



Guidance for Adults Bringing Under 5's To Matches

Introduction

Whilst it is a parent's responsibility to decide whether their child attends a football match, the first question they should ask is whether it is appropriate to take them along with you based on: their age, resilience, the time of the match, the predicted weather conditions, the noise, the crowds and any other associated risks?

Club Stadium Rules

There are a number of Club rules relating to children visiting the stadium:

- Anyone under the age of 14 must be accompanied;
- Anyone accompanying someone under the age of 14 must be 18 or over; and
- Children aged 4 and under may attend football matches free of charge but do so seated on an adult's knee.

Things to be mindful of:

Weather Conditions

Through the football season supporters are likely to experience all weather types. Early and late season may mean high temperatures and strong sunshine. Mid-winter games, especially at night, may mean sub-zero temperatures, rain, wind and snow. Frost and ice underfoot may also be an extra hazard for those carrying or walking with small children.

Be very careful in cold and wet and windy conditions. Babies and very small children can become very cold very quickly, even at times of the year where adults feel it is warm outside. Remember you may be walking with, carrying or pushing your child and keeping warm through activity whereas they will more than likely be inactive. They are also unlikely to tell you that they are cold until it's too late. Don't forget – unusually quiet with bright red (and cold) skin doesn't necessarily mean they are warm and happy this could be a sign of hypothermia.

If you do choose to bring your child to a match remember to clothe them with layers, at least one more than you are likely to be wearing and they should really have an outer coat, hat and gloves. Check the weather forecast before you leave and be prepared for it to be colder or wetter than predicted. If in doubt they should wear extra clothes – you can always take a layer off.

Remember to check the forecast prior to leaving for the event.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/m11>



Noise

Football matches are noisy events. The noise levels go up and down throughout a match. Small children have thinner skulls and more sensitive hearing and therefore more prone to hearing damage than adults. Whilst long term damage from the noise at football grounds is unlikely, the peak sounds can reach the same levels experienced in a nightclub. Ear plugs or muffs may help to protect their hearing and ear muffs in particular may also help to keep them a little bit warmer.

Some children may also find the cheering, singing and chanting in some parts of the stadium a little frightening. You may also find some supporters occasionally using language that is inappropriate for young people to hear. The Club has a Family Stand for families where such noise is less.

Balls

Football balls are hard. If they hit you then they can hurt and even cause injury. In many areas of the lower supporter seating there is a risk of being hit by a ball from the pitch. This is even more so behind the goals or near the corner-flags. During the warm up there are multiple balls on the pitch and may come from any angle. Please ensure that you and your child stay alert to the possibility of a football heading your way whenever you are sat in your seat (supporters tend not to concentrate on the on-pitch activities during the warm up).

Young Supporter Wristband

We would like all supporters to experience a safe and enjoyable matchday and this applies to families for groups bringing children under the age of 14. Young Supporter Wristbands are available from the stewards, simply complete the reverse of the wristband before attaching to your child.

Lost Children

Staff at both the Etihad Stadium are well trained and experienced in providing a safe environment for all our visitors but wherever there are large gatherings of people there are risks. We aim to have a family friendly environment but that does not mean common sense should not prevail. Parents or other chaperones have primary responsibility for the safety of their children.

Please be aware of where your child is at any time during your visit. Have a plan to meet somewhere if you get separated (one point inside the stadium and one point outside) or where to go if they feel lost or worried. **Make sure your child knows how to get in contact with you and that they should go to a steward if they get lost.**

Our stewards have a set of arrangements for re-uniting lost children and keeping them safe. There are Lost Child points around the stadium concourse – point them out to your child. You can go to any steward to raise a concern about a lost child and they will start the process to get you back together. Make sure your child knows to go straight to a match day steward if they get separated from you and **not to go off with a supporter they do not know.**



Emergencies

You should also think about emergencies – could you and your child cope in one? Would they be safe in the crowd trying to get quickly out of the stadium all at once? If you had to get out quickly how would you do that safely and together? Where would you meet up outside?

And Finally

We want you and your child to enjoy your visit. If you are bringing a child to the stadium think about their needs first. If you can't guarantee their comfort or safety, then please think about getting a babysitter so you can relax and enjoy the game!

If you have a concern about a child, then contact the Club's Safeguarding Team at any time. During a match, please do not hesitate to report a concern to one of our stewards.

<https://www.mancity.com/fans-and-community/club/safeguarding>