

LONE WORKING POLICY

Date of issue: 30/04/2021

1. Purpose

This guidance sets out the approach that all schools within the Two Counties Trust should take for managing lone working. The Head Teacher has day to day responsibility for health and safety in the school. This includes a duty of care to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable the risks associated with lone working both on and off the school premises. The Two Counties Trust is committed to the provision of a safe place of work for all staff, students, contractors, visitors and volunteers as well as those affected by, or involved in school activities. The Trust aims to ensure that any staff who may work alone (i.e., out of hours) are not exposed to additional or greater risk than any other person. More specifically all school's within the Trust should ensure that lone workers are identified, risks are assessed; and appropriate action is taken to reduce these risks.

2. Scope

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

This can be spilt into two main groups

- People who work in fixed establishments e.g. site staff, cleaners, staff working after normal hours.
- Remote Workers working away from fixed place of work e.g. home educators.

There is no general legal prohibition on lone working, however the employer must identify the hazards, assess the risks involved, and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements need to be put in place.

3. Classification of Lone Workers

To assist in determining the level of risk the Head of Health, Safety and Risk has identified examples of Low, Medium and High risk. Lower risk situations include: Staff working outside normal school office hours, e.g. site staff, cleaners, staff working through holidays.

Medium risk situations include:

Use of receptions or similar where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable and where colleagues cannot be readily called on by the lone worker in the event of an adverse situation arising. Working away from fixed place of work e.g. home educators visiting students in their home.

High risk situations include:

- Visiting domestic houses where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable.
- Working out of hours (not in a school controlled facility)
- Working alone with hazardous plant, tools, equipment or chemicals i.e. D&T or science labs.
- Where serious injury may be incurred by the type of work being carried out.

This is a guide only and Head Teachers or person they appoint to conduct this task (Health and Safety Competent Person) are required to complete a risk assessment to determine the level of risk and control measures required.

NOTE: Young or inexperienced employees who require direct supervision due to the nature of the task should not be permitted to work alone.

4. Key responsibilities in relation to lone working

Each school is responsible for implementing arrangements to ensure lone working is effectively managed and that all staff are made aware of the schools policy on lone working and any relevant risk assessments.

Wherever possible staff should not work alone. For example families should be invited into school or an agreed local venue to avoid home visits.

Staff must not take students in cars without another adult.

It is recognised that on occasion staff might be alone in a building. These staff should ensure someone knows where they will be working and what time they will finish.



When working in school during the holidays all staff must either sign in and out in reception or other agreed location or inform the site staff via email that they are onsite, where they are working and what time they anticipate to leave.

Staff making a lone visit away from school must inform their line manager of the address of the visit and the estimated time of return. If the estimated time of return changes then the school must be updated of the new expected time of arrival.

There may be occasions when contact with children and parents will require staff to work outside of normal working hours. For example if a parent is not available during the day due to work commitments. Visits must be discussed with a member of the Leadership team, taking into account any risk factors that may be pertinent and a risk assessment be in place.

Appropriate control measures, such as a buddy system described below, must then be agreed and implemented. If no risks are identified normal protocols will apply. Wherever possible these visits should not take place alone.

In cases where a monitoring/buddy system has been agreed as part of a risk assessment process the following will apply:

- If during office hours the agreed member of staff will alert a member of the Leadership team if staff member has not returned to or contacted the school within 30 minutes of expected return time/finish time.
- Leadership team member to contact the staff member by mobile, if unable to do so will inform the Police.
- If out of hours it is the worker's responsibility to contact the agreed designated contact person (Member of the Leadership team) to advise they have finished and are on their way home.
- If no contact is made within 30 minutes of expected finish time, designated contact person will attempt to make contact with staff member, and if unable to do so will contact the Police.
- Mobile telephones must be kept switched on until contact has been made with the designated member of the Leadership team.
- In all instances, if an individual staff member for any reason is aware that they will not be contactable on their mobile they must ensure that an alternative contact number is given.
- A code word should be agreed so that emergency help can be requested during a phone call. Eg 'Please tell ERIC I will be late for my next visit'.

Staff must be aware of health and safety and must not take unnecessary risks. For example avoid potential hazards such as working at height or manual handling.

5. Head Teacher Responsibilities

Lone working should carry no more risk than normal working however Head Teachers must recognise that the risks to lone workers are greater because there is a reduced level of immediate support available. By following normal risk assessment methods, Head Teachers should be able to eliminate, or reduce to an acceptable level, the risks associated with lone working.

Key responsibilities for Head Teachers are:

- To identify lone workers and hazards
- To carry out a lone working risk assessment for staff or department.
- To implement suitable control measures as identified in risk assessment.
- To distribute and monitor lone working device usage (if necessary)
- Ensure that any accident, hazard and violent incidents are reported and any control measures identified are implemented (in accordance with the Trust Health and Safety Policy).
- Ensuring that identified lone working staff, attend relevant training.
- Ensure that permanent staff, agency or voluntary workers, during their induction period, have adequate additional controls in place.
- To ensure procedures are in place in an emergency.

