



Lone Working Policy

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Approved by	Trustee Safeguarding and Health & Safety Committee
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Related Trust policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Incident • First Aid • Health & Safety • Induction • Lettings • Lockdown Procedures • Maternity • Staff Code of Conduct • Wellbeing • Whistleblowing
Related national guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE: Health & Safety. Duties for Schools, 2022
Availability	Accessible via Share Point

Legislation

This policy takes account of all existing legislation and implements the legal requirements into its general arrangements for health and safety, where appropriate. All new legislation introduced is considered, related to the activities undertaken, and implemented at the earliest opportunity, where necessary, and this Policy is reviewed to take account of any changes introduced.

The Trust recognizes its obligation under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. These responsibilities apply to those staff that, for whatever reason, work alone.

Introduction

Hull Collaborative Academy Trust recognises its health and safety responsibilities towards employees who are involved in lone working processes and others who may be affected by these activities.

Lone workers should not be put at more risk than other employees and specific control measures may be necessary to achieve this.

This document outlines a sensible risk-based approach towards lone working.

Safe lone working can be achieved by ensuring safe systems of work are made available through management processes and used by all employees.

All employees are expected to report all incidents which occur in relation to lone working in order to ensure the Trust can prevent future events by risk assessing appropriately in each case.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to outline the Trust's responsibilities towards staff working alone by:

- Defining what 'lone working' is
- Taking action to reduce risk to lone workers
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibility to use necessary guidance to assist lone workers

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including temporary workers and those employed on a casual basis. It should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those 'who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

They may include:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues, e.g. visiting people in their homes
- People who work at home

The definition can cover staff in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures. This policy will refer to high risk and low risk activities. Some staff members may spend most of their working lives with others but find themselves working alone occasionally, for example, when working late. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy will refer to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating and managing the risks associated with lone working.
- Implementing this policy.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working.

Line managers are responsible for:

- 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.
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.
- Providing lone workers with personal safety equipment, e.g. a mobile phone, where necessary.

Lone workers are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their working.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for advice as appropriate.
- 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.
- Ensuring they have the necessary equipment with them while lone working.
- Adhering to all necessary policies and procedures at all times while lone working.

Potential Hazards of Lone Working

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid.
- Violence or the threat of violence.
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment.
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)

Risk Assessment

The perception of these hazards or the actual risks may be different for different people. For example, some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace (home visit) or after dark; or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone. Therefore, it is imperative that these factors are considered when devising a risk assessment to reduce the risk, particularly for frequent lone workers or lone workers engaged in high-risk activities.

Lone working issues may be considered as part of an overall risk assessment of a job role or activity. However, where lone working has not been considered as part of other risk assessments, a specific risk assessment must be carried out. It is important to note that the original risk assessment may change as the activity itself progresses and further information on the competency of lone workers will need to be considered.

Factors to consider when developing a risk assessment:

- Does the workplace present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used on the premises be safely handled by one person?
- Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence?
- Is the nature of a visit or the person being visited likely to increase the risk?
- Will the staff member be alone in a dark or remote location?

This is not a definitive list and other risks may be identified.

All risk assessment must take account of foreseeable emergencies which may arise, such as equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Risk Assessment Review

Head Teachers/Line Managers must ensure that there are adequate reporting and feedback mechanisms in place which allow for new information to be gathered about any changes which impact on the risk assessment. Changes to working practice must be reviewed and communicated to all relevant employees.

Controlling the risk

It is important to ensure that control measures are proportionate to the risk.

A key factor in controlling lone worker risk is to ensure that lone workers are competent in adapting to a foreseeable range of changing and developing situations. The extent of supervision must be proportionate to the risk and the competency of the lone worker. The Headteacher/Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that safe working arrangements are in place for all stages of the activity, from task planning, to implementation and completion.

Unsafe lone working

In circumstances with all control measures in place, if the assessment identifies that it isn't possible for the task to be carried out safely then lone working should not proceed.

If you are unsure about what controls are needed because the task is considered higher risk or requires more technical/specialist knowledge, further guidance should be sought from the Trust's Health & Safety Lead.

Unacceptable lone working

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

- Working at height
- Manual handling of heavy or bulky items
- Transport of injured persons (this must always be undertaken by more than one member of staff).

Site security must be maintained at all times, however staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police. Staff must not put themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals.

Procedures Site Facilities Officers working alone on-site.

Ensure premises and buildings are secure.

- During holiday periods ensure everyone on-site signs in and out
- Ensure that they have left the building before locking up.
- Hazardous jobs (e.g. working at height, using power tools, hazardous or flammable liquids) not to be undertaken.
- If alarm does not set, do not leave the building unsecured. Telephone Security and the alarm company and wait for an engineer to restore the system.

Procedures for home visits by school staff

- Consider paired working.
- Agree visit with Headteacher or Line Manager.
- Mobile phone to be kept with member of staff at all times.
- Leave timings, address and contact details with a named person in the school office.
- Use agreed password if situation is unsafe.
- School to telephone police if safe arrival call is not made or staff does not arrive back at school at the expected time.

Emergency arrangements

Lone workers should be capable of responding to foreseeable emergencies through the development of planned arrangements, for example, fire and first aid need. The requirements for emergency will depend on the nature of the work being carried out.

Where it is possible a lone worker should withdraw from circumstances of escalating violence and aggression towards them.

Where a lone worker monitoring system is used it must include a means to raise the alarm in the event of (a) failure to contact a lone worker (b) an emergency request for assistance. When using a buddy system as outlined above must ensure that there is no delay in raising the alarm with the police. If there is no response from a lone worker to confirm their safety the police should be contacted and informed of the last known whereabouts after no more than a 15 minute period of trying to make contact.

Contractors

Contractors are responsible for assessing their own risk and for providing their own first aid kit, suitable for treating minor injuries.

It is the responsibility of contractors to be aware of and to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the school Site Facilities Officer or Office Manager.