

Safeguarding Risk Assessment **Under-18s - Guidance**

Any activity that involves staff or students (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity) working with members of a vulnerable group (e.g. children and young people or vulnerable adults), should have a safeguarding risk assessment completed before activity begins. For the purpose of this document, we are focused on children (defined as those under the age of 18).

The safeguarding risk assessment for an activity should be completed by the staff or student who is responsible for the activity. It should include clear identification of risks that need to be removed or mitigated, and the operating practice that mitigates or removes those risks. As an example, situations where there is only one member of staff or one student present with a lone child or adult in a vulnerable situation should be avoided. This may require you to consider alternative working practices.

When conducting a safeguarding risk assessment, we need to take into account many factors to help keep our audience, staff and students safe. This guidance will help you determine the different things you should consider when planning an event for under-18s, and this will inform you in drafting your safeguarding risk assessment.

This document contains questions and scenarios that should be considered when planning activities that involve under-18s, as well as a table that explores the risks and impacts in more detail. It can be used in conjunction with the safeguarding risk assessment template for drafting your specific safeguarding risk assessments. The Outreach team are available to help if you have questions or want to seek advice via email at outreach@imperial.ac.uk.

Planning your event

1. When, Where, What and Who

Identify the nature, length, frequency, intensity and time of any contact when working with under-18s to help inform your risk assessment.

Questions you might want to ask yourself are:

- Is your activity face to face or online?
- Is your activity aimed at adults, but with a likely or possible presence of under-18s?
- How old are your participants? Are they accompanied by an adult?
- What activity are you going to do with them? Are there health and safety risks you need to control? (Note – if yes, you should liaise with your safety officer to ensure this is fully risk assessed as well)
- How often are you going to work with this group?
- Are you having the same volunteers / staff working regularly?
- How will you determine whether those volunteers / staff are safe to work with under-18s?
- If the activity is face to face, is the physical space you are planning to use safe for under-18s? Is it secure or publicly accessible? Are you on campus, in school or in another space?
- If your activity is online, what platform are you going to use? Have you assessed the platform suitability for under-18s? Is it secure and safe?
- Is the activity after-school or at weekends? During the school day?
- Is there a likelihood that staff will find themselves working one to one with someone under the age of 18?

2. Supervision ratios

You will need to determine what the appropriate staffing ratio is for your activity. It is recommended that at least two adults be present for any activity involving under-18s regardless of group size. Guidance from the NSPCC suggests the following minimum ratios:

- 0 - 2 years - one adult to three children
- 2 - 3 years - one adult to four children
- 4 - 8 years - one adult to six children

- 9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
- 13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

You need to determine whether these ratios are sufficient based on the activity you are doing (content and duration), where the activity is taking place, the age of the participants, whether participants are accompanied or unaccompanied by a parent / teacher, the skill-set of your staff/volunteers and whether there are any special requirements (e.g. medical needs) you need to support.

3. Staffing

You should consider the following:

- Are your staff/volunteers used to and/or suitable to work with under-18s?
- Do your staff/volunteers need any specific training before working with the participants on this activity?
- What information do they need in advance to ensure they understand their part in keeping the participants safe during your activity?
- Do you, or other staff/volunteers supporting this activity, require a DBS check? (Note that guidance on DBS checks can be found on the [Imperial College website](#))
- Do staff and/or volunteers know how to report concerns about a participant's welfare or behaviour, or that of another staff member, including who the report should go to?
- How are you going to make staff and / or volunteers working on this activity aware of the Imperial College's safeguarding policy and procedures?

4. Managing concerns, behaviour issues

You should ensure you have a process in place for staff/volunteers and under-18s to report problems, concerns or difficulties and how you will respond to and / or manage these issues. Imperial's [safeguarding contacts](#) can be found on the Safeguarding website.

5. Managing lost or missing young people

You should think about what you can put in place to prevent under-18s getting lost finding their way to your activity or during your activity. You should also consider what your procedure will be if you do have participants go missing before or during your activity. You may wish to consider a designated meeting point for lost individuals (e.g. where this will be, how you will make sure participants know about it and how it will be supervised), how you will contact parents or carers to inform them that their child is lost or has been found, who will co-ordinate the initial search for a missing participant. If on campus, you should consider speaking to the Security team about your event.

6. Consent, including photography and filming

You should consider what consent you require from participants and / or their parents/guardians for their involvement in your activity. If you are working with a school, you should determine whether the school is gaining consent for participation. How are you going to collect emergency contact information for under-18s or their medical information in advance of the activity? Are you going to film or take photos at the event? How do you communicate that to your participants and their parents / guardians and what consent do you need? More information about gathering consent for photography and filming can be found [here](#).

7. Emergency procedures

This will also form part of your health and safety risk assessment. In order to keep under-18s safe on your activities, you should ensure you have a trained first aider present or identified and local / on-site during your activity and that you and your staff/volunteers understand the fire evacuation procedure. Consider also how you will inform parents / guardians if there is an emergency / accident during your activity, and what your procedures are if you need to contact the emergency services.

