



# LONE WORKING POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to state how the school deals with the requirements of the law regarding any activities that may involve the need to work alone. There are many issues regarding lone working that need to be understood by all employees and in particular by those in a position of responsibility for others.

Lone working in the context of this policy is generally defined as follows:

Someone who is working and is out of the eye-line OR out of ear-shot (OR both) of at least one other person. (Note: this will apply of course to staff as well as pupils or students).

However, lone working will need to take into account several additional factors, such as the abilities and capabilities of an individual who may be working alone as well as the nature of the work itself. In some instances, carrying out a task alone is unacceptable in any case, whether the individual is within an eye-line or ear-shot or not. For example, certain manual handling tasks, work at height tasks involving a ladder that needs to be footed or certain situations where there may be a risk of violence.

In many instances, lone working is perfectly acceptable if it involves a low risk activity (such as simple office work), but in all cases, a lone worker should NOT work without some means of communication with another, or without some arrangement whereby a regular check is made on the lone worker by another.

Most workers will find themselves working alone at some point or other for short periods of time as they go about their day-to-day tasks and activities, which is a natural consequence of everyone 'getting on with their jobs'. However, whilst for the most part this will be of little or no risk to the lone worker, it is important that all workers recognise and understand what is considered to be unacceptable practice. Typical 'problem' periods occur during overtime working where not only will lone working be a more likely scenario, but that the normal day-to-day support facilities and arrangements, such as those for first aid, and security, may be limited or absent altogether.

Particular attention should be paid to those who are considered to be less familiar with the premises and the arrangements (and hence more vulnerable), such as visitors, contractors (such as cleaners), temporary workers etc. Visitors, for instance, should be accompanied at all times, whether carrying out any work or not.

Care should also be exercised in determining any lone working situations that involve a student, especially on any field work activities, for example.

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)**

**Nicola Richardson**

The primary function of the above named person is to assess the various activities that the organisation requires to be carried out that involves any need to work alone, as required under current legislation and to ensure that the requirements of this policy are carried out and that any problems or difficulties in meeting these requirements are reported.

In particular, the above named person has responsibility for ensuring that any systems and procedures laid down for carrying out any lone working are adhered to. This applies to any internal operations as well as to the activities of any external person or organisation contracted in to carry out work. In such cases, external contractors will not be authorised to carry out any lone working unless they have satisfied the above named person(s) that they will only be carrying out a task or activity that presents little or no risk and that in any case, the period of time associated with such lone working is controlled by one of the appropriate arrangements in this policy.

The above person can delegate specific tasks to other staff members and is responsible for ensuring that such delegation is appropriate and clearly indicated in the Health and Safety Policy.

**The Policy:**

- To aim to avoid all lone working wherever practicable and possible.
- To limit any lone working to those tasks and activities considered to be of little or no risk to the individual concerned.
- To minimise the period of time that anyone needs to be working alone.
- To ensure that appropriate arrangements are put into place to consider the health and safety of those who are authorised to carry out lone working.
- To recognise lone working situations that may crop up from time to time and to give clear guidance on what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

**The Arrangements:**

The following arrangements and activities are in place in order to meet the above policy requirements:

- A risk assessment system for determining which activities and tasks are considered to be safe for someone to carry out alone.
- A generic risk assessment form that lists the predicted risks of carrying out lone working and the appropriate controls to put into place.
- Systems and procedures for determining the work schedules and activities of external contractors (as can be obtained from their work plans, method statements and risk assessments) and for ensuring such contractors are made aware of our lone working policy.
- Safe working practices and instructions for specific internal tasks and activities.

- Appropriate communication systems provided to/for those who have a need to work alone. (Note: these will range from telephones, mobile phones, pagers, personal and/or panic alarms etc).
- A formal request and authorisation procedure for controlling out-of-hours working and determining the nature of the work to be done.
- Records indicating those persons who may be particularly vulnerable to medical conditions that may result in them requiring urgent attention.
- Security personnel on site at all times that any other person is on site, irrespective of that person, the nature of their work or their reasons for being on site.
- Where considered necessary, at least one suitably competent person in first aid procedures appropriate to the risks from any tasks or activities outside of normal working hours. (Note: this is not specific to lone working, as this will apply also to any persons or groups of persons working outside normal hours).
- Security checks and procedures prior to locking up at the end of the working day.
- Permit to Work systems by which the hazardous nature of any work to be carried out on site can be controlled and the appropriate conditions laid down.