Employees Responsibilities:



- Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- To assist their Head Teacher in completing a lone working assessment.
- Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others.
- Take part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.
- Staff should 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.

6. One to One Teaching and Support

There will be many occasions where staff work one to one with students. This must always be considered as part of a risk assessment. Rooms/ locations for this must be carefully considered. For example doors should have viewing panels, staff should leave the door open and public spaces are better than out of the way parts of the school.

Outside agency staff must sign in at the main entrance of the school. Carefully consider where they work especially if they have been instructed to work one to one with students. Students must not be seen without parent / carer permission.

7. Training and Information

Training to ensure competency is particularly important where assistance is limited, and may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. Head Teachers need to set limits on what can and cannot be done when working alone and staff must be competent to deal with circumstances that should arise.

Personal safety training available to staff lone working should cover:

- Advice and guidance not to go into a situation if they feel at risk.
- The use of conflict resolution or defusing techniques. These include being aware of non-verbal communication; how to behave in a non-confrontational way; the importance of empathy; being polite; and listening.
- To be aware of surroundings, your own actions and how others may perceive you.
- Dynamic risk assessments

8. Risk Assessment Procedure

Risk assessment is an integral management tool that should be completed to ensure that staff are safe in their work. Normal school risk assessments should be completed in accordance with the risk assessment policy.

9. Lone worker identification and risk assessment process

- Head Teacher to identify lone working and the hazards.
- Head Teacher to complete a lone working risk assessment
- Ensure control measures are adequate
- Review assessment on an annual basis (at least annually) or if there have been any significant changes.

10. Assessment of Risk

Employees involved in lone working must have access to all available relevant information in order to make a reasoned judgement of any potential risk.



The following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the visit, special circumstances, likely outcomes
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- Any other special circumstances

The environment

- It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to assess the risks presented by the location of any meeting – access, layout, furnishings, lighting and temperature control – and to take appropriate action.
- If students are being accompanied on transport or in a public place, or visited at home, there must be an appropriate assessment of the risks this might present.

Personal

- In order to make a complete assessment, any history of challenging behaviour (i.e. a potentially violent parent) should be investigated.
- Any information regarding known triggers must be recorded.
- Staff must be aware of the effect they may have on the situation through their verbal and non-verbal communication, and take steps to avoid provocation.

Planning

- If visiting a property or individual as part of a teaching role, where a risk has been identified, always consider a visit with two staff members or a school-based meeting as alternatives. In some cases it may not be appropriate to hold a face-to-face meeting, and a telephone meeting may have to do.
- Ensure there are agreed contacts in case of an emergency and a system for reporting back at the end of a visit.
- Take into consideration the current situation and any previous events, which have caused problems.

Support and guidance can also be obtained from the Health, Safety and Risk Manager.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Whilst a lone worker risk assessment has been carried out during the period of lone working the staff member should be constantly reviewing the situation as part of a dynamic risk assessment. If at any time the lone worker is uncomfortable with their position, they should call for assistance or remove themselves from the risk. Personal safety training will cover dynamic risk assessments.

Review of Risk Assessment

All risk assessments must be reviewed at least annually or following a change in circumstance e.g. a reported incident, change in work pattern etc.

11. Environment Awareness

- Know what measures are in place at the school: Procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon by the aggressor and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in the school building.

12. Self Awareness

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything, which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.



- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

13. Awareness of Other People

- Take note of non-verbal signals from others.
- Be aware of the other persons triggers.
- Don't crowd people – allow them space.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them and show them you are listening.

14. Accident/incident and Near Miss Reporting

Any accident/incident or near miss, including threat of violence and aggression whilst lone working should be reported to the Head Teacher and recorded on Every, the Trust's on-line accident and incident system. For further information on accident/Incident reporting refer to the accident and incident reporting policy.

15. COVID-19

The Two Counties trust will continue to assess risk, and look at the application of current COVID-19 guidance and how this relates to the risks in our workplaces. This will likely warrant changes in certain practices, and where this is the case we will look at the impact on general risk control procedures and measures, reassessing them if applicable. This includes building in suitable cover and capacity for safety critical processes. The overarching aim always being to reduce the risk to as low a level as is reasonably practicable and in doing so, protect staff, students and visitors.

Suitable and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided free of charge to employees.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to develop, risk assessments and measures taken shall be updated regularly as new advice or information is provided.

16. Limitations of this Policy

This policy cannot anticipate all eventualities, therefore professional judgement should be used to identify the appropriate course of action needed to protect those who are vulnerable and/or at risk. This judgement should derive from multi-disciplinary team discussion rather than any one individual where possible.

17. Associated Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

18. General Data Protection Regulation

All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.



