

## Policy 2228: Children and Minors in the Workplace Procedures

The Children and Minors in the Workplace policy is not designed to eliminate all visits by children but to encourage the Mason community to discuss those situations where children would distract from or be endangered by a workplace situation as well as those situations where it would be appropriate to permit children to visit. Further, the policy is not intended to be proscriptive, rather supervisors need to use good judgment regarding safe and productive workplaces.

Please keep the following points in mind when requesting to bring a child to the workplace or considering whether to approve having a faculty or staff member's child visit the workplace:

1. The policy outlines that the workplace may not be used in lieu of child care, however children may visit with supervisor approval. Because Mason is so diverse, it is left up to individual units, supervisors, and department heads to consider whether a visit is appropriate. Approval is at the discretion of the supervisor and/or department head and there is no burden of justification on them for turning down a request with the exception that requests should be handled equitably (i.e. similar situations should be treated similarly).
2. The policy permits "brief" visits. Brief is a relative term. Brief can mean that a child could attend a Mason summer camp until 3:30 pm and then be in the parent's office area until 5:00. When considering a visit, one should take into account several things:
  - The age and behavior of the child -- do they understand the work at hand; can they behave in such a way as not to distract the parent or anyone else?
  - The nature of the workplace -- is it safe for a child? (given that children range in age from infants to 17 years, this is an important question)
  - The flow of the work -- even a safe place and a well behaved child might still be a distraction from the work at hand.
  - Allowing children to be in the workplace, when appropriate, may be advantageous to the entire workplace environment and contribute to an engaged and supportive work and study experience
3. The parent/guardian must be able to supervise the child. It is not appropriate: o for a parent to pass that responsibility to a colleague, subordinate, or student o to leave a young child unattended (i.e. one who requires constant supervision) o to permit a child to engage in behavior that puts the child or the workplace at risk or distracts the parent and/or colleagues from their work.
4. The policy indicates that, "Children who have a potentially contagious illness shall not be brought to the worksite under any circumstances." This may be a judgment call however if a child is home from school or daycare because of illness, they should not be brought to work. Please note: Supervisors may grant leave or flexible hours at their discretion to assist an employee in a temporary and unforeseen emergency such as this or other such situation that may arise on occasion.

5. If an approved visit proves to be disruptive or in any way impacts the safety of the child, a supervisor may ask the employee to remove the child from the workplace.
6. All locations of Mason are covered -- this includes all buildings, grounds, and facilities. Facilities can include shops, labs, athletic fields, gyms, courts, fitness centers, swimming pools, etc.
7. If children who are on an approved visit to the workplace complete any tasks while visiting, it is presumed to be in the capacity of a volunteer unless prior arrangements are made. All federal and state child labor laws are to be observed.
8. Virginia law permits breastfeeding “at any location where [she] would otherwise be allowed on property that is owned, leased or controlled by the Commonwealth as defined in § [2.2-1147](#)<sup>1</sup>. Private space will be made available to employees, students, and visitors who need to express milk. For a current list of identified spaces on campus, please visit <http://hr.gmu.edu/parentGuide/>
9. Human Resources & Payroll has compiled child care resources that may be of assistance. Please visit <http://hr.gmu.edu/parentGuide/> for details.

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<sup>1</sup>Please see <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter11/section2.2-1147.1/>