Langham Village School Lone Working Policy and Procedure

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1. Lone working policy

Langham Village School recognises its health and safety responsibilities towards employees who are involved in lone working processes and others who may be affected by these activities. Lone workers should not be put at more risk than other employees and specific control measures may be necessary in order to achieve this.

This document outlines a sensible risk-based approach towards lone working. Safe lone working can be achieved by ensuring that safe systems of work are made available through management processes and used by all employees.

Periodic review will take place to ensure that these measures are effective.

All employees are expected to report all incidents which occur in relation to lone working in order to ensure that the organisation can prevent future events.

2. Defining lone working

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. Lone workers may be found in a range of situations:

- People in fixed establishments where:
  - Only one person works at the premises.
  - People work separately from others, e.g. in isolated areas of a site.
  - People work outside normal hours, e.g. maintenance employees.

- Mobile or peripatetic workers operating away from their fixed base:
  - On construction, maintenance, inspection activities or unfamiliar sites.
  - 'Service' workers, for example, Social Workers, Tutors, Mobile Library Drivers, Enforcement Officers.

3. Note on lone working risk assessment

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone. However, a risk assessment of lone working tasks must be carried out.

Lone working can be included as part of an overall risk assessment for an activity or a specific lone working assessment must be carried out. A lone working risk assessment template and an example of a Lone Worker Risk Assessment is included with this guidance.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, however this task can be delegated to a competent person.

4. Identify the hazard

Activities identified need to be assessed to determine the level of risk they present. This involves looking at factors such as:

- The potential for violence and aggression.
- The environment and other activities taking place in the same working area. Examples of these two areas include adverse weather, working on an unfamiliar construction site.

In addition, the risk assessment must take into account unforeseeable emergencies which may arise, such as equipment failure, illness and accidents.

4.1 Potential for violence and aggression

It is recognised that the hazards presented by a particular lone working activity will vary, e.g. carrying out unwanted enforcement activities, cash handling, driving for business.

The following table identifies four areas for consideration as they are applicable when assessing lone working risks. This table does not contain an exhaustive list and should be used as a starting point.

The client	Individual characteristics can have the potential to contribute towards violence and aggression, e.g. previous history, or the fact that the person is unknown and there is no available information to use as part of the risk assessment process.
The employee who is lone working	Factors which may increase or decrease the chances of violence and aggression occurring, e.g. their competence (level of training, experience, cultural awareness etc), role (e.g. representing authority in enforcement work) and the things they might do (e.g. arriving late for a home visit)
Interaction	The interaction which takes place between the employee and the client, for example, enforcing rules, carrying out inspections, asking questions about family backgrounds, carrying valuable items, transporting people who use the service.
The work environment	**Off School Site** For example; a home visit on another person's property, visiting rural areas that are without lighting, court visits etc. The table below provides further information about the work environment. **On School Site** Lone working employees need to be able to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency. Where there is the potential for violence and aggression involving a client, both employees and visitors need to be able

	to move to a place of safety if a difficult situation arises, for example, exit the meeting room that you are working in.

4.2 Physical hazards

The working environment and activities may present particular hazards and should be considered as part of the lone working risk assessment, for example:

Work environment	The level of risk varies from one working environment to another, higher risk environments can include: construction sites; docks; farms and working on or near to water (including the coastline). Lower risk lone working environments can include working at offices that are secure and driving alone on short duration journeys in built up areas. There must be a safe way in and out of the workplace. This can be difficult to achieve when working on premises which are not under the control of NCC, for example when making a first home visit. Other areas for consideration include when using third party owned electrical appliances (home visits), poor lighting.
Activity being undertaken	The level of risk varies by activity. Examples of higher risk activity includes working off ladders to carry out maintenance work, carrying out bridge inspections, animal handling on farms, working on highways, using hazardous machinery. Lower risk lone working activity includes attending meetings at another office base belonging to NCC and home working.
Plant, equipment, substances	Some equipment used to carry out work may not be easily and safely handled by one person, e.g., temporary access equipment such as ladders or trestles. Other manual handling activities may also not be suitable for one person. It should be established whether equipment can be used and controlled safely by a lone worker, for example, reversing a heavy goods vehicle in an area with high pedestrian movement. Specific warnings may be provided by the manufacturer or identified through the way in which the work is being done which indicates a need to avoid lone working, for example, when using certain chemicals or hazardous substances.
Communication with others and supervision.	Means of communication vary depending on the work activity and location. There are areas in Norfolk where a mobile phone signal is not available. This also impacts on the ability to summon assistance in the event of an emergency.

5 Who is at risk (and when)

The lone working assessment must consider who might be harmed as a result of our activities, for example, employees, visitors and contractors.