#### Responsibilities:

All staff have the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that any requirement for lone working is raised with their immediate supervisor or manager prior to carrying out the work.
- To inform their immediate supervisor or manager (or any other responsible person) of any situations that may suddenly arise that leaves them or someone else in a position of unacceptable lone working (Typical examples given at the end of this policy document).
- To check to ensure that any communication device provided for use during lone working situations is in good working order and that they have been instructed in its use.
- To only carry out the tasks and activities for which they have been authorised and to not carry out any that are unacceptable or prohibited.

Staff who are in a position of responsibility where they may authorise or refuse either lone working or out of hours working:

- To ensure that, where any such lone working MUST take place, the appropriate procedures and risk assessments are taken into account and the applicable controls are put into place.
- To ensure that any lone worker for whom they are responsible is fully aware of the arrangements in place and is fully conversant with the means by which communication should be made in the event of a problem arising.
- To report any lone working seen or known to be unacceptable or prohibited. Where considered to be of a hazardous or dangerous nature, steps should be taken to stop the work immediately until appropriate arrangements are put (back) into place.

*(Note: appropriate arrangements may not be immediately obvious, but if, after questioning the lone worker, it is clear that they are not aware of any and/or do not have the means by which to alert someone should a problem arise, it should be taken that the arrangements in place are NOT acceptable and thereby should be stopped unless or until the proper arrangements are in place and that all relevant personnel, including the lone worker, are conversant with them).*

#### Training:

The following training will be undertaken by the school:

- All staff will be made fully aware of this policy and the requirements and arrangements laid down within it.
- Key staff, as identified by the responsible person named at the head of this policy document, will be trained in systems and procedures of the school for recognising and dealing with

lone working and in the various arrangements available by which lone working can be authorised.

#### References:

The following internal documents and official publications should be referenced in conjunction with this policy:

- Generic risk assessment document for lone working.
- Work plans, method statements and risk assessments provided by external contractor organisations for carrying out both standard and non-standard operations and activities both during and outside normal working hours.
- Permit to Work Systems and documentation.
- Current sets of regulations for:
  - Management of Health and Safety at Work.

#### Examples of Unacceptable/Prohibited Lone Working:

The following are examples of tasks and activities not to be carried out or authorised in any way where lone working is involved: This list is not exhaustive.

*Note: the following, if they are to take place at any time, MUST have the appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of the person involved. These arrangements MUST include appropriate first aid, appropriate means of communication (in good working order) and the means by which regular monitoring of the individual's personal safety is carried out.*

- Any lone working in laboratories that involves the use of hazardous substances or the carrying out of hazardous operations.

*(Note: individual safe working procedures for the laboratory should be referred to for further guidance).*

- Any lone working in workshops that involve the use of hazardous machinery or equipment where there is a need for a second person to assist in its safe operation.
- Any manual handling task that requires a minimum of two persons to carry out and/or requires an additional person to guide the carrier.

*(Note: such manual handling tasks can be referred to in the appropriate risk assessments for manual handling).*

- Any type of work carried out by an expectant woman.
- Any type of situation where there is a risk of violence to the individual.

*(Note: For example, receptionists, persons handling or carrying large amounts of cash, staff visiting parents etc where there may be a risk of violent reactions).*

- Any type of work carried out by someone who may be at additional risk or vulnerability.

*(Note: for example, a woman or a young person in certain situations, someone with a known medical condition who may require urgent attention, someone at risk of violence as stated above, a disabled person who may need particular support in the event of a fire, a new employee or temporary worker etc)*

- Any travel to and from locations that may put the individual in a position of increased risk through a lack of preparation.

*(Note: Ensuring that a safe and appropriate means of travel is provided, especially when out-of-hours travel is reasonably foreseeable or possible, clear directions for getting to and from the destination, appropriate information regarding the reasons and objectives of a visit, due regard to any potentially hazardous situations that may be encountered, information and*

*relevant instruction on any hazardous materials to be carried, appropriate equipment required for handling heavy, difficult or awkward loads, clear arrangements and options available where an overnight stay might be required etc).*