

APPENDIX D. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY - CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

Principals and line managers should take reasonable steps to accommodate students or employees who are parents or carers and may need to bring their child or children into the workplace in unplanned, exceptional circumstances.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (section 35K) allows for persons with a family responsibility to access facilities, services or opportunities to meet their special needs in relation to employment, education, training or welfare.

Approval by principals and line managers

Principals and line managers may accommodate staff and student requests to bring their child or children into the school or workplace in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the following factors:

- potential disruption to the work environment, other employees and students;
- duty of care responsibilities;
- the nature of the unplanned exceptional circumstance;
- age of the child;
- length of time involved;
- risk the working environment poses to the child;
- any medical conditions and special needs of the child;
- safety and health issues; and
- direct and constant supervision required by the parent.

If it is not possible to accommodate the parent's request, factors that led to the decision should be explained to the parent.

Due to occupational safety and health reasons, some work areas are not suitable for children, even though they would be under the direct supervision of the parent. These areas include laboratories, design and technology workshops and kitchens.

Duty of care

Employees only owe a general duty of care to children brought into the school or workplace under the care of the parent, not the special duty of care owed by teachers to students.

Responsibilities of parents

Parents should:

- consider the risk the work environment poses to the child before seeking approval;
- request approval from their principal or line manager prior to bringing children into the school or workplace;
- if approval is granted, be exclusively responsible for the direct care and supervision of their child. Failure to do so will result in approval being withdrawn immediately; and
- not bring a child into the school or workplace who is excluded from school, kindergarten or a child care centre for contact with, and cases of, infectious disease (see exclusion periods in Appendix 4, *Communicable Disease Guidelines*, WA Department of Health).

Any injuries to the child caused by the child's own actions or lack of supervision by the parent is the sole responsibility of the parent.