The following table provides details of some specific aspects for consideration when assessing the suitability of lone working for NCC employees:

New and expectant mothers	Impaired ability to carry out physically strenuous work. Later stages of pregnancy may increase the risk of falls through reduced visibility and changes to mobility. Risk of early labour or miscarriage through physical assault. Please note: a specific risk assessment is provided for New and Expectant Mothers on Schools' PeopleNet.
Young people	Lack of experience and level of maturity. Inability to concentrate for long periods.
Disability	Impact on ability to make unassisted evacuation. Ability to identify that evacuation is required.
New employees, trainees including inexperienced volunteers	Lack of familiarity through level of experience or training needs.
Specific medical conditions	Some individuals may have medical conditions that make them unsuitable for working alone. These may include some health conditions, such as unstable epilepsy or diabetes. The consideration of medical conditions should include both routine activities and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

The following table provides examples of individual consideration for non-employees

Contractors	Unfamiliar with site layout, emergency procedures, adjacent activities and site hazards.
Person who uses the school site for a one to one meeting.	Unfamiliar with exit route from meeting room, may become agitated and need to leave the room in anger.

Lone working may be encountered during part of a working day as well as for lone working occupations, for example, locking and opening up an office base, driving to different work bases to attend meetings.

All of the above considerations are just a guide and are not exhaustive. Each risk assessment must consider the vulnerabilities of the person involved in the lone working task and identify controls to reduce to an acceptable level.

6 Controlling the risk

It is important to ensure that control measures are proportionate to the risk.

A key factor in controlling lone worker risk is to ensure that lone workers are competent in adapting to a foreseeable range of changing and developing situations with little or no contact with their supervisor. The extent of supervision must be proportionate to the risk and the competency of the lone worker. The manager is responsible for ensuring that safe working arrangements are in place for the all stages of the activity, from the task planning, to implementation and completion. These arrangements include ensuring that lone workers are competent in adapting to a foreseeable range of changing and developing situations with little or no contact with their supervisor.

Any employee working alone must let someone know that they are on their own

6.1 Withdrawing from lone working activity

Headteachers /Managers must ensure that the lone worker is supported if they decide that they need to terminate the work they are carrying out to protect their (or others') safety. For example, when working at height and wind speeds increase during the course of the work or visiting a person who uses a service who becomes verbally aggressive and threatening. In this instance a review of the arrangements for similar future work must be carried out.

6.2 Unsafe lone working

In circumstances with all control measures in place, if the assessment identifies that it isn't possible for the task to be carried out safely then lone working should not proceed.

If you are unsure about what controls are needed because the task is considered higher risk or requires more technical/specialist knowledge, further guidance should be sought from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

6.3 Supervisory monitoring of lone working

The Headteacher must ensure that lone worker monitoring takes place. Monitoring can include:

- Supervisor visits sites in person or observes people who are working alone
- Making regular contact with the lone worker using mobile phones, radio, telephone or use of automated devices (please refer to Emergency Arrangements in this document for the arrangements needed if a lone worker cannot be contacted). An overview of contact systems are detailed below.

6.4 Mandatory control measures for potentially violent and aggressive situations

Where there is the potential for violence and aggression the following three risk categories and mandatory control measures are provided. Some employees may fall into more than one category of lone working, therefore all control measures against each individual category may apply.

Additional information is provided for consideration, this information is a guide only and isn't a fully inclusive list of control measures. This should be read alongside Keeping Children safe in Education and The School Safeguarding Policy.

Risk Category	Control Measures
Category 1 Employees working in offices or other secure locations outside of normal working hours or who routinely work in these locations on their own. Work of a low risk office type. Examples would include: Teachers, office-based employees, travelling to meetings.	**Mandatory** • Employees must be briefed on the measures required to ensure their workplace is secure if they are lone working and emergency procedures. • All employees must record an itinerary of their movements that is accessible to their manager/colleagues. Details made available should include location, car make, model, registration number and mobile phone number.
	For guidance and consideration Refer to low risk office lone working procedure

