



LONE WORKING POLICY

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CONTENTS

1.	Policy Statement	2
2.	Purpose	2
3.	Scope	2
4.	Context	2
5.	Definition	3
6.	Mandatory Building Procedures	3
6.1	Security of buildings	3
6.2	Working alone at another building/location.....	3
7	Personal safety	4
8	Assessment of risk	5
9	Planning.....	5
10	Staff working at home	6
11	Staff working for The Island Project	6
12	Practice Guidance – Personal Safety	6
13	Monitoring and Review	7
	Appendix 1 - Personal Safety	8
	Appendix 1 - Protocol and Guidance for Home Visits	10
1.	Guidance for Home Visits	10
2.	Protocol for Home Visits	11
3.	Health and Safety	11
4.	Risk Assessment	12
5.	Unaccompanied visits	13

Introduction

In this Policy, “the School” means the Island Project School and refers to all employees, contractors and volunteers (“Staff”), irrespective of whether they work in the School at Diddington Hall, or the College at Birmingham Road.

In this Policy, Line Manager will refer to the Senior Leadership Team

Any agreement for lone working outside the School or College premises must be with the full knowledge of an appropriate Line Manager.

This policy will not apply to staff accessing the community as part of a planned activity with pupils. However the general approaches to risk contained in this policy should always be applied. All pupils have risk assessments for access to the community and these risk assessments will be deemed suitable for the purposes of this policy.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Where Staff are required to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. “Alone” is defined as being either the safe adult in charge of a pupil in an outreach situation, i.e. working with a pupil in a home setting. This does not apply in the School or College setting where other individuals are on the premises.
- 1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Child Protection Line policies including, where relevant, those of any partnership organisations.

2. Purpose

This policy is designed to alert Staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.
- 3.2. Volunteers would not normally be expected to work alone and so should be outside the scope of this policy

4. Context

Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone to undertake their job role e.g. the Education Team or Management. The School’s principles for supporting lone workers include:

- 4.1. A commitment to supporting Staff and Line Managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices;
- 4.2. Recognising and reducing risk;
- 4.3. A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for Staff;
- 4.4. A clear understanding of responsibilities;
- 4.5. The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property;
- 4.6. A commitment to providing appropriate training for Staff;
- 4.7. Ensuring that equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate;

5. Definition

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This does not apply when staff are working within School or College during the School day when Staff are on call to support.

6. Mandatory Building Procedures

6.1. Security of buildings

Line Managers and Staff must ensure that: -

- 6.1.1. all appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible.
- 6.1.2. alarm systems are tested regularly.
- 6.1.3. when working alone staff are familiar with exits and alarms.
- 6.1.4. there is access to a telephone and first aid kit.
- 6.1.5. if there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering.
- 6.1.6. external doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone.

6.2. Working alone at another building/location other than School or College Premises (not including a pupil's home)

Line Managers and Staff must ensure that: -

- 6.2.1. all appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible;
- 6.2.2. they are familiar with any fire and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms;

- 6.2.3. when making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e. Building Manager or Caretaker) and that this person can be contacted in the event of an emergency;
- 6.2.4. there is access to a telephone and first aid kit;
- 6.2.5. if there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering;
- 6.2.6. staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures;
- 6.2.7. whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area; and
- 6.2.8. ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed

School will ensure that, where staff are required to work with Pupils outside School or College, they are provided with a suitable mobile phone in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy.

6.3 Working alone in the home.

When working in the home of a Pupil of the School, Line Manager and Staff must ensure:

- 6.3.1 If a pupil is non-verbal, or assessed by the School as vulnerable, that a parent or carer is also present in the home; or,
- 6.3.2 If no parent is present in the home, for example when working in the home of a Post 16 pupil, adequate risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of both the pupil and the Staff. This would include ensuring that parents of the pupil are aware of the risk assessments in place and have consented to the pupil being taught on a 1:1 basis in the home;
- 6.3.3 Staff should familiarise themselves with the pupil's home, including how to Exit the premises in an emergency.
- 6.3.4 Staff should have access to a mobile phone provided for their use by the School.

Any such risk assessment should establish whether the pupil is safe to be left alone should the member of staff need to leave and obtaining confirmation from parents/carers that this is acceptable.

Staff should not take their personal mobile phones into the home of any pupil if they are lone working (or are left alone with a pupil within the home) as this leaves them vulnerable to allegations.

7. Personal safety

- 7.1. Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together
- 7.2. Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.

- 7.3. Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
- 7.4. Before working alone, other than in School or College buildings, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Line Manager
- 7.5. Where required, staff must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers.
- 7.6. Staff must inform their Line Manager or other identified person when they will be working alone in a pupil's home, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home rather than returning to School or College.
- 7.7. Staff who work to a pre-planned programme of sessions, must inform their Line Manager if they deviate from the programme, for example if they take a pupil out of the home.
- 7.8. If a member of staff does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary.
- 7.9. Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the reason for lone working. Issues to take into account include:
 - 7.9.1. staffing levels and availability.
 - 7.9.2. the identified risks; and
 - 7.9.3. measures in place to reduce those risks
- 7.10. Where Staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, Line Managers must make provision for regular contact to monitor the situation.
- 7.11. Staff working away from School or College should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider. Please see Appendix 1 for further guidance.
- 7.12. Staff must not undertake lone working visits outside normal School hours, and at any time other than that agreed with their Line Manager.

8. Assessment of risk

- 8.1. In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:
 - 8.1.1. the environment – location, security, access.
 - 8.1.2. the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
 - 8.1.3. the individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
 - 8.1.4. history – any previous incidents in similar situations.
 - 8.1.5. any other special circumstances.

