



Lone Working Policy

Policy status

Recommended

General Statement:

Parkend School recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves, without close or direct supervision and sometimes in isolated work areas or outside of office hours. This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff. The policy outlines lone working procedures and what is expected of employees who undertake lone working.

This policy aims to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic way and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce that risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on staying safe when working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

Lone workers are those employees who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. The following situations are covered by this policy:

- Site manager or last employee in the building/locking up
- Employees working outside of normal working hours, i.e. weekends and holidays
- People attending out of hours meetings/functions

For the purpose of this policy, a lone worker is an individual who spends some or all of their working hours working alone. This may occur:

- During normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace
- When working outside of school hours. These are deemed to be between 18:00 and 07:30, Monday to Friday during term times, weekends or during school holidays.

Legal Position:

There is no legal prohibition to working alone, however any hazards must be identified and measures put into place to control any risks. Our duty to both assess and control any risks from lone working is not covered by any specific legislation but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply.

This legislation states that "It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all of his employees" and "It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with".

Employers and employees therefore have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety and there is an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when they work remotely from other colleagues or other persons and/or outside 'normal' working hours.

Hazards

These may include, for example:

- Violence and aggression from members of the public including parents/visitors
- A potential for violence or threatening behaviour towards an individual carrying cash or high value equipment
- The use of machinery, electrical or other equipment or chemicals
- Working in remote areas, particularly after dark and outside normal working hours
- Encountering intruders
- Working at height, using ladders and lifting
- Competency, ability and medical condition of the individual
- Working outdoors in severe weather and the risks of slips
- Working in the hours of darkness and the increased likelihood of trips
- Difficult or complete loss of communications e.g. poor mobile phone coverage
- Manual handling of loads and moving and handling of service users
- Use of hazardous chemicals or medication and the lack of first aid assistance
- Accidents arising out of the work environment and the lack of first aid assistance

This is not an exhaustive list. Individuals will be expected to report all situations which leave them open to any health and safety issues to the Executive Head, Operational Headteacher or health and safety representative. The risk can then be assessed and control measures applied where necessary. Through the risk assessment process, existing control measures will be assessed for their effectiveness.

Unacceptable Lone Working

The following activities are not to be carried out by lone workers under any circumstances:

- Working at height
- Meetings with parents
- Working with dangerous equipment

Risk Assessment

Once job roles involving lone working have been identified, the following factors will be considered:

Risk of violence - All jobs involving an element of lone working will be assessed for a risk of verbal threats, or violence. The priority will be those involving face-to-face dealings with members of the public and/or cash handling.

The worker - The medical fitness of workers working alone will be assessed, e.g. if pregnant, asthmatic.

Access - Some lone working may require access to locations which are difficult to access or exit. Assessments will be made by the individual whether these tasks are suitable to be carried out by one person taking into account environmental factors e.g. weather.

Plant and equipment - Plant and equipment used by lone workers will be assessed to ensure that it is suitable for use by one person.

Chemicals - Any existing, or planned use of chemicals will be considered with regards to their suitability for use by those working alone and in accordance with COSHH guidelines for the product.

Communication: Staff are advised to:

Avoid lone working wherever possible by arranging to work in pairs or as a group.

Carry either a mobile phone or have access to a school telephone at all times when lone working.

Let someone know you are coming into work, how long you expect to be and when you are leaving.

Comply with fire evacuation procedures and attend fire assembly points, ensuring that you are cleared to leave the site in the event of an incident.

First aid:

For those working on our premises, first aid kits can be found in the cupboard in the main office (this cupboard is always locked, the key is hung in the key cabinet out of reach of children.)

Emergency procedures:

In the event that a lone worker falls ill, or into difficulties, they are to use their mobile phone / school phone to contact the Executive Headteacher / Operational Headteacher/Caretaker. Please ensure that you have contact numbers (see staff contact list).

Control Measures

In order to manage the risks identified, we have introduced the following control measures:

- Staff must not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working.
- All meetings must be arranged during school occupancy times or when there is more than one member of staff on site for the duration of the meeting.
- Staff are required not to handle cash when lone working, unless a specific risk assessment has been carried out and agreed.

- Late meetings must finish promptly and not leave one member of staff alone on site.
- Staff must not approach, or let unauthorised persons into the buildings when lone working.
- All staff are required to inform a family member or friend that they are working in school and their expected time of return. Staff working at school must ensure that they are secure within the building.
- All staff (even key holders) are required to give prior notice to either the Operational Headteacher before lone working, either after hours or through holiday periods. The school will be locked during these periods.
- Staff attending 'alarm activated' call-outs will complete an outside check of the premises first to ascertain if entry has been unlawfully gained before any attempt is made to enter the school; if there are obvious signs of unlawful entry, staff must not put themselves at risk by entering the building, and police support must be sought.

Training

Lone workers will be made aware of responsibilities through this policy and staff meetings / briefings.

Line Managers

It is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher and Operational Headteacher to:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and that procedures are adhered to through a system of monitoring lone working, i.e. through a signing in system.
- Establish times when staff can work in school 'out of hours', i.e. in the holidays without lone working. This can be achieved by asking staff to only work in school in the holidays when the caretaker is at work or to arrange to come into school with another person.
- Ensure that all safety checks are maintained, i.e. testing of fire alarms and maintenance of emergency exits.

All staff should:

- Exercise appropriate levels of personal safety awareness. Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their working.
- Follow the school's policies and procedures for safe working.
- Seek the permission of the Operational Headteacher before working alone.
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others, and asking for advice as appropriate.
- Ensure you use any equipment or procedures put in place for your safety.
- Report any failures in systems or equipment provided for your safety.
- Familiarise yourself with the above procedures for lone working and supporting risk assessments
- Advise managers of any circumstances that may affect their ability to work safely (E.g. relevant medical issues).
- Ensure family members or partners have work emergency contact details where necessary.

Lone Worker Duties:

All lone workers are expected to cooperate fully with instructions given by either the Executive Headteacher or the Operational Headteacher. They are also expected to follow the school's safe systems of work and any associated procedures. Failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence.

Home visits

A list of home visits is kept securely in the **school office**. This record includes details of the following:

- The name and address the lone worker is visiting
- A known contact number for the lone worker
- How long the lone worker expects to be at the location

Once in place, appointment arrangements should be adhered to. The lone worker will notify the Operational Headteacher of any changes to their schedule.

Visits deemed high risk, e.g. where there is a history of violence or the location is high risk, will only be undertaken if absolutely necessary. In these cases, the lone worker may request a meeting in a more suitable location or to be accompanied by another member of staff. A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be undertaken where necessary.

During a home visit, the lone worker will:

- Carry identification and be prepared to identify themselves.
- Carry out a '10 second risk assessment' when they first arrive at the location. If they feel in danger, they should have an appropriate reason to not enter the house and arrange an alternative appointment.
- Be aware of any animals in the house and ask for them to be secured in a separate room.
- Ensure that they shut the door behind them and make themselves familiar with the door lock, in case an emergency exit is required.
- Not position themselves in the corner of a room or in a situation where it is difficult to escape.
- Remain calm and focussed at all times, and keep their possessions close to them.

Links with other policies:

Health and Safety

Safeguarding

Allegations against Staff

Policy Review

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Agreed by Governors: **March 2023 – March 2025**