



North Crescent Primary School

Lone Working Policy

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Last Review	N/A
Next Review	January 2026

What is Lone Working?

Lone working is defined as an individual who:

- Works without close or direct supervision
- Works away from the building or on the school grounds
- Works on the premises outside of normal working hours, at weekends or during holidays and a half term break.

School employees, volunteers and students may be classed as lone workers due to their behaviour, working hours, location or methods of working.

Who can be affected and when?

- Cleaners
- Caretakers
- Headteacher or Principal
- Teachers
- Business Manager
- Library staff
- Security
- Lab technicians

Examples of Lone Working Scenarios:

- PE staff teaching in playing fields or playgrounds away from the main building.
- Staff teaching after core hours in an annexe/hut separated from the main building.
- Parent and teacher interviews.
- Premises Staff carrying out maintenance work during holiday periods.
- Situations involving children and young people with the potential for predictable violent outbursts or a tendency for malicious allegations.

The Law

As long as the work has been risk assessed and appropriate controls are in place it can be safe to work alone. The **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** requires controls to be in place to ensure safe working practices at all times.

Employers have a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of employees.

Under **the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, employers must assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety.

Responsibilities

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst at work. Employers also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them.

These responsibilities **cannot** be transferred to any other person, including those who work alone or contractors.

Employees are responsible for:

Taking reasonable care of themselves, and other people who may be affected by their work;
Co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

Head Teachers and Senior Leaders

Key responsibilities are:

- To avoid lone working as far as reasonably practicable;
- identify lone workers and hazards they are exposed to;
- To carry out a lone working risk assessment for relevant staff or departments;
- To implement suitable control measures as identified in risk assessment;
- Ensure that any accident, hazard and violent incidents are reported and any new control measures identified are implemented;
- Ensuring that identified lone working staff attend relevant training;
- Ensure that permanent staff, agency or voluntary workers, have adequate additional controls in place during their induction period;
- To ensure procedures are in place for an emergency situation.
- Senior Leaders, if necessary to lone work, need to communicate with relevant people that they are on site and make regular contact. This includes contact when leaving site and agreed times (minimum every two hours).

Employees

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- To assist their Head of School / Department Head in completing the lone working risk 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.

If you do not feel comfortable with long working, ensure you communicate your concerns to the school head or Senior Leaders.

How Does Lone Working Affect Hazards?

An existing hazard identified in a standard task risk assessment generally remains the same whether you work with colleagues or work alone.

E.g. Using a step ladder to hang a display carries a risk of falling from height.

However, the **likelihood** or **severity** (or both) may increase because you are alone because you do not have support or cannot raise the alarm.

Accidents

Accidents can often be unpredictable so you need to consider what would happen if you had an accident when you are working alone.

If you were unable to reach a first aid kit or summon assistance, particularly if you are unconscious - what systems are in place for emergencies?

Management Checks

Arrangements can be made for you to contact your manager or they visit you at certain times to confirm everything is alright.

Buddy System

A buddy is a nominated colleague that will either receive check-in calls from the lone worker or contact the lone worker directly at agreed times if they don't report in. It is always recommended that each member of staff have two buddies nominated to allow for holiday and sickness cover.

Lone Worker System/Device

Lone Worker mobile phone apps can be used to summon emergency help or check-in at agreed intervals. (An alarm can be sent to a manager if a check-in time is missed.)

Personal devices can also provide a function of alerting managers if the Lone Worker falls and fails to get up, e.g. fall from height or fainting.

Illness and Medical Requirements

It is important to check that lone workers have no medical condition/disability that would make them unsuitable for working alone.

Staff should seek medical advice if necessary to ensure the controls in place are suitable for their situation. Some examples of medical situations that require further assistance include: Uncontrolled / poorly controlled diabetes, Epilepsy, Heart conditions. New and expectant mothers, History of fainting/blackouts, Anxiety/panic attacks, Severe asthma, Taking certain medications

Working at Height and Manual Handling

You are at an increased risk of falling if you work on full ladders with no colleagues to support you at ground level.

Always attempt to eliminate work at height where possible to use alternative methods to complete the task. E.g. Telescopic pole window cleaning.

When this is not possible, ensure you are sufficiently trained to carry out work at height on the suitable equipment and arrange for a trained colleague to assist you where appropriate.

With no assistance to help carry tables or similar equipment, you are more likely to sustain injury when carrying out significant manual handling work alone.

Always refer to the T.I.L.E method to assess if a manual handling task can be carried out by a lone worker or requires more staff to complete the task safely.

Task - What does the whole task involve, are there mechanical aids you can use?

Individual - Can you handle the load yourself or should this be a two-person job?

Load - Assess the loads' weight, size, shape, stability before moving the object?

Environment - Is there sufficient space and light to move the load safely, any wet surfaces or is specific PPE required?

Hazardous Work Equipment and Substances

You must ensure your training and instructions clearly state equipment can be operated safely by one person before starting work.

Ensure you are aware of all the controls in place including emergency stop procedures for machinery and the Personal Protective Equipment to be worn.

For Hazardous substances, be aware that not all products have the same properties and PPE that works with one may not be compatible with another.

Always refer to the COSHH assessment to confirm how to use it safely.

Consider if something did go wrong whilst you are on your own, what would happen. E.g. A sleeve being caught in workshop machinery or you become faint from using a heavy-duty cleaning product.

Ensure you are aware of emergency procedures to deal with situations that involve fire, electric isolation, gas leak or hazardous spillages.

