporting Documents | 5 |
| Responsibilities | 5 |
| Implementation | 5 |

Purpose

To contribute to the University's support for staff and students with responsibilities for children (as articulated in the Children in University Activities Policy) and for breastfeeding staff and students (as articulated in the Breastfeeding of Infants Guidelines), through providing a clear process for determining whether it is appropriate or not for children to be brought to University activities and, if so, under what conditions.

Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff and students who are parents/carers/guardians who wish to bring their children to any University activity, including students studying at the University's partner provider locations. It covers:

- Considering Requests to Bring Children to University Activities (not applicable where children are attending children-specific programs or services or where a child is accompanying a staff member/student to the University Library or other areas where public access is normally accepted)
- Responsibilities of Parents/Carers/Guardians
- Removal of Approval
- Advice and Assistance

Legislative Context

- Victorian [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)
- Commonwealth [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)
- Victorian [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- Commonwealth [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012](#)

Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------------------|---|
| University Activity: | any activity, or location of an activity, for which the University has responsibility as part of the University operations. |
| Manager: | the staff member with designated responsibility for the staff member making a request for a child to attend a University activity, or with designated responsibility for a physical location. |
| Teaching staff: | the relevant teacher/lecturer/tutor responsible for the activity to which a child may be brought. |
| Staff: | any person who is an employee of the University including, for the purpose of this Policy, other contracted staff. |
| Student: | any person enrolled as a student of the University. |

Actions

Requests to Bring Children to University Activities

1. In all cases, staff and students must make a request to bring their children to University activities, except where their children are attending children-specific programs or services or where their child is accompanying a staff member/student to the University Library or other areas where public access is normally accepted.
2. This request must be made to the relevant staff member (teaching staff/manager) responsible for the activity to which a child may be brought.
3. The principle of “reasonableness” will apply to both those requiring and those granting permission.
4. Teaching staff and managers have the delegated responsibility to consult with and give or limit or decline permission for staff members/students to bring their children into the work place or into a learning environment (including field trips) for which the teaching staff or manager has direct responsibility.
5. In accordance with the University's Children in University Activities Policy and, as relevant, the Breastfeeding of Infants Guidelines, decisions on requests to bring a child/children to a University activity must be made through a reasonable process, as outlined in this Procedure, to ensure that the decision to either allow, limit or decline a request to bring a child into a specific environment is taken after due and fair consideration of the relevant issues.
6. In initiating a request a staff member or a student who is a parent/carer/guardian must:
 - make a request, in advance, to the teaching staff or manager responsible for the activity and/or location to which a child is to be brought;

- indicate whether permission is being sought for a one-off request or for an agreed range of situations, noting that this arrangement is not normally to be used as an alternative to regular long day care;
- recognise the needs of other students and staff.

7. In considering a request the manager/teaching staff member must consider, as relevant and in consultation with the parent/carer/guardian and other relevant students and/or staff:

- whether the needs of the parent/carer/guardian can be met in other ways eg staff working from home; flexible study arrangements; flexible working hours; flexible leave arrangements and personal leave;
- the needs of breastfeeding staff and students;
- the impact on the parent/carer/guardian, and others if relevant (eg other staff/students), if the request is declined;
- the degree of possible interference with students, staff and other users of the University and potential impact on these people;
- the age of the children and supervision needs;
- the health of the child (eg if infectious illness is present)
- issues surrounding use of computers and other equipment;
- the length of time involved;
- proposed frequency of attendance;
- the subject matter of class attended;
- available space;
- location of the activity;
- health and safety issues (If any potential OH&S concerns, undertake a HIRAC using the OH&S Procedure – [Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control \(HIRAC\) for Children in University Locations/Activities](#). For advice contact OH&S Manager);
- the timeliness of the request (eg is there enough time to make an informed analysis of hazards)
- potential for breach of privacy, confidentiality and security;
- the ability of parent/carer/guardian to supervise children;
- the impact on the parent/carer/guardian's ability to perform their duties;
- student excursion issues, using the [OH&S Procedure – Student Excursions](#).

8. The teaching staff/manager may refer the request to the relevant Dean/Director.

9. Teaching staff/managers must deal with requests in a timely manner, to enable staff and students to plan for alternative arrangements to be made if the request is declined or limited.

10. After full and fair consideration, the teaching staff/manager will inform the staff member/student if their request is approved in full, approved with modifications or declined.

11. If approving the request the manager/teaching staff member should ensure that the decision and any conditions agreed to are clearly understood by the parent/carer/guardian, and documented if necessary. The

manager/ teaching staff member should also ensure the agreement (and conditions if relevant) is understood by other relevant people, eg staff team members; class members.

12. If giving permission for an agreed range of situations, the manager/teaching staff member should also negotiate an agreed review process and timeline.

13. If declining or limiting the request, the manager/teaching staff member should give clear reasons, addressing the issues considered and the reasons for refusal.

14. If the parent/carer/guardian does not consider the outcome to be fair, they can seek assistance from Equity and Equal Opportunity, and/or People and Culture (in the case of staff) and/or the Student Advisory Service (in the case of students).

15. If, after this assistance, the parent/carer/guardian is still not satisfied with the outcome, they can access the relevant internal complaint process as outlined in the [Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Guidelines](#).

16. In any approved instance of children attending a University activity, the parents/carers/guardians are responsible for the supervision, at all times, and safety of their children.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers/Guardians

In bringing a child to a University activity and/or location the parent/carer/guardian must assume full responsibility for their child (unless otherwise arranged for during a children-specific program or service) and must ensure the child is safe and does not cause disruption to, or put at risk the safety of, other members of the University community.

Removal of Approval

1. A manager or teaching staff member may request that a student/staff member remove a child if:

- the child's health or safety is considered to be at risk;
- the child is considered to be presenting a health or safety risk to others;
- the child's behaviour is causing disruption to the work of staff or students, or is otherwise considered inappropriate.

2. In situations where a child/children are in what is perceived to be an unsafe situation and the parent/carer/guardian is not in attendance, the University may take action to minimise any risk. Such actions should normally be authorised at the level of Dean/Director or above but, in urgent situations, staff members may take any action they consider to be appropriate and reasonable.

3. Any staff or students who have concerns arising from the presence of children should raise these concerns with the staff member responsible for the activity or location in which a child/children are present, or with the relevant Dean/Director.

Advice and Assistance

The Manager, Equity and Equal Opportunity can provide advice and assistance to all parties in relation to this Procedure.

Supporting Documents

- [Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Guidelines](#)
- [People and Culture Policy](#)
- [OH&S Guidelines - Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for Children in University Activities.](#)
- [OH&S Procedure – Student Excursions.](#)
- [Child Safe Procedure](#)
- [Information Technology Services Operations Manual- Use of Computing and Communication Facilities and, Information Security](#)
- [Corporate Governance Policy](#)

Responsibilities

- Chief Operating Officer (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- Director, People and Culture (as the Document Owner) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the Chief Operating Officer.
- All staff with responsibility for other staff and/or for student activities and/or for specific locations have responsibility to implement this Procedure with reference to the Children in University Activities Policy and, as appropriate, the Breastfeeding of Infants Guidelines.

Implementation

The [Children in University Activities Procedure](#) will be communicated throughout the University via an Announcement Notice via FedNews and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy.