

WESTERTON PRIMARY ACADEMY



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LONE WORKING POLICY

Author	Valid From Date	Next Review Date
Tim Pool	September 2025	September 2026

Westerton Primary Academy – Lone Working Policy

School staff will at times be required to work by themselves or in isolated parts of the building. There may also be a requirement for some staff to carry out home visits. Where there is a need for people to work by themselves or in isolation the Principal will ensure that arrangements are in place to protect their health and safety.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

Employees also have a number of responsibilities, namely:

- to co-operate with employers on matters of health and safety,
- to follow the requirements of any risk assessments and comply with any particular control measures specified in the risk assessment,
- to adhere to any instructions given

The Principal needs to be notified of any lone working activities carried out by employees to ensure that the risk assessment and procedures are followed.

Risk Assessment

A Risk Assessment for Lone working including home visits has been produced and the control measures should be followed for all lone working activities.

Lone and isolated working can include:

- Staff accessing the garage, boiler house, roof or roof void.
- Staff working in the building into the evening or at a weekend.
- Staff working one to one or with small groups of pupils.
- Staff visiting a pupil's parents at home.
- Staff discussing issues with a parent within the building.
- Staff discussing sensitive issues in private with another staff member.
- Staff visiting sites / locations for field trips / school visits.
- Staff manning a reception desk.

Recommended procedures

Work undertaken alone or in isolation must be authorised by the Principal, be risk assessed and any procedures, equipment and substances followed / used must be in accordance with any training and instructions given.

Regular contact

Whenever anyone is working in an isolated part of the building or is working by themselves in the building or elsewhere there should be an arrangement in place whereby a manager or other responsible person is aware of where they are working and for how long.

The lone worker should be required to contact the identified responsible person at agreed times during the day – when working in an isolated part of the building this may be easily established by requiring the member of staff to return to the office / reception at given times. For staff working out of hours this may require a nominated person to be available to be contacted e.g. a manned reception desk, a line manager or colleague.

Staff that regularly work alone or in isolation should have their own work mobile phone, or access to a shared mobile phone. They should also have lists of contact numbers – these can be programmed into mobile phones and / or put onto a laminated card for staff to carry at all times.

Prior to starting work, and once work has finished, the lone worker should inform the responsible person. If the responsible person finishes before the lone worker the responsible person should check that the lone worker is ok and then implement the recommended procedure for out of hours work.

Where a manager or responsible person has been made aware that a member of staff has not made contact or is late returning and has not called in, the procedures outlined below should be followed:

The manager should attempt to contact the member of staff at the last known address or via an agreed means of communication. If no contact is made the manager must decide whether to contact the police or attempt to find the member of staff – in most circumstances if there is an established means of communication that has failed and there is no known location to which the person may be likely to have gone, the police should be contacted.

When the police are contacted they will need specific information; it is useful to have a staff details sheet for all staff who may undertake lone or isolated work. Such a sheet should include the following –

- Person's name, address and phone number;
- Family contact and relationship;
- Height, weight, hair colour & style;
- Eye colour and any other distinguishing features;
- Car make, model, registration and year.

The police would also need to know when the person was due back, has their home phone number been tried and what were they wearing when last seen

It is important staff are made fully aware of the importance of reporting / contact procedures so that alarms are not falsely raised.

Walkie-Talkies

Walkie-talkies can also be used to protect staff in a number of ways:

- To summon assistance if an accident occurs e.g. fall from a ladder, etc.
- To summon assistance e.g. if staff regularly have teaching sessions or sensitive meetings that could have the potential for violence.
- To summon assistance for frontline staff manning reception desks.

Out of hours work

Where work is undertaken out of normal work hours and the member of staff is isolated, the member of staff should ensure that the door to the room in which they are working is locked, or that there is no ready access into the part of the building they are working in. Where such work is undertaken during hours of darkness, lights in rooms other than the room being worked in should be turned on to give an impression that more than one person is in the building.

Any member of staff working by themselves in any premises out of hours must be authorised to do so and should ensure that the Principal is aware of the time they expect to be at work. Consideration should be given to the security of access and egress routes, parking areas and the availability of lighting in such areas in allowing out of hours lone working. For example, isolated employees may move their cars closer to the building during the day.

Prior to undertaking out of hours work the member of staff should ensure that a trusted family member, line manager or nominated responsible person, is given full details of the time they intend to start and finish work. If relying on a family member and the member of staff does not make contact at the required time the family member should contact the member of staff's Principal.

