**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

**POLICY ON ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN ON UNIVERSITY PREMISES**

**Due to Health and Safety concerns, and to protect, staff, students and their families, this policy is suspended.  At this current time where there is a need for the University to operate a Covid secure environment – children will not be permitted to be accompanied in teaching session.  However, children can be accompanied under very limited circumstances.  These are related to the Click and Visit Library Services (where physical library resources cannot be obtained on-line) and any situation where access to a booked on-campus appointment with Student Services has been made (although we encourage an alternative on-line appointment to be arranged if childcare becomes an issue on the appointment date).**

**The suspension of this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as the University continues to operate a Covid secure environment in line with government guidance.**

**Introduction**

Newman University is an institution of higher education and research with a large staff/student population and, as such, its buildings have been designed and built for use by adults. Many of the hazards present (e.g. the building layout, the equipment/machinery, the chemical/biological materials etc.) would, in most cases, be considered non-child friendly. In addition, children are more vulnerable to environmental exposure: they are naturally inquisitive and are normally inexperienced. There may be specific occasions when students find that they are unable to arrange childcare for their children. In these exceptional circumstances it may be possible for accompanied children to sit in on timetabled sessions. This will be expected to be a ‘one off’ occurrence and not a regular circumstance. This guidance document attempts to balance this need with the requirements of health and safety regulations; it does not, nor is it its intention, to prevent staff or students bringing children on its premises, but to ensure their safety and the safety of others should they be present.

**Background**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, forms the regulatory framework for health and safety throughout the UK. In particular, it imposes duties on the University to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, those who are not employees (i.e. the general public), can use the premises without risk to their health or safety. Similarly, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, require the University to make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of non-employees who may be affected by its undertaking and to ensure that appropriate safety management systems are in place. From an insurance perspective, the University insurers have confirmed that the children of staff and/or students fall under a general visitor category, and the institution’s legal liability cover will operate, should the children suffer a loss arising from the responsibilities and/or activities of the institution for which it could be held to be legally liable.

**Scope**

Children are defined as being aged from 0 to 18 years. This guidance is only concerned with children of staff or students or children they have responsibility for, coming onto University premises. It excludes children who are simply travelling across the campus. It also excludes children who may be present for other reasons such as; schools visiting the University, University Nursery, “Open” days and similar events, Work experience, Social occasions e.g. Christmas/leaving parties etc., Sports events. These are subject to separate arrangements.

**General Considerations**

Apart from problems with child care arrangements, a member of staff might bring in a new baby to show work colleagues, a student may have a child with them when returning or renewing a library book or submitting a piece of course work, or under exceptional circumstances where no other childcare arrangements are possible. A parent/guardian might already be at the University when the child needs to be with them. In this last case, the child must remain at a suitable location with the person bringing them in until they are collected by the parent/guardian. Regardless of the reason for bringing the child to the University, it should be viewed as a short term solution and where longer term arrangements (e.g. annual leave, unpaid leave, working from home, absence from lectures or practicals) are necessary, they must be made with the approval of the appropriate Faculty/department or tutor. In some cases the ‘Compassionate Leave/Emergency Care of Dependants Leave Agreement’ or the ‘Parental Leave Agreement’ could be applicable for staff. For further information, see the Human Resources web site.

**General principles and Procedures**

Requests for a child/children to attend a session should be made in advance in writing, if at all possible, and must be discussed with the lecturer taking the session before entering the venue for the session.

Attendance is always on the condition that the child/children are well behaved and have been provided with activities by the students to keep them occupied in order that they do not disturb the session.

Most subject areas will allow accompanied children to attend sessions, including lecture sessions in science area (with the agreement of the lecturer), but NOT in sessions based in laboratories, including Psychology laboratories.

Due to the nature of the subjects under consideration, there will be some sessions that are not suitable for children to attend and the lecturer concerned will advise the student if this is the case.

Due to the nature of the subject as a whole and the professional accreditation attached, children will not be permitted in sessions for Counselling or the MSc Psychotherapy programme.

Children must not impede the work of others; they should be kept in the parent/guardian’s work area and they must not inconvenience or endanger staff, students or other visitors.

**Public areas of the University**

A parent is responsible for their child/children at all times. The University will not accept any responsibility in any cases of accident or injury and any student availing themselves of this concession will be required to agree to an indemnity.

Under no circumstances are children to be left unaccompanied. Any parent who does so will be required to leave with their child/children. This applies equally to visiting school children. Under no circumstances are they to be left unaccompanied and their teachers must be in attendance at all times.

Children must not be allowed to play in areas such as corridors, lift lobbies or staircases. They must also be kept away from windows.

Children must never operate lift machinery or ride unaccompanied in lifts.

Children who have previously been disruptive or parents or guardians who do not follow this guidance (or school/department procedures) could be asked to leave and could be refused access in the future.

Where space restrictions limit the number of people able to make use of particular facilities, then the needs staff or students must always take priority.

When providing activities to keep your child/children occupied, we expect you to abide by the terms of the University’s General Conditions of Computing and Network facilities use. In particular, this requires you not to share your usernames or password with anyone else, and not to share material with those who are not entitled to use them. If you want your child/children to sue a computer, we expect you to provide a portable device, such as a smartphone, tablet or laptop, and use the University’s guest Wi-Fi service. They must not use University desktop computers or laptops.

In the Library, we expect you to closely supervise any children you have with you, making sure that they are comfortable and secure and that their behaviour is appropriate to the zone you are in. If their behaviour is no longer suitable for the zone you are in, we expect you to move to a more appropriate part of the Library, or to move outside the Library altogether.

**Health and Safety Note**

Heads of Departments and Directors of Services have ultimate responsibility for Health & Safety within the areas they control. They will therefore need to decide whether to permit children in their areas. If permission is granted, it is likely they will delegate the day to day responsibility to other responsible persons. However, regardless of what administrative arrangements are agreed locally, it is important to ensure that adequate control measures are in place.

**Amended November 2017**

**Additional Note 14th September 2020**