Supervision and Staff Contact

Ensure you have regular supervisory contact so your manager and colleagues know your work patterns.

Supervision and support are also vital for monitoring for signs of stress, fatigue and isolation.

The extent of supervision depends on the risk and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

In particular, young and new workers should be supervised in person and not permitted to work alone until fully trained.

There should be regular contact either by radio, mobile phone or email. Check that the member of staff has returned home safely after completion of the work.

Violence and Aggression at Work

Consider whether there is a need to interact with visitors or trespassers alone and if there has been a history of verbal threats.

You need to be clear about what action you can take if you are in a heated situation or unable to get assistance by phone when away from other staff.

If there is a greater risk of coming into contact with violent or aggressive individuals, procedures need to be in place for working and visiting in pairs where possible.

Consider if visits or meetings can be held in an appropriate office at the school with colleagues on-site for support.

Automatic Lone Worker alert devices could also be considered for Lone Workers working in high-risk areas who may need to call for police assistance without having to rely on reaching their mobile phone or radio.

Buddy Systems

An arrangement should be in place between the workers and managers to have an agreed local procedure of what to do if someone cannot be contacted.

A lone workers buddy should have:

All of the required contact details for the lone worker, e.g. work schedule or access to an online diary, work and private phone numbers, work location and emergency contact information.

Have all of the above information written down and available to hand. Know when the lone worker's breaks or rest periods are (including short 10-minute breaks, lunch breaks and times when the worker is travelling).

An established escalation procedure should be communicated to all involved to know when a situation should be escalated to a lone workers manager and higher.

For example, If the lone worker does not get in touch at the agreed time or intervals, attempt to contact the worker 2 - 3 times before escalating the matter to their manager/supervisor.

If the lone worker can still not be contacted by their manager after an hour, contact the workers emergency contact to establish if they have further information and attend the site to confirm if medical or police assistance is required.

Why Are Risk Assessments Required?

Employers have a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary.

This must include:

- Involving workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them.
- Taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible or putting in place control measures to reduce the risk as far as possible.
- Provide instruction, training and supervision.
- Reviewing risk assessments periodically, or when there has been a significant change.

Senior Management Responsibilities

The Head of School and Senior Leaders should identify situations where people work alone and identify the risks they may be exposed to by considering the following: -

Does the workplace present a specific risk to the lone worker?

Is there a safe way in and out of the work area or building?
Is there machinery involved that one person cannot operate safely?
Are chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a particular risk?
Does the work involve lifting objects too large for one person?
Is there a risk of violence or aggression?
Are there any reasons why the individual might be more vulnerable than others working alone?
If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communication, especially in an emergency?

What is a Dynamic Risk Assessment?

Whilst employers have a duty to provide lone workers with a risk assessment, situations can change for a number of reasons.

A Dynamic risk assessment is an 'On the spot' assessment that you carry out in your head. It is a continuous assessment of a situation for any changing circumstances and any additional controls are required. This allows you to ensure an acceptable level of safety is maintained or to stop the work if the risks cannot be controlled as planned.

Dynamic risk assessments are used to highlight if the recorded formal risk assessment needs reviewing and updating.

Are there additional controls that are now required for new circumstances or for a scenario that was previously missed?

If yes, this must be carried out promptly and the revised risk assessment communicated to all staff affected.

Changing Situations - Is it Safe to Continue

Aggression at Work

The Health and Safety Executives definition of violence or aggression at work is as follows: "Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work"

This includes verbal as well as physical abuse or threats. Verbal abuse and threats are the most common types of incidents. Physical attacks are comparatively rare.

For any act of aggression or violence against you, always ensure you seek assistance and support from your manager as it can be very upsetting and stressful.

A record of the incident should be made as soon as possible, including any contact with the Police when violence or threatening behaviour was involved, to allow management to take further action.

Verbal and Non-physical Aggression

"Should I say something?"

Non-physical aggression can be harder to report than physical aggression.

What you find offensive or upsetting may not be offensive to someone else but that does not mean you should put off speaking to your manager about it.

Examples of non-physical types of aggression:

- Racial or sexual verbal abuse
- Threatening gestures/language
- Staring/making you feel uncomfortable and intimidate
- Abusive phone calls
- Swearing, shouting, insults
- Innuendo
- Name-calling
- Deliberate silence to intimidate
- Stalking and obsessive behaviour
- Internet comments and letters

Inhibitors

Inhibitions are things that prevent people from outwardly losing their temper or behaving inappropriately.

It is important to recognise inhibitions can be reduced in the long term for example as the result of a learning/intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or dementia.

They can also be reduced temporarily through prescription or non-prescription drugs and the consumption of alcohol.

Fear/anxiety/pain/frustration

The Early Warning Signs of Aggression

Learn to recognise when a person could become aggressive or violent. There are established stages of developing body language that can indicate when someone has the potential to become aggressive or violent. These changes can occur in a matter of seconds or in most cases throughout a conversation or meeting.



De-escalating Aggressive Situations

It is impossible to completely avoid confrontation throughout our lives.

Wherever there is the possibility of services users such as parents, visitors or students wanting something that staff cannot provide at that time (or situations that arrive from a misunderstanding) there will be the possibility of confrontation.

That said, our skills, attitude and approach will go a long way towards reducing the level of hostility experienced.

Remember - it is Ok for people to be frustrated or angry but it is NOT Ok for them to be aggressive or violent.

The Control Trilogy

The Control Trilogy has three main stages to think about when defusing an aggressive situation.

"Calming, Reaching and Controlling"