



THE
NEW GUILD
TRUST

Lone Working Policy
(Including Family Support Workers)

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Statement of Intent

The school recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves, without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours and specifically that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of Family Support Workers (FSW) when undertaking school visits. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

The school has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves. Employees, however, should also be aware of their responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

1. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff and specifically to Family Support Workers (FSW).

Lone worker includes:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises, e.g. site staff.
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations.
- People working outside normal office hours, e.g. cleaners; site staff.

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue.
- One worker is making a home visit to an individual.
- One worker is working from their own home.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is 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 the 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 safety 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. Responsibilities

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing 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 and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy.
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees.
- Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own.
- Ensuring that 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 working alone.
- Ensuring that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, and updating and refreshing this training 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 a mobile phone, and other personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable.

Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- 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/Head of School before working alone on the school premises outside normal school hours.
- Ensuring they do not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. Meetings must be arranged during school occupancy times, or when there are other members of staff on site.

Home visits must always be conducted with two members of staff present. Lone visits will only take place, in exceptional circumstances, with the permission of the Headteacher/Head of School.

4. Guidance for Risk Assessments for Lone Working

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Is there another member of staff available to accompany on a home visit?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

5. Good Practice for Lone Workers

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace (or home) should leave details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at the school.
- If, in the course of a trip away from the school, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the school office.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague, may also be advisable.
- Staff should avoid meeting clients alone at the workplace. When this is unavoidable, staff must make a risk assessment and obtain the prior agreement of their line manager who will make any arrangements to ensure their safety. This should be recorded in the School Outlook Calendar giving contact details of the person who is being met.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.

6. Children and Vulnerable Adults – Please refer to the relevant NGT Policies

- In general, staff should never work alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone.

7. Monitoring Safety Issues

- Lone workers must report incidents such as accidents and near misses, including all incidents where they feel threatened. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

- Managers will ask people working on their own whether there are any safety concerns that are not being addressed. Lone workers are encouraged to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.

8. Lone Working Procedure

- 1.1 Risk of violence: All jobs involving lone working are assessed for risk of verbal threats or violence.
- 1.2 Access and egress: Some lone working may require access to locations that are difficult to access or egress. Assessments will consider whether these tasks are suitable for lone working.
- 1.3 Situational hazards: These include potentially dangerous animals on home visits, dangerous locations and visits to locations where previous problems have occurred.
- 1.4 Lone working must only be undertaken following authorisation from the Headteacher/Head of School.
- 1.7 In relation to FSW, a log of known risks, with regard to locations and persons, must be kept, updated and reviewed regularly. It must be available to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and FSW / prior to visits and held in a secure location. If a FSW is leaving the school's employment, they are required to inform their successor of any known concerns via a report, and a briefing.
- 1.8 Under no circumstances should a FSW compromise their personal safety. If a FSW feels in danger, they should remove themselves from the situation immediately.
- 1.9 A risk assessment must be undertaken for any lone working. It must cover all work currently undertaken alone (or proposed to be), where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or by the lack of available assistance should something go wrong. The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for ensuring suitable procedures are in place for undertaking risk assessments for all situations requiring lone working. These procedures must ensure that all involved are aware of precautions and methods of work to be followed, including emergency action to be taken if necessary.
- 1.10 Appointments must be managed so that colleagues of the FSW are always aware of their movements and appointments. A list of appointments for the FSW is kept on the School Outlook Calendar for the Headteacher/Head of School/School Office to view. The list includes the named person attending the address that they will be attending with the FSW, the details of the person(s) whom they are visiting and a known contact number, and indications of how long they expect to be at these locations.
- 1.11 Details of vehicle(s) used by the FSW, including make, model, registration number and colour, must be held by the academy school.
- 1.12 Once in place, appointment arrangements should be adhered to. The FSW must notify the Headteacher/Head of School/School Office of changes to their schedule.
- 1.13 If a visit is deemed high risk, where there is a history of violence or the location itself is considered high risk, the visit must only be made if absolutely necessary. In these cases, the FSW must request a meeting in a more suitable location.
- 1.14 During a home visit, the FSW and named person will:
 - Carry an ID badge and be prepared to identify themselves.
 - Carry out a '10 second risk assessment' when they first arrive at the house. If they feel in danger, they should have an excuse ready not to 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. If there is a known problem with animals at the address, the occupants should be contacted and requested to remove or secure the animals before arrival.
 - Ensure that they shut the door behind them and make themselves familiar with the door lock, in case an emergency exit is needed.
 - Not position themselves in the corner of a room or in a situation where it is difficult to escape.
 - Remain calm and focused at all times and keep their possessions close to them.

