



The Stables Independent School

Lone Working Policy

This policy links directly to the listed Stables Policies	Health & Safety Policy
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This policy was reviewed and approved by the Proprietors in the Autumn Term 2026.

It will be reviewed annually and approved by the Proprietors.

INTRODUCTION

Working alone presents a unique health and safety problem since, at least on initial consideration, workers have to ensure their own safety. However, as far as the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 is concerned, the responsibility of the employer to ensure the safety of lone workers does not differ much from that of their responsibility to ensure the safety of employees working in a group or under close supervision.

The overall duty remains which puts a duty on every employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of employees.

The duty therefore applies to lone workers. The Stables Independent School is required to consider in some depth the hazards and risks of the work involved and to take steps to minimise the hazards so as to reduce those risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Employees are also required to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who might be affected by their acts or omissions.

1. DEFINITION OF LONE WORKING

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. At The Stables, this definition can apply to several categories of employee including:

- teachers and support staff who work one to one with young people or who may be left alone while other staff accompany young people
- staff required to attend meetings and who may travel alone
- office based staff who may be alone for parts of the working day
- office based staff who may work late or work at weekends
- staff who occasionally work from home

Employees do not therefore have to be working in complete isolation all the time to be considered a lone worker.

2. LEGISLATION

There are no legal duties on employers specifically in relation to lone working and no legal bar to people working alone. However, the following legislation is in place to ensure a safe working environment:

- Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAW) 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995
- Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007

3. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

A number of health and safety legislation requirements on employers have particular relevance to lone working. The aim is to ensure that the lone worker is not at any more risk than other employees who work together. Employers must:

- Carry out a risk assessment – this responsibility cannot be transferred to the lone worker
- Ensure appropriate personal safety measures, communication systems and training requirements have been instigated for employees who work alone. This will include employees working off site or in the community
- Put systems in place to ensure staff who work alone are safe
- Record all assessment and safety measures identified to alleviate risk
- Actively encourage employees to take ownership of their personal safety and security.

- Following an incident undertake a review of work practices within team and in any case to do so on an annual basis.
- Identify appropriate training needs for their employees and ensure that these are delivered.
- Ensure all employees are trained in conflict resolution (i.e de-escalations skills) and attend further training when risks have been identified.
- Have procedures in place to ensure that there is a record of the location of employees who may be in a lone working situation
- Ensure that appropriate advice is sought from the Health and Safety Manager or other relevant organisations over specific issues.
- Ensure lone workers are supervised regularly, even if this is carried out differently from workers who work together
- Ensure that the company is insured to cover lone working.

4. EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees also have a responsibility under health and safety legislation to:

- Take reasonable care of their own and other people's safety
- Have an awareness of their surroundings and the possible threats to their personal safety when working alone
- Be involved in assessing risk and identifying safety measures
- Undertake and follow training and conflict resolution (Norfolk Steps) provided to ensure their safety
- Follow the organisation's policies and procedures set up to protect their safety
- Use equipment in accordance with the training given and not misuse it
- Tell the employer when safety measures are not adequate
- Tell the employer when they have encountered a 'near miss' or have identified additional risks to their safety that were previously unidentified and use this information to prepare up to date risk assessments
- Report to the employer any actual accidents or incidents that occur, using proper organisational procedure entering into the accident book
- Ensure that their line manager and colleagues on shift are aware of their location, including any planned off site activities with young people, and that contact details are left available
- If their plans change, ensure that their line manager and colleagues on shift are made aware of changes if at any time they feel at risk they should withdraw immediately and seek advice or assistance

Any employee who is in a situation where they feel uncomfortable and fear for their personal safety should remove themselves from the situation unless this is likely to increase the risk to themselves and/or other employees or young people. Any device or alarm that has been issued for such situations should be activated to summon assistance. Ensure your mobile network can be used in the area prior to going (speak with the headteacher to assist around this if there are issues).

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

The crucial element in ensuring the safety of lone workers is the risk assessment. The main aims of the risk assessment are to find out whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker, to ensure the lone worker is not put at any greater risk than those who would do the job together and to identify any jobs that are too difficult or dangerous for a lone worker to carry out.

