

POLICY ON CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE

Administrative Division	Business Office
Policy Title	Policy on Children in the Workplace
Administrative Office	Human Resources
Effective Date of Policy	October 21, 2024

Purpose

Kansas Wesleyan University values an atmosphere that fosters a healthy balance between workplace obligations and family responsibilities. At the same time, Kansas Wesleyan University strives to maintain a professional environment that is conducive to work and where disruptions and health and safety concerns are minimized, maintaining a high-quality educational environment for students, employees, and other constituents. The workplace is typically not designed for children. However, the University recognizes that employees may occasionally want to bring children to the workplace for brief visits, specific campus events, situational convenience or family emergencies. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for creating a supportive working climate for employees to meet family obligations and to outline when children can appropriately be in the workplace.

Implementation

This policy is effective October 21, 2024, and is applicable to all employees, affiliates, and volunteers who bring children under the age of 18 to the workplace or are visited in the workplace by children under the age of 18 during normal business hours. This policy does not apply when children are participating in approved University events or programs, or youth activities that involve children in education, research, or supervised care. University events are activities sponsored or operated in part or whole involving intentional interactions between youth and employees, such as, but not limited to, camps, symposia, internships, job shadowing, lessons, coaching, field trips, service learning, projects, competitions, workshops, clinics, or conferences). It also does not apply to children who are residing in a campus facility with a parent or guardian who has residency in a campus facility as a condition of employment.

Flex Work Time

When possible, departments should honor an employee's request for flexibility to meet unexpected family needs that may require the employee's attention during normal working hours. When workloads and job requirements allow, the university encourages departments to cooperate with employees who wish to meet family responsibilities by using breaks or lunch hours, flexible work schedules, telework, adjusted hours, paid time off, or other alternative work arrangements.

Procedure and Restrictions

The university understands that brief and infrequent visits by children in the care of its employees may occur for a variety of reasons. **However, the frequent, regular or extended presence of children during work hours is not allowed due to the potential for interruption of work, health and safety issues, and liability to the university.**

Employees are permitted to bring children to the workplace or be visited by children in the workplace during work hours for a brief period of time as necessary and appropriate subject to the following general circumstances:

1. Brief visits (introducing a child to coworkers, bringing a child to work before or after an appointment);
2. Specific campus events that are employee sanctioned and at which attendance by children is encouraged;
3. In the event of a family emergency where there are no alternatives; or
4. When prior arrangements have been made for breastfeeding.

Employees should meet with their supervisor to request having children in the workplace. Approval of such visits is at the discretion of the employee's supervisor and may be required in advance of the visit. Classroom attendance of children of students is at the discretion of the instructor.

Kansas Wesleyan University employees should ensure that any visits of children comply with all safety protocols and university guidelines, including, but not limited to the following principles regarding the presence of children in the workplace:

- Visits should generally be brief (no longer than two (2) hours) and generally not on consecutive days.
- At all times, children remain the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- At all times, the parent/guardian must accompany and supervise their children.
- The employee must not ask any other employee or student to supervise the child.
- The employee must ensure that the work of the university is not disrupted by the presence of the child or negatively affect the productivity of the employee who brought the child, other employees, or students.

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- The employee's supervisor may deny or revoke permission for the child to be in the workplace at any time if the supervisor determines that health or safety risks are too great, or that the child's presence is disruptive.
- Bringing children to the workplace on a recurrent basis during their school breaks, closures, or before/after school, or due to a lack of childcare is not appropriate. Children are not to be brought to work in lieu of extended or regular childcare.
- A child who has an illness that prevents him/her from being accepted by a regular day care provider or from attending school, particularly a child with an infectious disease, should NOT be brought to the workplace under any circumstances.
- Children shall not be permitted in any potentially hazardous area. For example, this would include lab, art, or shop facilities or any other setting where they may be exposed to hazardous materials, chemicals, flammable substances, sharp objects, machinery, construction areas, high-security areas, health-related situations such as food preparation, or areas being used for high-risk activities. Children as passengers in campus vehicles must follow age-appropriate vehicle safety protocols and be preapproved by the employee's supervisor.
- Children may not have access to any confidential or sensitive information (e.g. student records, medical records, employee files).
- By bringing a child to campus, the employee assumes all liability for that child and accepts responsibility for all aspects of the child's behavior, including safety of the child, disruption of coworkers, unauthorized use of university resources and damage to property or injury to others.

Compliance

Any employee violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure according to the respective university guidelines.

EXCLUSIONS OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

Children cannot be brought to campus during periods of emergency (e.g., natural and/or man-made disasters, disaster recovery, health pandemics) either on an intermittent or reoccurring basis, unless as part of local schools' evacuation and shelter protocols. Employees should contact their supervisor in such cases to determine alternate solutions to balance work activities and childcare needs.

An employee seeking a short-term arrangement to bring a child to work on a regular basis, should request advance approval from their supervisor. If granted, the supervisor should develop a plan and special requirements for such a temporary arrangement in consultation with the employee, with consideration of the work setting, job responsibilities, the child's needs and developmental level, and the potential for disruption. Approval of such an arrangement may be denied or rescinded by the employee's supervisor, or senior administration.

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