RISK	IMPACT ON PEOPLE	IMPACT ON IMPERIAL COLLEGE	POSSIBLE RISK OR HARM This is not an exhaustive list and there may be others specific to your event, activity or programme
Lack of appropriate consent or participant information	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information about individual participants and the number of participants means that risk mitigation is harder and providing adjustments to meet individual needs is not possible. • Attendees could be at risk of harm if risks are not mitigated, managed or reasonable adjustments are not made. • Activities may not be accessible to all if medical needs or additional requirements are not understood, and could cause unintended harm • Imperial College could ultimately face legal action / reputational damage if risks are not identified, mitigated and managed appropriately
Staffing ratios are inadequate	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants going missing • Participants coming to harm due to poor supervision • Participants not enjoying/benefiting from the activity • Participants with additional needs not being supported • Parents/carers being concerned and uncomfortable • Imperial College could face reputational damage / legal action
DBS Checks / Appropriate staffing personnel	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants could be at risk of being exposed to individuals who may intend to cause harm if DBS checks are not in place when required • Staff / volunteers developing inappropriate relationships with participants • Over reliance on DBS checks can cause relaxation of supervisory practice which can place participants at risk of harm • Staff / volunteers not confident in working with under-18s including managing inappropriate behaviour places participants at risk and / or causes stress / anxiety in staff / volunteer • Imperial College could face reputational damage / legal action if appropriate checks were not in place when required.

Suitability of space for activity	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space is not appropriate for activity and / or age group of participants • Participants and staff/volunteers with additional needs (e.g. mobility issues, visual or hearing impairment) may be at increased risk if space is not accessible with appropriate emergency exit routes. • Participants and staff/volunteers could be at risk of injury or harm from the space, furniture, equipment or machinery within • Participants could be at risk from other space users if space is shared • Participants could be at risk from other adults, young people, if the space is public or publicly accessible. • Participants and staff can be injured by slipping or falling • If overnight accommodation is required, additional risks need to be considered.
Toilet provision + procedure	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets are often shared facilities where adults and under-18s may come into contact. Age appropriate support may need to be considered • Participants and staff/volunteers with additional needs may need access to disabled toilets • A family-focused event may require the need for nappy changing facilities • Public accessibility of toilets can pose a risk to participants
Event Information / Arrival and Departure from events	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided to participants is not clear and leads to confusion, lost or late individuals • Building entrances and exits could become overcrowded • Parents/carers dropping under-18s off too late for registers to be taken and participants unaccounted for • Parents/carers collecting under-18s late after the activity finishes could lead to inappropriate staffing ratios or participant being left alone • A participant unaccompanied on site after the activity has concluded • Entrance / exit points of building are potentially hazardous spaces with vehicles, pedestrians etc. • Public knowledge of specific event information (e.g. what time and where under-18s will be) poses a risk of exposure to individuals who may intend to cause harm

Photography/film consent / social media usage	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of GDPR compliance with image / video consent if not managed properly • People taking photos of staff/volunteers and participants without the appropriate permission or signage • Photographs or videos of under 18s being taken on personal devices • Pictures being uploaded onto sites without the appropriate permissions • Risk of looked after children being identified from publicly accessible images or video • Participants may take and make photos / videos of under-18s available via social media sites without the relevant permissions • Derogatory comments on social media platforms • Images / videos stored on personal devices • Complaints / reputational damage
First aid provision / Medical Information not collected	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of first aid provision if required • Lack of understanding by staff/volunteers about who to contact when first aid / medical emergency occurs • A participant's medical needs not being met / making activity inaccessible to them / creation of higher risk • Allergies, staff / volunteers unaware of a participant's allergies and how to manage them • Staff / volunteers unable to deal with a medical and / or first aid incident • Extreme cases have a potential risk to life • Imperial College at risk of reputational damage and / or legal action
Referral of concerns and managing allegations	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting procedure for concerns / incidents is not in place / understood • Concerns about the welfare / safety of a participant are not shared with responsible person / contact • Allegations or concerns about staff/volunteer conduct not shared with responsible person / contact • Imperial College at risk of reputational damage and / or legal action if concerns are not managed appropriately and a participant comes to harm as a result

Emergency & evacuation procedures	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff / volunteers not having a clear understanding of emergency evacuation procedures puts lives at risk • Participants could be left inside a building • Participants could get lost during evacuation • Participants /staff/volunteers with additional needs may face increased harm if an appropriate PEEP has not been put in place • Individuals unaccounted for puts staff / volunteers / emergency personnel at risk • Staff / volunteers not knowing how to manage other emergency situations can result in lost or hurt attendees • If off-site, local rules may need to be considered • Imperial College at risk of reputational damage and / or legal action
Online	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymity of platforms / knowing who someone is online • Increased risk of peer on peer abuse • Difficulties of managing inappropriate behaviour in the virtual environment • Barriers to under-18s reporting concerns • Limited ability for staff / volunteers to identify welfare concerns in the virtual environment • Possibility of unmonitored contact between staff / volunteers and under-18s • Possibility of excessive screen time for under-18s • Managing virtual breakout spaces • Managing privacy settings • Sharing / circulation of inappropriate materials • Digital exclusion • Accessibility of virtual environment or content to those with additional needs.

Other risks	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants being lost or unsupervised • Exposure to dangerous or inappropriate behaviour (e.g. strong or offensive language, violence, substance misuse) • Participants purchasing or consuming alcohol or having access to alcohol via the activity they are attending (e.g. public events with an adult audience) • Participants experiencing anxiety, stress or other mental ill-health concerns during activities • Participants and / or staff / volunteers sharing personal information or contact information with each other • Participants making contact with staff / volunteers or vice versa outside of scheduled activities • Unauthorised adults accessing under-18s during activities • Staff / volunteer being in a 1-2-1 situation with someone under the age of 18 • Peer on peer abuse (e.g. bullying) face to face or online • Participants exposed to unsuitable entertainment (e.g. adult material – comedians; entertainers using strong or offensive language; sexualized entertainment or references; material containing violent/aggressive images or sounds)
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