

Lone Working Policy



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Recognised unions have been consulted on this document via the Unity Schools Partnership Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee. It was accepted by Unity Schools Partnership on:		Date: September 2020
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1. Purpose

Unity Schools Partnership is committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, grounds, 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.

2. Categories of lone workers

Within the School or Central Trust Office a lone worker will most probably fall within one of the following categories:

- Those who work in an otherwise unoccupied part of the building
- Those who work in an isolated part of school grounds or Trust offices
- Those responding to an alarm call out after normal school or working hours
- Those travelling due to work

3. Definition of Lone Working

HSE define lone workers as staff who are engaged in work (either outdoors or indoors) where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to come to their immediate aid in the event of an incident or emergency.

4. Risk Assessment (school or Trust offices specific)

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher (or delegated member of the Leadership team) to ensure that an annual Health and Safety and Risk Assessment is undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this as well as the risks of Lone Working. The risk assessment will take into account the type of tasks undertaken, the environment, health and safety instruction and training received and the individual's medical history.

A risk assessment could include the following:

- Is there a risk of violence or aggression?
- Means of communication with the lone worker
- Is there a risk of being vulnerable?
- Will the employee be using machinery/equipment which could be hazardous?
- What will happen in the event of an emergency?
- Is there access to first aid facilities?
- Where the assessment identifies risks to the lone worker, the first question asked must be whether the work needs to be carried out in the first place.
- Working remotely or home working
- Where an employee is going to be working or travelling
- Emergency procedures in relation to first aid
- Does the employee have a medical condition which needs further assessment in consideration of lone working?

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Headteacher (or delegated member of the Leadership team) for the likelihood of the hazard causing harm. Measures will be introduced if the assessment shows that existing precautions are inadequate to eliminate or adequately control the hazard. The risk assessment will be subject to review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the school.

Contractors will be given the opportunity by the School's Leadership team to complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment as necessary and receive the appropriate Health and Safety information.

5. Controls

Staff should seek the permission of the Headteacher to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours. 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 and/or designated member of the Leadership team. 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.

Lone workers should receive regular contact from their line manager. This could include regular keeping in touch calls and supervision. If an employee's first language is not English you must ensure the employee has received and understood any information, instructions and training they need to work safely.

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. Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness. If a medical condition is present medical advice should be sought to ensure the employee is safe to work alone. It would be important to consider possible emergencies that may put additional physical and mental burdens on the lone worker – these can be included in the risk assessment.

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (Headteacher's or designated member of the Leadership team) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time. It is not normally practicable for the Headteacher to periodically visit and visually monitor people working alone.

Staff will receive information and/or training to help ensure they understand the risks associated with lone working and to minimise these risks. All lone workers, in an otherwise unoccupied building, should follow the school's Fire and Emergency Procedures. Staff have a responsibility for making themselves familiar with and following the school's safety procedures and location of safety equipment. Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

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. It should be the responsibility of the employee to ensure that if they are travelling to an appointment and they do not attend at the given time then the School/Central Team should be made aware to follow up on any possible reasons for delay including safety concerns.

In the situation where two or more people are working in isolated areas of an otherwise unoccupied building, personnel should keep each other informed about their movements. 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. Staff working at height in an isolated building must follow Working at Height Procedures.

All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

If there is a need to carry out a home visit by school staff it should be carried out as a pair where possible and agreed in advance by your manager. Details of the address, and contact details should be left with a named person in the school. Each visit and situation should be risk assessed and if there is any serious risk please call 999.

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 designated member of the Leadership team. 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.

The School respects the right of the employee, under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. They also can advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of Headteacher and/or designated member of the Leadership team any aspect of work related risks.

The relevant committee of the Governing body will regularly monitor the implementation of these procedures. Following any incident an investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.

Further Advice

If any staff, contractor or visitor requires any further information regarding this policy or support they should either ask their Headteacher **or** contact the HR Helpdesk at hrhelpdesk@unitysp.co.uk or telephone 01440 333401.