- Be aware of their body language and the body language of the client. There is potentially a risk of exacerbating the situation by sending out nervous or aggressive signals, particularly where cultural, gender or physical issues need to be considered.
- 1.15 The FSW/lone worker will report, via telephone, to their 'buddy' at the end of the visit (see 1.18).
 - 1.16 If the FSW has been given personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a school mobile phone or personal attack alarm, they must ensure that they have it with them and that it is fully charged and operational.
 - 1.17 The school operates a 'buddy system' for lone workers. The member of staff must have a nominated buddy for each period in which they will be working alone (including working at their own home alone). The buddy will:
 - Be aware of the schedule and movements of the member of staff.
 - Have all necessary contact details of the member of staff, including next of kin.
 - Attempt to contact the member of staff if contact is not made as agreed.
 - Follow agreed escalation procedures and notify the Headteacher/Head of School.
 - 1.18 Contingency arrangements must be in place for a member of staff to take over the role of buddy in case the nominated person becomes unavailable, for example, the buddy is called into a meeting or appointments go beyond their working day.
 - 1.19 Where there is genuine concern, as a result of employees failing to attend a visit or report back to their buddy, the Headteacher/Head of School will use the information held on record to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the member(s) of staff. If contact cannot be made, the Headteacher/Head of School will decide, depending on the circumstances, whether to contact the Police.
 - 1.20 If Police involvement is necessary, the Police will be given access to all information held.
 - 1.21 It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure all necessary precautions and procedures are adhered to at all times.
 - 1.22 Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where the existing control measures may not be fully effective, must inform the Headteacher/Head of School as soon as possible.

9. Training

- 1.1 Lone workers will be fully trained in safe working practices. The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for organising all relevant training.
- 1.2 The FSW will undertake training in conflict resolution to enable them to negotiate difficult situations safely. Other training that will be considered for FSW includes: cultural awareness training, diversity and racial equality training, specific equipment training, manual handling training, first aid training, and training in disengagement techniques.

10. Duties of a Lone Worker

Lone workers are expected to follow all the procedures outlined in this policy and all relevant training. Failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence. This includes SLT/Teachers/Support Staff/Premises staff and any other staff who may be considered for lone working.

11. Lone Working and Safeguarding

- If lone working is an integral part of an employee's role, a full and appropriate risk assessment will be conducted and agreed.
- Full and ongoing training regarding child protection, physical restraint and the use of reasonable force, and lone working procedures will be provided for all staff with regular lone working responsibilities.
- Meetings or sessions with children will never be held in remote or secluded areas.
- Colleagues will be informed beforehand when holding one-to-one sessions or discussions.

- The use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs is prohibited.
- Doors will be kept open when conducting one-to-one sessions. Where this is not possible, for example in a music lesson, it will be ensured that both parties can be seen through one or more windows.
- When holding one-to-one sessions, staff members will talk to the child 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.
- If a child becomes emotional, distressed or angry, the staff member will seek assistance, it will be reported to a senior colleague and a record kept of the employee's concerns.

12. Allegations

- Our policy and procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in the New Guild Trust's Dealing with Allegations of Abuse policy.