Work Activities covered by this assessment:	Lone Working when Exam Invigilating
School	Ashfield School
Name of Risk Owner	Rachel Talbot
Job title of risk owner	Exams Officer
Note: A person specific assessment must be carried out for disabled persons, pregnant women and nursing mothers	

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating			Further action <i>Consider hierarchy of controls i.e. elimination, substitution, engineering controls, signage/warning and/or administrative controls, (PPE as a last resort)</i>	Actions			Risk Rating		
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating		who <i>(Name)</i>	when <i>(Date)</i>	complete <i>(Date)</i>	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
Lone working – general	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone working activities avoided where practicable Staff shall limit the amount of time that they are alone on site as far as reasonably practicable Staff shall not undertake any high risk activities while working alone. (i.e. working at height) Staff to carry mobile phone to call for help if required Staff should ensure a colleague is aware of lone working when in occurrence Consideration given to staff at increased risk i.e. new or expectant mothers, inexperienced staff etc. and lone working activities avoided where practicable. 	3	3	9	All invigilators to sign in to confirm they are on site when working.	All staff	Ongoing	2	3	6	
	Injuries sustained and unable to call for help					All invigilators to sign out when they leave to confirm they have left the site safely.	All staff	Ongoing				

<p>Lone working with students</p>	<p>Staff may be at risk of injury, ill-health, physical/verbal abuse and stress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible lone working is avoided. • Staff are ‘competent’ (e.g. trained) to carry out the activity. • Formal procedures in place relating to lone working activities and protocol for informing of expected return times. • All staff are made aware of the procedures of lone working. • Arrangements are in place for reviewing lone working procedures, i.e. following an accident / near miss / incident. • Arrangements are in place for staff to raise their concerns relating to working arrangements. • All staff to follow guidance in the Trust Lone Working Policy. 	3	3	9	<p>If at any time a member of staff feels unsafe they must leave the room immediately and report issue.</p> <p>If a member of staff feels unwell they must contact the exams officer via mobile phone, who will assist and arrange cover.</p>			Ongoing	2	3	6
<p>Injuries sustained and unable to</p>	<p>Staff may be at risk of injury.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shall limit the amount of time that they are alone with the student to the 	3	3	9							

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating			Further action <i>Consider hierarchy of controls i.e. elimination, substitution, engineering controls, signage/warning and/or administrative controls, (PPE as a last resort)</i>	Actions			Risk Rating		
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating		who <i>(Name)</i>	when <i>(Date)</i>	complete <i>(Date)</i>	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
call for help.		<p>time of the exam. They should try to ensure that there is another adult close by and the exams officer is contactable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shall report to line manager after the examination has finished. • Staff shall not undertake any high risk activities alone. (i.e. working at height). • One mobile phone should always be in the room 										

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating			Further action <i>Consider hierarchy of controls i.e. elimination, substitution, engineering controls, signage/warning and/or administrative controls, (PPE as a last resort)</i>	Actions			Risk Rating		
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating		who <i>(Name)</i>	when <i>(Date)</i>	complete <i>(Date)</i>	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
Staff specifically at risk	Staff may be at risk of infection, miscarriage or exacerbate pre-existing medical conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration is given to staff particularly at risk e.g. new or expectant mothers, females, individuals who may be medically unfit to work alone, new staff etc. and lone working activities are avoided for this group of individuals, as far is practicable. When lone working activities cannot be avoided for this group of individuals, are adequate monitoring arrangements in place and a specific risk assessment is produced. 	3	3	9							
Intruders	Violence to staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all external doors / windows secured to prevent unauthorised access Do not allow access to unknown callers. 	3	3	9	Ask trespassers to leave site. If trespasser refuses to leave staff have mobile phone to contact Exams Officer or they can dial 999 if necessary.	All staff		Ongoing	1	3	3

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	Existing Control Measures	Risk Rating			Further action <i>Consider hierarchy of controls i.e. elimination, substitution, engineering controls, signage/warning and/or administrative controls, (PPE as a last resort)</i>	Actions			Risk Rating		
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating		who <i>(Name)</i>	when <i>(Date)</i>	complete <i>(Date)</i>	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
Assessors Name: Rachel Talbot			Assessors Signature: Rachel Talbot				Date: 21.01.22					
Risk Owners Name: Rachel Talbot			Risk Owners Signature: Rachel Talbot				Date: 21.01.22					
Date of review: 21.01.23												

To determine if your control measures are adequate, have you have done everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm, compare your control measures with good practice. An approach of evaluating risk involves working out the risk level by categorising the likelihood of the harm and the potential severity of harm using the matrix below. The risk level determines which risks should be tackled first.

Risk	Impact				
Likelihood	Negligible (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Severe (4)	Catastrophic (5)
Common occurrence (5)	5	10	15	20	25
Likely (4)	4	8	12	16	20
Foreseeable (3)	3	6	9	12	15
Occasional incident (2)	2	4	6	8	10
Freak event (1)	1	2	3	4	5

Key to Risk Management Action Level	Tolerable	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority
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