

# Children of Staff and Students on University Premises Procedure

## Section 1 - Background

(1) The University seeks to provide a family friendly work and learning environment. This Procedure supports this aim and recognises the University's duty of care to staff, students and visitors. This Procedure seeks to address both health and safety and equity and inclusion issues by striking a balance between the safety of children on University premises, limiting their exposure to risks, and the maintenance of equity standards.

(2) The following ACU policies describe the frameworks that support a safe, healthy and equitable ACU workplace:

- a. [Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#);
- b. [WHS Risk Management Procedure](#);
- c. [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy](#); and
- d. [Equal Opportunity Policy](#).

(3) This Procedure operates in conjunction with these policies and provides guidance in relation to the arrangements for bringing children onto University premises for staff and students who are carers and those making decisions on such matters. Good judgement, discretion and reasonableness are expected to be applied in the application of this Procedure to specific circumstances.

## Section 2 - Glossary of Terms

(4) For the purposes of this Procedure:

Term	Definition
Infant feeding	refers to the act of providing food and nourishment to an infant by a carer.
Child or children	refers to a person or persons under age 18 who is not enrolled as a student of ACU
Carer	refers to a parent, guardian or other person responsible for a child or children.
Unsafe and/or restricted areas	are areas in which children are not permitted and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• science and anatomy laboratories and laboratory preparation areas;</li> <li>• visual arts workshops or studios;</li> <li>• printer/copier rooms;</li> <li>• technical workshops and studios;</li> <li>• nursing laboratories and clinics;</li> <li>• exercise science and physiotherapy laboratories and clinics;</li> <li>• kitchens and other food preparation areas;</li> <li>• storerooms or areas where hazardous substances are being kept;</li> <li>• construction sites and areas where minor works or maintenance are being carried out.</li> </ul>

## Section 3 - Principles

(5) ACU recognises that:

- a. staff and students who are carers may need to bring children onto University premises from time to time;
- b. the safety and wellbeing of all persons on University premises, including children, is of the utmost importance; and
- c. the education function and effective operation of the University must be maintained and the presence of children on campus needs to be accommodated within this requirement.

(6) Consequently, it is necessary to identify:

- a. the responsibilities of the carer supervising the child or children;
- b. the requisite level of supervision; and
- c. appropriate/inappropriate areas for children to be present.

(7) ACU also recognises that care must be taken to ensure that the implementation of this Procedure:

- a. does not result in the discrimination, directly or indirectly, of a staff member, student or prospective student on the grounds of sex, or carer responsibilities; and
- b. supports the ACU's commitment to flexibility of working and learning arrangements to enable staff and students to meet family responsibilities in special circumstances.

## Section 4 - Publicly Accessible University Premises

(8) While the University precincts are private property, some areas are publicly accessible and permission to enter them is not normally required. Examples of such areas are:

- a. gardens and courtyards;
- b. cafes and cafeterias;
- c. chapels and reflection rooms; and,
- d. foyers and lobbies.

(9) Children are welcome on campus for approved University activities such as Open Day, concerts and performances, and guided tours. These activities are to be informed by WHS risk assessments, which should address specific hazards relevant to attendance and participation by children as well as suitable controls. Staff, students, visitors and contractors that are accompanying children in such circumstances, and in publicly accessible areas, are at all times responsible for their care, safety and welfare and compliance with relevant requirements and should be reminded of this through event invitations and other communication prior to and, where possible, at the event.

(10) Libraries are accessible to the public and are both a learning environment for staff and students, and a working environment for Library staff. All users of the Library are required to respect and uphold conditions necessary to provide an appropriate atmosphere for study, research and work. Staff, students and other adults accompanying children within the Library are responsible for ensuring that the conduct of the children in their care is appropriate.

## **Section 5 - Permission to bring a child or children on University Premises**

(11) Staff and students are expected to obtain prior permission to bring a child or children under their care into a working or learning environment on ACU premises. This is necessary to allow supervisors and teaching staff to carry out their responsibilities under this Procedure (refer to parts 9.3 and 9.4). Staff and students who are carers should refer to part 9.5 for their responsibilities under this Procedure.

## **Section 6 - Considering requests to bring a child or children onto University Premises**

(12) In considering requests to bring children into the learning and working environment, supervisors and teaching staff should:

- a. use good judgement and discretion to consider each request on a case-by-case basis; and
- b. be mindful of the need to be able to demonstrate the reasonableness of a decision.

(13) All decisions relating to a request to be accompanied by a child or children need to take account of factors such as:

- a. the particular circumstances that have led to the request;
- b. the availability of other options;
- c. the operating environment;
- d. the health and safety issues and risks;
- e. the likely impact on students, staff and visitors;
- f. the needs of others and the potential for any detrimental effect on the ability of any person to teach, work or learn effectively; and
- g. in the case of classroom activity, the nature of the subject matter being covered (including safety/content).

(14) If a student requests to be accompanied by a child or children and the teaching staff member is concerned that the content may be inappropriate or upsetting for children, the teaching staff member should advise the student of what will be covered. In such cases (providing that the venue has been assessed as posing no other WHS risks to children), the student, as the carer of the child or children, is responsible for making the decision on whether it is appropriate for the child or children to be present.

## **Section 7 - Withdrawing permission for a child or children to be present in a learning or working environment**

(15) Staff and students with children on University premises can be required to remove a child or children if, in the judgement of the supervisor, teaching staff member or person in charge of the area:

- a. the health or safety of the child or children is at risk;
- b. the child or children are presenting a health or safety risk to others; or
- c. the work of staff or students is being disrupted or inconvenienced by the child or children.