- 8.2. All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

9. Planning

- 9.1. Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc.
- 9.2. Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
- 9.3. Communication, checking-in and fall back arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time.
- 9.4. The Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the staff member.
- 9.5. There must be no unplanned home visits. Any unplanned visits will be treated as Misconduct under the Disciplinary Policy.

10. Practice Guidance– Personal Safety

‘Reasonable precautions’ might include:

- 10.1. Checking directions for the destination.
- 10.2. Ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover.
- 10.3. Ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home.
- 10.4. Avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas.
- 10.5. Taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.
- 10.6. Ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

For more information see the Suzy Lamplugh Trust website <http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/personal-safety-tips/> which gives further advice

11. Monitoring and Review

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their Line Manager as a matter of urgency.

Appendix 1 - Personal Safety

1. Personal Safety

1.1. There are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The School has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but Staff also have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves.

1.2. This is not about raising anxiety levels but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for pupils in your care.

2. Be aware of the environment

2.1. Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.

2.2. Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with.

2.3. If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.

2.4. Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

3. Be aware of yourself

All Staff required to work in a pupil's home will have received Studio 3 training. It is also good to consider the following:-

3.1. Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?

3.2. Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.

3.3. Staff are required to wear their uniform when working in a pupil's home.

3.4. Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset. If necessary and safe to do so, you should leave the pupil's home and call your Line Manger immediately.

4. **Be aware of other people especially parents, carers or other individuals within a Pupil's home.**

4.1. Take note of their non-verbal signals.

4.2. Be aware of their triggers.

4.3. If necessary, and safe to do so, leave the pupil's home and immediately contact your Line Manager.

Appendix 2 -Protocol and Guidance for Home Visits

Introduction

1. Guidance for Working with Pupil's in the Home

1.1. Before any home visits are finalised two people, including a Line Manager, should make home visits together. Staff should be appraised of any previous visits by other staff or agencies and acquire background information from their Line Manager.

1.2. Staff visiting should be fully acquainted with the location of a pupil's home and how to get there to avoid having to stop and ask for directions.

1.3. If staff are anxious on arriving at a location and feel their safety could be jeopardised, they should not take the risk of proceeding further. They should contact their Line Manager, School Manager or School Principal immediately on the mobile phone provided.

1.4. A record should be kept of each visit made to a pupil's home. This will be shared with the relevant Local Authority and any other relevant bodies as required. Any concerns that the member of staff may have from the meeting however trivial these may appear at the time, should be raised with their Line Manager upon return to School or College. Clear and detailed record keeping may well prevent problems in the future.

1.5. Travel plans should only be changed if relevant staff have been alerted.

1.6. Confrontation should always be avoided. At the first sign of potential danger or aggression whether from a pupil or other individuals within the home, the staff member should leave the home immediately. Never assume that violence wouldn't happen as while there are hundreds of home visits made safely every day, personal safety is paramount. Any incident should be reported to your Line Manager immediately.

1.7. All staff undertaking any work in the home of pupils are required to keep up-to-date with current legislation and safeguarding training.

1.8. The School will ensure that any member of staff working with a pupil in accordance with this policy is informed of all relevant background information to ensure the safety of themselves and the pupils.

2. Protocol for Home Visits

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers

- 2.1. Show respect for parents/carers/families as equal partners in the relationship.
- 2.2. All visits will be agreed in advance.
- 2.3. If applicable confirm parents/carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents, or that both have the same surname as the pupil.
- 2.4. Do not assume that all parents or carers are literate.
- 2.5. Be aware of Social, Cultural and Religious differences.

3. Health and Safety

- 3.1. Ensure that the mobile phone provided to you is operational and fully charged beforehand.
- 3.2. Demonstrate normal courtesy - wait to be invited into the home.
- 3.3. It is important that a record is completed after each visit.
- 3.4. Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels threatening - leave, saying for example, that you are going back to get something from your car.
- 3.5. If in doubt cancel the visit and re-arrange with a colleague in attendance
- 3.6. The staff member undertaking a home visit must ensure that they telephone their Line Manager immediately after visit has taken place if they are not returning to School or College or if they are delayed.
- 3.7. If the home visit takes longer than anticipated, the staff member should ring their Line Manager to say that it has run over and give the reasons.
- 3.8. If the staff member doesn't ring at the expected time, their Line Manager or another appointed member of Staff will then ring the mobile phone to make sure the home visit has finished and that they are safe
- 3.9. If there appears to be any cause for concern, an agreed a code word will be used and the staff member should respond accordingly.
- 3.14. If there is no answer, the Line Manager should try to make contact again after 5 minutes
- 3.15. If there is still no answer, the Line Manager should ring the contact details of the parent or carer to ensure that the staff member has left and at what time
- 3.16. In the event of any prolonged failure to contact the member of staff, the Line Manager should inform the School Manager or School Principal accordingly.

4. Risk Assessment

- 4.1. Check records as to what is known and what information is available.

- 4.2. Talk to other professionals who may have already have had contact or involvement with the family.
- 4.3. Discuss with the Line Manager what strategies to adopt when working with a potentially difficult parent or carer.

5. Unaccompanied visits

5.1. Staff may be permitted to make home visits without the presence of parents or carers, for instance where a pupil is a Post 16 pupil and is verbal and able to be left alone by parents/carers. In this instance the following guidelines should be observed:

5.1.1. Permission to make an unaccompanied home visit must be given by the Line Manager in advance of the visits

5.1.2. Permission must be obtained in advance in writing by the parent or carer.

5.1.3. Any work undertaken should be done in an appropriate space which is open and accessible.

Care should be taken that proximity to the pupil cannot be misinterpreted.

5.2 Staff will be required to confirm that they are aware of the contents of this Policy and that they will adhere to the principles and requirements set out in the Policy.