

Upton Snodsbury C of E First School



Lone Worker Policy

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Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Aims of the policy
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Controls
6. Risk assessment
7. Procedures for lone workers
8. Home visits
9. Safeguarding
10. Monitoring safety issues
11. Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy their working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, grounds or cleaning staff may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This however may introduce risks for a normally non-hazardous work activity.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the governing board, as the employer, has a duty of care to advise and assess risks for lone workers. Lone workers also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

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.

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- 1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - Positive Handling Policy
 - Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy

2. Definitions

- 2.1. For the purpose of this policy, '**lone working**' refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone either on or off the school premises and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance.
- 2.2. Due to the possibility of buildings creating isolated areas, it is possible for a staff member to be 'lone working' with other staff members in the building.

3. Aims of the policy

- 3.1. 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 and ongoing 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing the risks associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy.
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees.
- Identifying situations where staff work alone and deciding whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own.
- Ensuring that the relevant risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with lone working.
- Ensuring that staff identified as lone workers are given appropriate information, instruction and training that is updated as necessary.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through a robust system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.
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4.2. Lone workers are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their working.
- Following the school's policies and procedures for safe working.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for advice as appropriate.
- Taking part in training related to lone working as required.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.
- Seeking the permission of the headteacher before working alone.

4. Controls

4.1 Staff should seek the permission of the Headteacher to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours unless employed to do so.

4.2 The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working. Lone workers must be considered capable of responding correctly in an emergency situation by the Headteacher. Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague. Staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police.

4.3 Staff should activate the door security system when lone working and ensure that areas of the school not in use are kept secure. Staff must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance.

4.4 Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

4.5 All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with the Headteacher. It is also advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (Headteacher's mobile phone number for entry and exit) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

5.6 It is not normally practicable for the Headteacher to periodically visit and visually monitor working alone.

4.7 Staff have a responsibility for making themselves familiar with and following the school's safety procedures and location of safety equipment. Lone working in before and after school clubs must adhere to the risk assessments and policies associated with the clubs.

4.8 Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

4.9 If staff rely on mobile phones they must ensure that their network has good reception within school. Although phones can give extra reassurance, they do not provide complete protection and staff should still be alert for their own personal safety at all times.

4.10 Subject to the completion of a risk assessment, the lone working will be authorised if it is on the approved list. If the lone working is not on the approved list, it can only be undertaken following explicit authorisation from the headteacher.

5. Risk assessment

- 6.1. Prior to lone working, a risk assessment will be conducted by the headteacher.
- 6.2. The risk assessment will cover all work proposed to be undertaken alone and where risk may be increased by the work activity itself or by the lack of available assistance should something go wrong.
- 6.3. Depending on the tasks the lone worker is proposing to undertake, the risk assessment will cover the following as appropriate:
 - The staff member's medical fitness and suitability to work alone
 - Channels of communication
 - Any specific risks related to the lone working activity
 - The risk of violence
 - Access
 - Reporting and recording arrangements
 - The ability to trace the staff member's whereabouts
 - Situational hazards
- 6.4. It is the responsibility of the lone worker to ensure all necessary precautions and procedures are adhered to at all times.
- 6.5. Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where the existing control measures may not be fully effective, will inform the Headteacher as soon as possible.
- 6.6. Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height, any task that has been identified as medium or high risk or which are potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.
- 6.7. All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.
- 6.8. It is the responsibility of all school personnel and contractors to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety, to the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-ordinator. If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury and any compensation claims for damages or unfair dismissal may be reduced accordingly.