- d. the content and topic of discussion within the class changes to be inappropriate, when initially there were no concerns, or the child is finding the content upsetting.

(16) In the case of staff with children, their supervisor has the authority to require that a child or children be removed from the work and/or learning environment.

(17) In the case of students with children, the teaching staff member involved, or in some cases the person in charge of the area has the authority to require that a child or children be removed from the work and/or learning environment.

(18) In the Library, any member of staff on duty has the authority to require that a child or children be removed from the area.

(19) Children who are left unsupervised will be managed in accordance with the [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy](#) and [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Procedure](#).

## **Section 8 - Infant Feeding on University Premises Parents and Expressing Parents**

(20) ACU is committed to providing an inclusive work and learning environment that supports staff and students to balance work / study and family responsibilities. The University acknowledges the importance of infant feeding for the parent and child, and provides the following information:

- a. ACU will ensure that appropriately equipped parenting rooms are available on each campus.
- b. Staff and Students are not restricted to the feeding of infants in parenting rooms.
- c. Staff members or students who are pregnant or feeding infants are able to access information about combining feeding and work or study from local infant welfare centres, the [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#) and/or the [Department of Health and Ageing](#).
- d. ACU has a range of entitlements and working arrangement options available for staff who are prospective or currently parents to assist with their parenting needs (including infant feeding) that include:
  - i. Parental leave;
  - ii. Part-time and job share arrangements; and
  - iii. Flexible working arrangements.

(21) Students may negotiate subject load within course requirements in order to support parenting responsibilities including infant feeding.

## **Section 9 - Responsibilities**

(22) Everyone using University facilities has responsibilities in relation to the practical implementation of this Procedure, particularly in terms of making ACU a safe place. Specific responsibilities include the following:

### **The University**

(23) The University is responsible for:

- a. providing an environment that is conducive to work and learning for all staff, students, visitors and contractors;
- b. providing a healthy and safe learning and working environment for all staff, students, visitors, and contractors in line with legislative requirements and the [Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#); and

- c. taking reasonable steps to assist students, staff and visitors who may have special needs to access facilities and services.

## **Members of the Executive**

(24) Members of the Executive are responsible for effectively communicating the provisions of this Procedure in the area under their management by ensuring that:

- a. the Procedure is well publicised and implemented within all work areas under their management (for example, notices are displayed in laboratories, workshops and clinics where children are not normally allowed, and/or are unsafe and/or restricted areas); and
- b. supervisory and other staff who report to them are aware of this Procedure and are able to implement it fairly and reasonably.

## **Supervisors**

(25) Supervisors are responsible for:

- a. assessing potential risks related to requests made by staff to ensure that children are not allowed into any unsafe and/or restricted areas except, for example and as appropriate to the area, to access professional services as a client; or attend organised and supervised public displays or other activity;
- b. providing approval for children of staff to attend in specific situations, and, where such approval is provided, sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the child or children; and
- c. providing guidance as required to the staff they supervise on implementing the Procedure.

## **Teaching staff**

(26) Teaching staff are responsible for:

- a. assessing potential risks related to requests made by students to ensure that children are not allowed into any unsafe and/or restricted areas except, for example and as appropriate to the area, to access professional services as a client; or attend organised and supervised public displays or other activity; and
- b. providing approval for children of students to attend in specific situations, and, where such approval is provided, sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the child or children, including attendance at off-campus learning activities. e.g. excursions.

## **Carers**

(27) Carers wishing to bring children into the University learning environment, or their personal work environment, are responsible for:

- a. assessing any options available for alternative childcare arrangements before approaching their supervisor or the relevant teaching staff member;
- b. obtaining approval for bringing a child or children into a University learning environment or their personal work environment. The expectation is that such approval will be obtained in advance. On the rare occasions when this is not possible, the person wishing to make the request should:
  - i. leave a message for the supervisor/teaching staff member;
  - ii. advise another supervisor in the unit if one is available (should the supervisor be unavailable); or
  - iii. contact the supervisor/teaching staff member as soon as possible after arrival on campus.
- iv. taking reasonable steps, while on campus, to safeguard the health and safety of the child or children in their care;

- v. considering the potential risk to the health and safety of others that may be associated with bringing children into the University learning or work environment, and taking reasonable steps to safeguard against risks including ensuring that the child or children are not suffering from a contagious illness;
- vi. in the event of an incident or injury, submitting a report within [Riskware](#) and collaborating with a relevant supervisor to review the report and/or apply lessons;
- vii. ensuring any child or children in their care do not inconvenience or endanger staff, students or visitors in the course of their work or learning; and
- viii. ensuring the child or children are adequately supervised by them at all times, including at off-campus learning activities, e.g. excursions.

## Section 10 - Revisions made to this Procedure

(28) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the current policy platform. Any later changes will show in the Status and Details tab.

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
27 July 2016	Editorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correction of name of Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.</li> <li>• Clarifying responsibilities of supervisors and teaching staff when they approve the attendance of children in work and/or learning environments</li> </ul>
4 May 2023	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding policy has been incorporated in this policy,</li> <li>• Updated governing and approval authorities.</li> <li>• Updated related policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Review in line with the Policy Development and Review Policy.</li> </ul>

(29) The University may make changes to this Procedure from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Procedure may forward their suggestions to People and Capability.

## Section 11 - Further Assistance

(30) Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further information or advice be required staff should visit [Service Central](#).

## Section 12 - Associated Information

(31) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	20th December 2023
<b>Review Date</b>	27th July 2026
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor and President
<b>Approval Date</b>	20th December 2023
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
<b>Responsible Manager</b>	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Bernardine Lynch ER and Safety Committees and Policy Officer <hr/> People and Capability