



## St Peter's College

### HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

#### General

1. The nature of the College's work and its buildings means that extra care needs to be taken over the health and safety of young people and children, who may be particularly vulnerable because of their relative lack of experience and maturity. They require special consideration when carrying out risk assessments; and employed young people, which is unlikely to be a frequent occurrence, will require more training and supervision than more experienced workers. This policy reiterates the importance of the fundamental elements in managing health and safety risks to young people who may be employed on work experience, or may be present as students (e.g. as undergraduates or on educational visits). Advice must be sought from the Bursar's office and the HR officer before employing young people to work for the College in any capacity.

2. Children may also be present on the premises for a number of other reasons not related to work. For example:

- a. For access, along with other members of the public, to the College grounds.
- b. Where the children (or their parents) are subjects of study.
- c. Where they are enrolled in nurseries or crèches.
- d. During open days and other promotional events.
- e. As students on summer schools.

This policy is primarily concerned with health and safety: it should, however, be read in conjunction with the College's "Child Safeguarding Policy 2015".

#### Relevant Legislation

3. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 require risk assessments to be carried out, taking particular note of vulnerable or inexperienced groups of individuals. Young people are specifically cited as an example. Young people include employees and students less than 18 years old; and children (those under the minimum school leaving age, MSLA, usually 16<sup>1</sup>). The College prohibits the employment of young people under the MSLA except on work experience schemes approved by a local authority or the governing body of an independent school. While on work experience placements (which generally take place in Years 10 and 11) children have the temporary legal status and rights of employees.

4. Departments within the College considering employing young people should consult the HSE's publication, 'The Right Start': (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg364.pdf>). The HSE also publishes specific advice on the health and safety of children and young people in catering: (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais21.pdf>).

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<sup>1</sup> The minimum school leaving age is the last Friday in June of the year in which the individual is 16.

## General Advice

5. Departments in the College must not employ young people (those under 18 years) for work which:
- a. Is beyond their physical or psychological capability.
  - b. Might involve harmful exposure to hazardous substances.
  - c. Presents a risk to health from physical agents.
  - d. Introduces a risk of accidents which it may be reasonably assumed the young person cannot recognise due to inexperience or lack of training,

## Risk Assessment

6. Before young people start work a written risk assessment must be carried out, taking into account the following factors as applicable:
- a. Fit-out and layout of the workplace and the workstation.
  - b. Form, range and use of work equipment and the way in which it is handled; consideration given to the need for personal protective equipment (PPE).
  - c. Organisation of the work, processes, or activities that the young person will undertake: young people may be less skilled in handling techniques or in pacing their work according to their capability. The risk assessment should therefore take account of their physique, general health, age, and previous experience, ensuring that the pace of such work allows sufficient recovery time.
  - d. Inexperience, lack of awareness of risk, attitude and immaturity: there may be differences in the psychological make-up of individual young workers, which are generally a reflection of their background, experience, personality and training. Assumptions must not be made about a young worker's abilities to cope with different work situations, some of which may be stressful for a new and inexperienced worker. Lack of experience or training may make them less able to identify potentially risky situations or equip them with the means of dealing with them appropriately. Young workers must be supervised closely until their ability to cope and make sound decisions has been proven.

## Provision of Information

6. All employees, including young workers aged under 18 years, must be informed about any risks to their health and safety, as well as the preventative and protective measures to be implemented to control them. Information must also be provided about any emergency procedures or action to be taken in the event of serious and imminent danger. A copy of the written risk assessment will generally suffice (and see College policy regarding risk assessments). In addition to the young people themselves, the parents or those with parental responsibility for school-age children (i.e. under 16 years) must be given information about any risks and control measures identified in the risk assessment. The work experience organiser may assist with the provision of relevant safety information to the parent, carer, or guardian, usually by means of the risk assessment.

## Training and Supervision

7. Information is not enough in itself to ensure that young workers fully appreciate the risks associated with the work they will do. Proper instruction is essential, and the performance of the work must be monitored carefully to ensure that the young worker has fully understood any instructions that are given, as well as to alert the supervisor to emerging problems. The scope of training will vary with the individual and according to the work needing done. It is dependent on their comprehension and aptitude, and must be tailored, and paced, according to their needs.

8. Young workers are very likely to need more supervision than adults. Effective supervision<sup>2</sup> will help to monitor the effectiveness of the training they have received, and help to assess whether the young person is capable and competent to do the work to a level where they can work safely without putting themselves, or others, at risk.

### Children on College Premises

9. Although the College undertakes, as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that its premises are low risk to children, some buildings, due to their age or the work being done within/outside them, are simply not designed with the needs of children in mind. General risks regarded as trivial for mature visitors may be more significant for children and in general the College does not have the facilities to contain children safely, other than in those specific locations or circumstances where formal arrangements have been put in place to manage them.

10. This can have safety implications for those unplanned occasions when children are brought into the College, perhaps during brief social visits or, exceptionally, in emergency situations where staff, or students, have difficulties with their normal child-care provision. Children under the MSLA should only be allowed in the College with the permission of the Master or the Bursar for as short a time as possible and only as the last resort when all other options for childcare (such as taking emergency domestic leave or annual leave) have been exhausted. Information on taking time off for such domestic emergencies can be found in the College's staff handbook. In addition, the College has a flexible working policy that may allow parents to alter their working patterns, or change their hours, to help them manage their childcare responsibilities.

11. If alternative arrangements cannot be made, and it is absolutely necessary to bring children to work, permission should be sought, in advance if at all possible, and certainly as soon as the children are brought on-site, so that appropriate safety management arrangements can be made to accommodate them. In particular, a risk assessment should take account of the following factors:

- a. The age of the child(ren).
- b. High risk areas of the College - access to certain areas is absolutely prohibited in:
  - (1) Workshops.
  - (2) Plant rooms and roof tops.
  - (3) Kitchens and food preparation areas.
  - (4) College supply and waste stores, or goods receiving areas.
  - (5) Any other areas designated as 'authorised access only'unless this is a planned event, such as for work experience training or open days and, even then, they must be accompanied by a responsible staff member at all times.
- c. General areas - if there is no alternative to bringing children to work, and the Master/Bursar has agreed this, then the children should be restricted to general areas, such as common rooms and offices. Even in low risk areas, special consideration should be given to the potential for slips trips and falls, especially from stairs and landings (being mindful that many older buildings may have steep stairs or gaps in the banisters which might allow young children to pass through, or where climbing may be attempted). Windows which may be accessible to children should be of restricted opening and any low level glazing protected against breakage, or resist breakage.
- d. Supervision - children must always be accompanied while on College premises and on no account should they be permitted unsupervised access even to low risk areas. Parents cannot delegate this responsibility.
- e. Emergency procedures - planning should take account of the limited mobility of young children and the possible need for parents to receive assistance in the event of an emergency situation arising.

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<sup>2</sup> The risk assessment should include a conclusion as to whether supervision will be wholly effective

f. Other considerations - it should be acknowledged that the presence of children is potentially disruptive to other staff, particularly those who share a work area with the parent of the child or children, if those children are not supervised and managed properly. If the parent needs to briefly leave those areas of the College to which children are restricted, suitable arrangements must be put in place to supervise the children for the period of the parent's absence and this may result in an imposition on colleagues.

g. Summer schools – procedures must be developed jointly, and subsequently agreed, between the College and the school organisers.

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