6. Procedures for lone workers

- 7.1. During working hours, all loner workers leaving their workplace will leave written details with the school office of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at the school.
- 7.2. If, in the course of a trip away from the school, a lone worker's plans change significantly, they will contact the school office to inform the school of changes to their schedule.
- 7.3. All lone workers will be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where necessary.
- 7.4. Lone workers will ensure they have any of their provided personal safety equipment with them prior to lone working and that the equipment is working.
- 7.5. Lone workers will avoid organising meetings where they will be alone with an individual or group. Where this is unavoidable, the lone worker will obtain prior approval from their Headteacher, who will make any arrangements to ensure the staff member's safety. Any appointments of this nature will be recorded.
- 7.6. If a staff member is required to work alone with a child or vulnerable adult, they will follow the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 7.7. Lone workers will have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers will carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- 7.8. Under no circumstances should a lone worker compromise their personal safety. If a lone worker feels in danger, they will remove themselves from the situation immediately.
- 7.9. The school operates a 'buddy' system, whereby lone workers will inform the Headteacher if they are on site. The Headteacher will have a 'buddy' with the most senior teacher. Their role is to:
 - Be aware of the schedule and movements of the lone worker.
 - Have all necessary contact details of the lone worker.
 - Attempt to contact the lone worker if contact is not made as agreed.
- 7.10. Contingency arrangements will be in place for a member of staff to take over the 'buddy' role in case the nominated person becomes unavailable.
- 7.11. Where there is a genuine concern about the whereabouts or safety of a lone worker, the Headteacher will use the information held on record to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the worker. If contact cannot be made, the Headteacher will decide on the best course of action depending on the circumstances, which could include contacting the emergency services.

7. Home visits

- 8.1. A list of home visits is kept securely in the school office. This record includes details of the following:
- The address the lone worker is visiting
 - Details of the persons whom they are visiting
 - A known contact number for the lone worker and the persons they are visiting
 - How long the lone worker expects to be at the location
- 8.2. Once in place, appointment arrangements should be adhered to. The lone worker will notify the Headteacher of any changes to their schedule.
- 8.3. 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.
- 8.4. During a home visit, the lone worker will:
- Carry an ID badge 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 a reason ready 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.

8. Safeguarding

- 9.1. Where a lone worker is required to work with pupils, physical intervention will only ever be used as a last resort.
- 9.2. If a lone worker is required to conduct one-to-one sessions with pupils, the following guidelines will be adhered to:
- Full and ongoing training regarding child protection, physical restraint and the use of reasonable force will be provided to the worker.
 - Meetings or sessions will never be held in remote or secluded areas.
 - At least one other member of staff will be informed of when and where a one-to-one session is taking place.

- The lone worker will not use 'engaged' or equivalent signs on rooms used for one-to-one sessions.
- Doors will be kept open during sessions – where this is not possible, the worker will ensure both parties are visible through a window.
- When holding the session, the worker will talk to the pupil with a desk between them, or otherwise arrange the room or environment to avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Both parties will sit near to the door during sessions.
- If a pupil becomes emotionally distressed or angry, the worker will seek assistance and a record will be kept of the incident.

9.3. Any allegations against a lone worker will be dealt with in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

9. Monitoring safety issues

- 10.1. Lone workers will report incidents such as accidents, near misses and threatening situations to the headteacher who will make a record.
- 10.2. Lone workers should raise any safety concerns with their line manager, who will arrange for additional precautionary measures to be put in place.

10. Monitoring and review

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Board and Headteacher.
- 11.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2022.

A considerable variety of factors must be considered when assessing the risk of working alone. The following list is not exhaustive but suggests some of the hazards which may commonly be encountered by different groups of staff.

Outdoors:

Falls/accident

Uneven or slippery ground

Driving alone, especially at night

Working in poorly lit or unlit areas

Bad weather conditions

Violence and aggression

Storms

Indoors:

Working in remote part of building

Working at heights (ie on ladders, scaffolds or roofs)

Use of chemicals

Violence and aggression from pupils, visitors or intruders

Sudden illness

In addition, for people working on unfamiliar premises (eg contractors or staff on visits away from base, including home visits):

Unfamiliar layout

Unfamiliarity with emergency routines

Unfamiliar procedures

If a risk assessment shows the risk potential to staff to be high or medium, then control measures must be developed and introduced to reduce the risks.

To be reviewed July 2023