



North Crescent Primary School

Lone Working Policy

Date Policy Created	January 2024
Last Review	New
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 may be classed as lone workers due to their working hours, location or methods of working.

Who can be affected and when?

- Cleaners (*out of normal school hours and during non-term times*)
- Premises staff (*out of normal school hours and during non-term times, and if working in isolation*)
- School leaders (*out of normal school hours and during non-term times*)
- Teachers (*out of normal school hours and during non-term times*)
- Office staff (*out of normal school hours and during non-term times*)
- Catering staff (*out of normal school hours and during non-term times*)
- Contractors (*out of school hours and during non-term times, and if working in isolation*)

The Law

Does the law prevent us from working alone?

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

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; cooperate 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 the site and at agreed times (minimum every two hours).

Employees

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- To assist 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.
- Report any concerns about lone working to the Headteacher.

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 when you are alone because you do not have support or cannot raise the alarm.

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 or severe asthma.

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? For example:

- **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.

If expected contact has not been made, the matter must be escalated to the Headteacher or CEO.

- **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.

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. a telescopic pole window cleaning. When this is not possible, ensure you are sufficiently trained to carry out work at height on the suitable equipment.

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?

Working with Hazardous Work Equipment and Substances

- Ensure risk assessments are in place. Follow COSHH.
(Including what actions/controls are in place if an incident should occur)
- Ensure you are fully trained to use the equipment or substances.
- Have appropriate PPE in place.
- Ensure operating instructions are fully adhered to.
- Ensure you are aware of all the controls in place including emergency stop procedures for machinery.
- Avoid lone working where possible.
- Be aware of relevant emergency procedures, e.g. fire, gas leaks, hot works, spillages, etc).

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. It must be considered if there are 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.