

CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE AND WORK SHADOWING

Preamble

The University respects the rights of staff and faculty to attend to parenting duties and other family obligations, and in particular the rights of staff and faculty with family responsibilities to full and equal opportunity and participation in the workplace. At the same time, the presence of children presents distinct challenges for the University. Children may be subject to special risks and thereby present a liability to the safe and secure operation of the University. As well, children can disrupt the normal functioning of an academic workplace. The purpose of this policy is to better define the balance between employment and family responsibilities with regard to the presence of children in the StFX workplace.

Employees covered by this policy

This policy applies to all Faculty and Staff (including employed students) at StFX University.

Definition

For purposes of this policy, “child”, or “children” means individuals under the age of 18 years who are not students or employees of the University.

For purposes of this policy, “parent” includes a legal guardian or anyone having care and custody of a child.

For purposes of this policy, “campus” means the entire University property and premises, including the workplace, and “workplace” includes classrooms, laboratories, residences, and office spaces, but does not include common areas, walkways, parking lots, libraries, the bookstore, the Charles V. Keating Millennium Centre, etc., which are open to the public.

Policy

It is the University’s policy that staff are not permitted to bring children into the workplace, subject to reasonable exceptions covered below. Children may be brought on campus, subject to the general rules and restrictions, below.

Exceptions

This policy is not intended to discourage or interfere with the right of mothers and children to breastfeed. This policy is not intended to discourage or interfere with the right of mothers and children to breastfeed. In rare circumstances in which the workplace environment or an employee's workplace schedule or responsibilities are not conducive to having a child present for breastfeeding purposes, the University will work collaboratively with the employee to explore what alternative arrangements are available to accommodate the breastfeeding needs of the nursing mother and child.

The University recognizes that many employees have childcare responsibilities and acknowledges that there can be occasions when care arrangements break down. When child care arrangements break down or child care is otherwise unavailable, an employee should seek alternatives to bringing the child to the workplace. The employee should speak to his or her supervisor to discuss available options. The University will make every reasonable effort to accommodate family responsibilities. Options available include using any Emergency

Family Days available, accessing accrued vacation hours or, if applicable, parental leave or compassionate leave, depending on individual employee's available benefits and the requirements governing such leave. With the approval of the employee's supervisor, an employee may also be able to adjust working hours to accommodate family responsibilities.

When there is no alternative, such as in an emergency situation, a staff member may request that his or her supervisor grant an exception to this policy, allowing a child to be present in the workplace. Such exceptions will be granted for only so long as is necessary, and are expected to be of brief duration. Such exceptions are subject to the rules and restrictions below.

This policy is not meant to apply to the occasional, brief visit in which a child accompanies an employee to the workplace, for example to drop off an item or simply say hello. However, the rules and restrictions below continue to apply.

Nothing in this policy prevents children being on campus for approved University activities, such as Open Days and on guided tours. However, the rules and restrictions below continue to apply.

This policy permits children to attend on campus and in the workplace for work shadowing visits, subject to the rules and restrictions below, and the guidelines for work shadowing included below.

Sick Children

A child who has an infectious illness or disease may not be brought on campus under any circumstances. Employees should speak to their supervisors to discuss available options for accommodating a child's illness.

Notification

Employees who have received permission to bring a child into the workplace are required to inform their supervisors prior to the child's arrival. Where health and safety risk is too great, or for any other reason, the supervisor may decide that it is inappropriate that the child be allowed to be on the premises.

Supervision of Children

At all times children present on campus remain the sole responsibility of their parent/caregiver. Employees are fully responsible for the behaviour and actions of their children whilst on campus. The University cannot be and is not responsible for the safety of children brought on campus. The University will hold employees liable for any damage or injury caused by their children while on campus.

Parents who bring their children on campus must:

- Continually assess the risks to which their children are/could be subjected and take all necessary steps to minimize them;
- Take into account that children will be unfamiliar with the working environment;
- Ahead of time, explain any safety or courtesy rules applicable to the areas in which their children will be present, and ensure that such rules are observed;
- Accompany and supervise their children at all times (keeping children within "sight and sound" at all times);
- Not ask any other employee or student to supervise their children.

The University reserves the right to require parents to remove from campus children who are in violation of any of the above requirements, or disruptive in any way to the work of other staff, students, visitors or contractors on site, or otherwise at risk.

Access

When children are brought to the workplace, the following requirements apply:

- Children are expressly prohibited from entering the following hazardous areas:
 - Laboratories
 - Kitchens (Sodexho)
 - Bar areas
 - Workshops and studios
 - Any areas where tools or machinery are located or used – even when not in use
 - Any areas where chemicals, cleaning fluids or other substances covered by WHIMS are stored
- Children must not be left alone in parked vehicles or in parking lots.

Facilities and Equipment

Children are not permitted to use any University equipment including computer equipment.

WORK SHADOWING

Purpose

Job shadowing is increasingly becoming an integral part of the learning experience for students in elementary and secondary schools. It allows students to observe people as they perform their regular job duties and to see how skills learned in school are put into action in the workplace. These guidelines have been prepared by the Human Resources Department to assist the student, parents, workplace sponsor and workplace supervisor to make the experience a rewarding and safe one.

Legal Considerations

As it applies to the University, the Nova Scotia *Occupational Health and Safety Act* specifies that there is a shared duty on the part of the employer and employee with regards to workplace safety:

- Employers must ensure the health and safety of anyone at or near the workplace;
- Employees have a duty to report anything in the workplace that they think may be dangerous and they must also take every reasonable precaution to ensure their health and safety and that of others in the workplace.

The University also owes a common law duty of care to anyone invited or permitted to attend on campus. This duty of care further underscores the responsibility of all employees to ensure a safe workplace, particularly when visitors who are unfamiliar with the risks and responsibilities of the workplace are present for work shadowing visits.

Guidelines

In the following guidelines, the term "sponsor" refers to the individual (parent or supervisor) who takes the student into the workplace and who is responsible for that student during the time spent in the workplace.

1. Except in areas of the University to which the public generally has access (*e.g.* outdoors, corridors), the student must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult who is knowledgeable of and trained to deal with any hazards in the work area.
2. The sponsor must seek prior approval of the workplace supervisor to bring a student into the workplace for work shadowing purposes, and the supervisor must be notified of and approve the date and time(s) the student will be present, the locations which the student will be visiting, and the activities in which the student will

participate.

3. The sponsor must clearly identify and explain to the student the nature of the hazards in the workplace and the need for the safety and security procedures applicable to the workplace. Special attention should be paid to laboratory hazards such as chemical and biological agents, ionizing radiation and lasers.
4. The sponsor must explain any rules or procedures related to safety or courtesy that apply to the particular area(s) in which the student will be present, and ensure that the student observes such rules.
5. The sponsor must provide and ensure that the student wears any personal protective equipment (e.g. safety glasses, laboratory coat, hearing protection, footwear) required in that workplace.
6. The student must not operate laboratory or mechanical equipment, or vehicles.
7. The rules and restrictions regarding children in the workplace, described above, will apply to work shadowing visits.

Further information

For further information or questions related to this policy contact the Human Resources Department at extension 5236.