The risk assessment should be carried out by someone who is experienced in assessing risk and has an understanding of what the job entails. It should also be carried out in conjunction with all lone workers with reference to other materials such as accident and incident books and RIDDOR reports.

The assessor should evaluate the risk on a cost versus benefit basis. It should be 'reasonably practicable' for the organisation to reduce the risk.

The steps that should be taken when carrying out a risk assessment are:

- Identify the possible risks to the safety of school staff working alone – this can entail using real life incidents or near misses from previously recorded information and from staff experiences or by looking at possible worst case scenarios for each aspect of work
- The risk assessments should specify appropriate preventive measures that are not exhaustive but may be used as a guide to establish a safe and secure approach for each situation. A case by case approach must be developed taking into consideration each known contributory factor and factors that affect safety that may, or may not, be present. The type of control measures identified from the risk assessment will vary depending on the type of work, location, experience of persons involved and local conditions
- Record this information in an accessible place (this is a requirement if the organisation has more than five employees)
- Provide information and training to staff about the possible risks and measures to prevent incidents occurring
- Senior leaders should monitor and review the risk assessment regularly to ensure it is still valid and bring to the attention of all staff

As an additional measure, recognising the increased level of vulnerability of both staff and young people when lone working, The Stables will also ensure the following actions take place.

- Prior to a young person being placed at The Stables, their placing authority will provide a risk assessment. This will take into account the needs of the young person, their history and the risks they place on themselves, other young people, the staff and the community as a whole. This will be considered on every occasion a member of staff will be lone working with a young person
- An immediate risk assessment covering specific activities or events may also be put in place if necessary

- Staff will not spend time in closed rooms with young people unless specific circumstances dictate this cannot be avoided. This may include intervention work or catch up work; staff should ensure their colleagues are aware of their whereabouts before undertaking this work
- Where staff are potentially at risk of abuse or malicious allegations from a young person, a ratio of 2:1 will be ensured
- Issues of staff safety and lone working will be a regular item on staff meeting and supervision agendas

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A number of policies and procedures will assist the school in explaining to staff the measures they have taken to ensure the safety of those who work alone.

- A health and safety policy will outline how the health and safety of staff within the organisation will be managed and how often risk assessments and health and safety inspections are carried out. In particular this will include the risks associated with lone working.
- A mobile phone policy will outline how mobile phones and other communication devices are to be used by lone workers.
- Supervision is a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. A staff supervision policy will outline how staff will be supervised, which will include ensuring staff understand the risks of lone working and the safety precautions put in place to protect them. Supervision can take place either in the office, via the telephone or during accompanied visits. More supervision may be needed for lone workers and the level of supervision required will be identified during the risk assessment.

APPENDIX 1 – LONE WORKER CHECKLIST

The following are things that should be considered when undertaking a lone working risk assessment:

The Workplace

- Is there good access to and from the premises?



- Are there any foreseeable emergency situations?
- Are there security measures in place, ie. good lighting, CCTV, panic/personal alarms, mirror systems?
- Are there any other hazards identified particular to lone workers?

The Process

- Does the process of work being performed present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Are there any other hazards identified particular to lone workers?

Equipment/Goods

- Can all plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
- Does the process of work involve lifting objects too heavy for one person?
- Are there any emergency controls of plant or equipment that cannot be operated by one person?
- Are there any other hazards identified particular to lone workers?

Violence

- Is there likely to be contact with people who may become violent?
- Is there cash on the premises?
- Is there contact with people whose access cannot be carefully controlled?
- Is there a history of violence or threats to employees?
- Are there any other hazards identified particular to lone workers?

The Individual

- Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- What level and type of supervision is required?
- Does the medical history of the person present any foreseeable hazards, eg. epilepsy, diabetes?
- Is there a provision for meals, drinks and toilet facilities?
- Is special training required for emergencies in unusual situations, i.e. personal safety?
- Are there first aid facilities available?
- Are communication systems in place, i.e. mobile phones?
- Are there any other hazards identified particular to lone workers?

