

	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON WORK EXPERIENCE	 University of Sussex
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1.0 Introduction

From time to time requests are made for children or young persons to undertake work experience within the School. Under such circumstances, the School has a responsibility to protect and safeguard their welfare. The Protection of Children Act 1999 (PCA) requires that where people have been identified and considered as unsuitable to work with children they are prevented from gaining access to children through their work. In cases where a member of staff may be required to spend extended periods of time alone with a child or young person during their work experience, there may be a requirement to obtain disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau – in such cases advice should be obtained from the School Safety Adviser. For the majority of staff this will not be required, but a member of staff working with children or young people is a role model and will need to be aware of the potential risks and the practical steps which can be taken to minimise the risks.

This policy identifies key considerations; further clarification should be sought from your Line Manager or the School Safety Adviser if required.

2.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:-

A Child is a person who is sixteen years old or less

A Young Person is any person who has not reached the age of eighteen

3.0 Risk Assessment

Children and young persons are a high risk group in the workplace. They are inexperienced and liable to underestimate danger and may overestimate their own capabilities. Because of this, there is a legal requirement under the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*:

“to ensure that young persons are protected at work from any risks to their health or safety which are a consequence of their lack of experience, or absence of awareness of existing or potential risks or the fact that young persons have not yet fully matured”

A written assessment shall be completed before any placement begins giving details of the risks to which the young person may be exposed during their work experience placement and the protective and preventative measures put in place to control and reduce those risks. It should also cover the level of supervision to be provided. Any known disability or pre-existing medical condition, for example allergy or colour blindness, needs to be taken into account when preparing the risk assessment as well as the inexperience, lack of awareness of risks and immaturity of the child or young person. A copy should be sent to their school or personal guardian and to the School Safety Adviser.

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4.0 Prohibited Activities

When planning the work placement, it should be noted that where a Young Person is concerned, no work shall:

- a) be beyond their physical or psychological capacity;
- b) involve harmful exposure to agents which are toxic or carcinogenic, or which in any other way chronically affect human health;
- c) involve harmful exposure to radiation;
- d) involve the risk of accidents which it may reasonably be assumed cannot be recognised or avoided by young persons owing to insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training;
- e) expose them to a risk to health from extremes of heat or cold, noise or vibration.

In addition, Young Persons must not be left unattended to work with or around any equipment or materials which could be considered to give rise to significant risk. Any child or Young Person on work experience should be supervised at all times during work activities.

5.0 Authorisation of Work Experience Placements

All work experience placements in the School of Life Sciences must be agreed by the relevant Line Manager and authorised by the School Admin Manager or Technical Services Manager.