



Isle of Man Steam Packet Company

Adult/Child Ratio Policy Group Travel

POLICY:

Passenger safety is our top priority and this policy ensures the safety and comfort of the group, fellow passengers and our crew whilst traveling on our vessels.

The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company defines a group as more than 8 people traveling together on one ticket. Groups of eight or more must be booked via the Reservations Team either via email or telephone. Groups including children (0-15 years) must adhere to the following ratios of adults to children: Up to 10 Children, 2 Adults. Above 10 children one additional adult for every five children who travel. Groups will continue to have the option of purchasing a confirmed seat on board at a discounted rate and the maximum group size for any one booking will be 60 children with 12 adults.

BACKGROUND:

Children's group travel is managed through the company's group reservations and capacity control (yield) teams. All group bookings can only be made in the system after we review, approve and load the sailing schedules for the next 18 months.

Each year prior to loading our sailing schedules the management and leadership teams review a number of varying factors such as tidal restrictions, freight, private vehicle's, coach parties, adult / children's groups, operations and other areas of the business which may impact our customers journey. During this review a point of health and safety was raised about the issue of inadequate supervision of groups on board and in particular those with children. As a result of a detailed discussion on this issue a ratio policy of one adult to five children was introduced to coincide with the new schedule being launched on the 24 Oct 2024.

PRIMARY HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS FOR UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN ON BOARD:

In the event that there is an incident onboard, such as fire or flooding, the ship's crew will initiate emergency procedures, this includes closing water tight and fire doors. There is an increased risk with large groups of unsupervised children being separated from their supervisors/guardians. This situation will create an increased level of stress not only in the children but also the supervisors/guardians. The resultant panic will spread amongst other passengers, resulting in a situation that could become out of control and overload the ship's crew who are trying to focus on dealing with the emergency at hand.

If the emergency situation develops and leads to evacuation of the vessel, the large group of separated children now become the sole responsibility of the ship's crew who will not be able to give the required attention to those passengers who requested it at the time of booking, for example disabled or elderly passengers.

As a safety conscientious operator, we have to ensure we can comply with rules and regulations relating to evacuation times of the vessel in the event of an emergency, which are scrutinised by Isle of Man Ship Registry and our classification societies. We have to consider any additional time required to assist or supervise passengers requiring assistance. Having a large group of unsupervised children would potentially result in us not complying.

ONGOING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS FOR UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN ON BOARD:

- Accessing the outside decks whilst unsupervised by group leaders
- Knocking into passengers who are carrying hot beverages and food
- Bumping into elderly or infirm passengers who are trying to use the walkways
- Throwing items of food at each other in our seating areas
- Spilling drinks whilst running unsupervised around the passenger walkways
- Damage caused to the new children's play area on Manannan
- Disturbances to passengers cabins doors on deck 8 and lifts on Manxman

PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE ON BOARD:

- Numerous PSO's warnings to group supervisors about on-board behaviours
- Numerous announcements made about unsupervised children
- Group leaders refused alcohol at the bar whilst in charge of child groups
- Numerous passenger complaints onboard about children being unsupervised
- Warning instruction issued by an officer from the Bridge about behaviours
- Information letter about onboard behaviour issued at the point of group booking confirmation
- Warning notices issued post travel about future travel on board our vessels

SUMMARY:

When our 2025 /26 schedules were released no group bookings had been made for travel during this period. Our group reservations team have been informing customers of this new policy and the rationale for its introduction. Whilst we fully appreciate that businesses and education bodies who specialise in group travel for young children to and from the Island may be impacted by this policy, they must fully accept that our primary concern is for the health, safety and comfort of all our passengers.

We are keen to work with all groups to address their concerns and have suggested different ways in which these private businesses and educational bodies can address the child adult ratios via volunteers, parents or guardians being recruited to accompany groups traveling on board.

Task		Identify the risks associated with large groups of children travelling as passengers on board.										
Responsibility for completing risk assessments is the function and responsibility of HOD (Head of Department), however the task may be delegated to a competent person or persons												
Persons exposed to Risk = A: Employee B: Contractor C: Passenger D: Young Persons (<18)												
No	Risk/Exposure		Evaluate			Reduce/Mitigate/Action			Re-evaluate			Action/Owner
	Identify	Exposed to risk	L	S	R	Control Measures			L	S	R	Further mitigation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children accessing the outside decks whilst unsupervised - Running and playing games in passenger walkways - Knocking into passengers carrying hot beverages and food - Knocking into elderly passengers trying to use the walkways - Loud shouting and raised voices in passenger lounge areas - Throwing items of food at each other in seating areas - Spilling drinks when running around the passenger walkways - Vandalism / Damage to the children's play area 	C	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numerous PSO's warnings to group supervisors about on-board behaviours. - Warning instruction issued directly by an officer or the Master to children or adult supervisors. - Numerous announcements over the PA system concerning unsupervised children. - Group leaders refused alcohol at the bar whilst in charge of child groups. 	2	2	4	Adequate adult passenger supervision and attention of children in an emergency scenario. Letter issued to group leaders detailing standards required at point of booking confirmation.		
2	Where an emergency situation develops and leads to evacuation of the vessel, large groups of separated children will become the sole responsibility of the ship's crew who will then not be able to give the required attention to those passengers who have requested assistance at the time of booking, for example disabled or elderly passengers. This may lead to the possibility evacuation of the vessel may not be able to be achieved within the prescribed regulatory time and within the vessel's design survivability period.	A, C	2	5	10	1:5 adult to child supervision ratio implemented.	2	2	4	Adequate adult passenger supervision and attention to children in an emergency scenario. Letter issued to group leaders detailing standards required at point of booking confirmation.		
3	Adequate adult passenger supervision and attention to children in an emergency scenario. Letter issued to group leaders detailing standards required at point of booking confirmation.	A, C	3	3	9	1:5 adult to child supervision ratio implemented.	2	2	4	Supervisors of large groups situated in different parts of the ship. Letter issued to group leaders detailing standards required at point of booking confirmation.		

Key = L: Likelihood S: Severity R: Risk

Comments

For clarity in this risk assessment, "Group C: Passengers" includes adults and children, where "Group D: Young Persons (<18)" refers to crew members <18 years old under the MLC convention.

		Likelihood					Consequences		
		Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely	Certain	People	Assets	Reputation
Severity	5	5	10	15	20	25	Death	Severe Damage	Severe Impact
	4	4	8	12	16	20	Major Injury/Reportable Disease	Major Damage	Major Impact
	3	3	6	9	12	15	Reportable Injury (Over 3 day lost)	Moderate Damage	Moderate Impact
	2	2	4	6	8	10	Lost Time Injury (Under 3 days lost)	Slight Damage	Slight Impact
	1	1	2	3	4	5	Minor Injury (No lost time)	No Damage	No Impact
		1	2	3	4	5			

Score	Priority	Action
1 to 4	Low	Low risk identified - Control measures to be adopted and monitored
5 to 10	Medium	Medium risk identified - Ensure that the risk assessment is reviewed, further controls may be necessary
12 to 25	High	High risk identified - Re-evaluate risk assessment and develop/determine greater controls