Appendix 1

Example Risk Assessment - Lone Working - Generic Risk Assessment

School Name		Decide who may be harmed (insert):				
		Student		Contractors		Visitors
Department / Location (if applicable)		Staff		Vulnerable People		Volunteers
Identified Hazards	Initial Risk Rating	Existing Control Measures			Actions / Comments	Residual Risk Rating H/M/L
accidents / injury/ emergency situations	H	Known documented procedures are in place and are understood by all staff who work after school core hours or during school holiday periods (including signing in and out procedures)				L
Slips, trips & falls		Lone workers are competent in all activities they are carrying out and have received the appropriate training				
		High risk tasks have been identified and assessed to determine their suitability for lone workers (e.g. working at height)				
		Lone workers are aware of the procedures to and importance of reporting and recording all incidents and near misses (including those that occur off site)				
		Lone workers are aware of and are appropriately trained in what to do in the event of an emergency/incident				
		Known procedures are in place to ensure that lone workers have a means/point of contact for summoning assistance				
		Lone workers have a means of communication and or a "buddy" system is in place				
		First aid facilities are provided				
		Refer to risk assessment for slips, trips & falls (whole school)				
		The security of the workplace has been formally risk assessed and appropriate control measures are in place				
	Violence	H	Lone workers are trained to recognise potentially violent or aggressive situations and know not to put themselves at further risk			
Faulty electrical appliances	TBA	Refer to risk assessment for Electrical Appliances and Electrical Hand tools				L

Falls from height	TBA	Refer to risk assessment for Working at Height		<i>It is recommended Lone Workers do not undertake Work at Height</i>	L
Manual Handling Injuries	TBA	Refer to risk assessment for Manual Handling			L

Vulnerable workers i.e. new and expectant mothers, young people, disabled	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone Working is avoided Where Lone Working cannot be avoided the risks to vulnerable people/groups of people have been separately assessed and appropriate protective measures are put in place 		Refer to Specific Risk Assessment for the Individual Vulnerable Person where Lone Working cannot be avoided	L
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Risk Rating Guidance: H= High M= Medium L= Low TBA = To Be Assessed - Assessment of the likelihood and or impact of injury and or damage. Initial assessment has been undertaken, complete the residual assessment based on your control measures/findings/additional actions etc.

Other Hazards Identified	Additional Control Measures to be Put in Place				
Any other foreseeable hazards that are associated with the activities being carried out to be listed here.	<i>Where you have identified other hazards record the additional control measures your are going to put in place to mitigate these below:</i>				
Date of Assessment:		Carried out by:		Signature:	
Date of next review:		Carried out by:		Date Review Completed:	
Also refer to these other relevant risk assessments or safety advice documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Guidance Document SG9 Work at Height Safety Guidance Document SG12 Working Alone Safety Guidance Document SG24 New & Expectant Mothers Safety Guidance Document SG29 Volunteers in School Risk Assessment for Site Safety & Security Risk Assessment for Slips, trips & falls (whole school) Risk Assessment for Working at Height (if applicable) Risk Assessment for Manual Handling (if applicable) Activity Specific Risk Assessments Vulnerable Persons Risk Assessment (including new & expectant mothers) (if applicable) 				

Appendix 2

Lone Working during COVID-19

To be used in conjunction to the lone working policy.

As an employer, we have a continued statutory duty and responsibility to ensure the H&S and welfare of our workforce. This includes ensuring there are reasonable measures in place to ensure our lone working employees are safe during the event of a pandemic such as a coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Lone Worker positions during this time could include roles such as:

- Caretaker/Site Management
- Cleaners
- Home workers

You should consider the following

- How will you keep in touch with your employee?
- What work activity will they be doing (and for how long – assess the risk)?
- Can the work be carried out safely? (do you need to review the H&S arrangements)?
- Do you need to put any control measures in place to protect your employee?

It is important to keep in touch with your lone workers and ensure there is regular contact to ensure they are healthy and safe. For home workers it is strongly recommended that this is done by video where possible. If you do not do this employees may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can have a longer term affect for the employee affecting stress levels and their mental health leading to a possible increase in absence levels.

You may need to train, supervise and monitor the lone workers and ensure you respond to any incident. You may need to carry out a new risk assessments to ensure the work can be carried out safely considering the supply of PPE or any other equipment needed for your employees to work safely and effectively.

Guidance on social distancing and hygiene should always be followed.

The guidelines are continuously changing and therefore it is always important to review any updated specific advice from the DFE.