Category 2 Employees working in locations where security is inadequate or where shared premises would allow non-authorised access to their work area. Employees working in unfamiliar locations but not meeting members of the public. Employees visiting established clients who have been assessed as presenting no risk to employees. Employees responding to intruder alarm calls for NCC property out of hours. Firefighters conducting home fire risk assessments or similar activities. Examples would include: Groundsmen / school caretakers, employees whose duties include responding to out of hours intruder alarm calls, NCC employees working in shared offices with poor security arrangements, some home care employees, firefighters fitting smoke detectors in residents' properties by appointment.	**Mandatory** • For out of hours alarm calls each team must have clear instructions for employees. • Employees who are expected to respond to alarm call outs must have access to a personally issued work mobile with appropriate reception or have indicated that they are willing to use their personal mobile in such circumstances and that it has appropriate network coverage for the area in question. Where possible, lone working to respond to an alarm should be avoided through the use of contracted key holder arrangements. Where it is not possible then a buddy/automated buddy arrangement must be put in place. • Where dealing with violence and aggression training is not provided, the line manager should give clear information to lone workers on what work can and cannot be done alone; when to withdraw or stop work; communication and check-in procedures; signs of escalating violence and aggression and emergency procedures. • Where the problem relates to poor security allowing un-authorised access to work areas, the security of the building should be reviewed, if necessary, with the other occupiers or landlord and appropriate measures introduced. • Daily work tracking arrangements must be put in place in line with the level of risk involved • All employees must record an itinerary of their movements that is accessible to their manager/colleagues. Details made available should include location, car make, model, registration number and mobile phone number. • Consider issuing a personal safety alarm. • Provide all other relevant assessment information, for example, where alarms are located in private meeting rooms.

	For guidance and consideration • Consideration should be given to ensuing that employees receive appropriate training in dealing with confrontational situations such as the Suzy Lamplugh Trust's dealing with Violence and Aggression one-day course available through HR Learning and Development.
Category 3 Employees who visit unknown clients or clients who are known to present challenging or aggressive behaviour in their own homes in order to provide a service. Employees who routinely work alone in remote locations. Examples would include: Youth Offending team employees, Assessment and family support workers, Mobile Library employees, EDT out of hours team.	**Mandatory** • Employees dealing with clients must receive training on dealing with confrontational situations such as the Suzy Lamplugh Trust's dealing with violence and aggression one-day course. This training should be repeated annually. • Information to include what work can and cannot be done alone; when to withdraw or stop work; communication arrangements and emergency procedures. • A form of employees tracking system must be introduced and its use enforced. This could either be a buddy system or an automated system. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team will be able to advise on which system would be most suitable. • Employees must be briefed on the procedures for lone working before they start such work for the first time and at least six-monthly thereafter. Records of these briefings should be maintained. • Where a client presents a known risk of violence, then the visit should be re-arranged for a venue where appropriate levels of security or assistance are available. If there are particular reasons for the visit to take place at the client's home, then at least two people should attend. • Consider issuing a personal safety alarm. • Provide all other relevant assessment information

6.5 Personal safety - guidance on lone working control measures

A guide on control measures can be found on Schools PeopleNet. This guide includes information that can be used in the development of a lone working risk assessment, for example, issuing personal safety alarms, the use of alarms in meeting rooms.

6.6 Violence at work

Detailed guidance for Headteachers/managers can be found on Schools' PeopleNet and should be used alongside this document as it applies to lone working activities.

7 Emergency arrangements

Lone workers should be capable of responding to foreseeable emergencies through the development of planned arrangements, for example, fire and first aid need (see policy on Schools' PeopleNet). The requirements for emergency will depend on the nature of the work being carried out.

Where it is possible a lone worker should withdraw from circumstances of escalating violence and aggression towards them.

Where a lone worker monitoring system is used it must include a means to raise the alarm in the event of (a) failure to contact a lone worker (b) an emergency request for assistance. The NCC lone worker buddy system template on Schools' PeopleNet outlines a recommended system. When using a buddy system, you must ensure that there is no delay in raising the alarm with the police. If there is no response from a lone worker to confirm their safety the police should be contacted and informed of the last known whereabouts after no more than a 30 to 45-minute period of trying to make contact.

8 Risk assessment recording

Lone working issues may be considered as part of an overall risk assessment of a job role or activity. However, where lone working has not been considered as part of other risk assessments, a specific risk assessment must be carried out (a Lone Working Risk Assessment Template is available on Schools' PeopleNet). It is important to note that the original risk assessment may change as the activity itself progresses and further information on the competency of lone workers has been provided in this guide.

9 Risk assessment review

Lone working risk assessments must be regularly reviewed in line with changes which have been identified, for example, a violent incident has occurred during the last visit and it is no longer safe to lone work in the future. All incidents and/or previously unforeseeable risks must be reported by the lone worker as soon as possible, reviewed by the manager and flagged on any systems which will warn other workers of the risk. If no changes have occurred within a twelve-month period then lone working risk assessments should be reviewed at that point.

Headteachers/ Managers must ensure that there are adequate reporting and feedback mechanisms are in place which allow for new information to be gathered about any changes which impact on the risk assessment. Changes to working practice must be assessed and communicated to all relevant employees.

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Signed: Mrs Polly Kossowicz - Head teacher
Signed: Ms Kate Jackson - Chair of Governors