Working at Height

Falls from height are a serious risk for all staff working at height and these risks are greatly increased if the member of staff is lone working e.g. Site superintendent cleaning out the gutters in the school holidays. Lone workers should avoid working at height as far as possible. If lone working at height cannot be avoided the following additional precautions will be required:

- Principal must give permission for this activity.
- A suitable risk assessment and safe system of work must be in place.
- Suitable access equipment that is suitably maintained must be used.
- Only competent staff can use access equipment e.g. ladders, scaffold towers for working at height.
- There must be a system in place to check that the member of staff is OK at regular intervals whilst carrying out the work i.e. calling in at certain times. Emergency procedures must be in place to quickly summon assistance should contact fail to be made.

Home visits – visits by staff to various locations.

Any member of staff carrying out visits to places outside the school base, e.g. pupil's homes, offices, intended places for trips etc. should leave a list of intended visits, as accurate as possible, in the office. The list should be readily available to the person's Principal and/or colleagues and should contain details of the place being visited, the reason for visiting, contact number and time expected back at base.

Any major deviation from the list – e.g. change to the location being visited, change to the expected return time, a lone visit instead of a joint visit, should be notified to that person's manager as soon as possible to allow them to update the information provided as above.

A waiting time of 30 minutes following the expected return time has been set. Where this has not happened the school will need to set its own waiting time criteria. This may be between ten minutes to one hour after the expected return time. The Principal will start to attempt to find the member of staff 30 minutes after they have failed to return.

Where a member of staff is due to visit a number of locations contact should be made with each location in the order in which they were to be visited. Work mobile phones should be provided to assist in maintaining contact rather than relying on personal phones or the place being visited to provide a phone or pass on a message.

When visiting people's homes, unknown sites or isolated sites staff should be aware of and follow a few simple procedures which can help to keep them safe or aid a safe retreat from a site:

- Where there is a known potential for violence (verbal or physical) staff should attempt to arrange meetings at a location in the school and at such a time as to have support and assistance.
- If this is not possible staff should visit in pairs wherever possible.
- If staff have any doubts as to their safety they should not enter a premises / area without appropriate support.
- Staff should park their cars in the direction of their 'getaway' in the event this is required i.e. not pointing up a cul-de-sac or into a dead end.
- Staff should keep their car keys and mobile phones secure but readily accessible.
- Staff should identify their exit routes on entering buildings and try to ensure they have access to this exit route at all times e.g. staff should follow other persons into buildings / rooms and up / down stairs.
- If a situation seems to be becoming violent or staff are concerned about their welfare they should leave.
- Staff should consider what footwear they are wearing and how easy it would be to run in it.

Lone working with Children

Staff must not carry out any lone working with children unless they have a satisfactory enhanced DBS check. Staff should avoid lone working with children as far as possible, especially where they are away from other support that could be provided in an emergency e.g. out on a visit, transporting pupils in their cars. Such activities should be risk assessed to ensure adequate measures are in place to provide assistance and protect the staff and children.

Children that are likely to have behavioural or physical issues that could affect the safety of the staff member should have a pupil risk assessment in place which identifies the risks to staff and the child and what should be done to control this.

Staff that may need to restrain or take control over a pupil's behaviour should have appropriate Care and Control Training e.g. Team Teach. Employees should receive child protection training and be aware of the procedures to follow to report concerns regarding child protection.

Where working alone with pupils is part of normal practice, e.g. for an intervention or music lessons delivered by a peripatetic music teacher, this should ideally take place in a shared space or in a room where activities are visible to other members of staff i.e. through glass door panels. When working alone with individual pupils with specific needs, please refer to the Intimate Care Policy and Low-Level Concerns Policy.

Medical Fitness

Any lone working needs to consider if the person doing it is medically fit and suitable to work alone. For example are they at risk of heart attacks, epilepsy or heavily pregnant.

Manual Handling

Where manual handling activities take place, it is very important to assess whether the lifting and handling tasks can be carried out safely by a lone worker. If this is not the case a safe system of work should be put in place where two or more staff are required to undertake the activity.

A risk assessment should be carried out to establish the safety measures that need to be put in place for the lone worker undertaking manual handling tasks.

Fire and Evacuation Procedures.

Adequate measures are in place to ensure lone and isolated workers are warned of a fire or the need to evacuate before it's too late. Lone and isolated workers are at particular risk in the case of a fire in their place or area of work. Lone workers are less likely to be aware of a fire until they themselves see it or smell it.

Adequate measures in place to warn lone or isolated workers in the occurrence of a fire or need to evacuate e.g., bomb threat, gas leak.

Support Systems in the event of an incident

Following a violent or upsetting incident the Principal should support the affected staff member and if required offer counselling and support.

The Principal should investigate and review the incident. Using the WPA1 Form. This should identify:

- if procedures were followed
- if procedures were adequate and if any changes should be made
- if any training or equipment is required
- whether alerts need to go out to the rest of the team, other teams or organisations about the person(s) causing the incident
- whether the Legal Department need to be contacted to issue a formal letter to the perpetrator
- whether the Police (or Social Services) need to be involved.

Reviewed and updated by Tim Pool, September 2025