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LONE WORKING POLICY

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST, AMERICAN LANE,
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1. LONE WORKING POLICY

Lone working activities are a normal part of service delivery in Cambridgeshire County Council.

Horizons Education Trust 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 to support the employee.

This document outlines a risk based approach towards lone working. Safe lone working can be achieved by ensuring that safe systems of work are made available 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 Trust schools 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:

- Only one person works at the school. People work separately from others, e.g. in isolated areas of the school site.
- People work outside normal hours in school
- Outreach workers or school to school support working or training:
 - teachers or support staff working in other schools.

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 within this guidance.

The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, however, this task can be delegated to a competent person by the Head Teacher.

4. IDENTIFY THE HAZARD

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

- The potential risk of violence and aggression.
- The potential risk of the environment and other activities taking place in the same working area.

In addition the risk assessment must take account of foreseeable 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 for support staff.

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 or pupil | 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 and the activities they might do |
| Interaction | The interaction which takes place between the employee and the client or pupil, 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 the school site: For example; home visit on another person's property, visiting rural areas that are without lighting 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 pupil, 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 |

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| | working within. |
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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:

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| Work environment | <p>The level of risk varies from one working environment to another, higher risk environments can include: working in an environment separated from others. Lower risk lone working environments can include working at offices that are secure and driving alone on short duration journeys in built up areas.</p> <p>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 the school for example when making a first home visit.</p> <p>Other areas for consideration include when using third party owned electrical appliances (home visits), poor lighting.</p> |
| Activity being undertaken | <p>The level of risk varies by activity. Examples of higher risk activities includes working off ladders to carry out maintenance work, using hazardous machinery. Lower risk lone working activity includes attending meetings at another school and when permitted home working.</p> |
| Plant, equipment, substances | <p>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.</p> <p>It should be established whether equipment can be used and controlled safely by a lone worker, for example, a reversing a heavy goods vehicle in an area with high pedestrian movement.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Communication with others and supervision. | <p>Means of communication vary depending on the work activity and location. There are areas in Cambridgeshire where a mobile phone signal is not easily available. This also impacts on the ability to summon assistance in the event of an emergency.</p> |

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:

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| 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. |
| Young people | Lack of experience and level of maturity. Disability or special educational needs. 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. All staff are required to disclose any medical condition which may require risk assessment to ensure safety at work. |

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 service attending the Horizons Education Trust 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. |

A lone worker may be seconded to Horizons Education Trust from another organisation or vice versa, in both cases adequate lone worker arrangements must be put in place.

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 venues 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.

6.1 Withdrawing from lone working activity

Head Teachers /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, 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 than reasonably available from the school.

6.3 Supervisory monitoring of lone working

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

- Manager visits person or observes people who are working alone.
- Making regular contact with the lone worker using mobile phones, telephone or use of automated devices. An overview of contact systems are detailed below.

6.3.1 In house buddy systems

A buddy system is used to maintain telephone contact at pre-determined intervals between a nominated buddy and lone worker in order to confirm safety. The lone worker must provide the buddy with an itinerary. In house buddy systems rely on:

- All buddy employees knowing the actions to be taken in the event of a lone worker either raising an alert or emergency.
- Employees having the time and concentration to be able to fulfil the requirement of the role
- Full participation of all employees who are involved in system use in order to ensure that it remains robust and has credibility.

A buddy can also be used to monitor lone workers in person and respond to meeting room alarms, for example, when meeting with a service user. The buddy can check through a door vision panel into the room where meetings are carried out /or come into the room and ask a set question at a predetermined time; if assistance is needed it can be established through the response made without raising an alert to the other person(s) in the room.

6.3.2 Automated lone working alarm or tracking devices

Automated systems are provided to higher risk lone workers in order to either raise an alarm or to record and identify their location. Training in the use of these devices and the circumstances under which the device is to be used is of paramount importance as it has been identified that lone workers do not use or understand these systems fully where appropriate training has not been received. In addition line management of all employees who may be involved in receiving an automated emergency alert must be able to deal with the response procedure effectively. The type of lone working device selected will depend upon the type of lone work activity involved.

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 not a fully inclusive list of control measures.

| Risk Category | Control Measures |
|--|---|
| <p>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.</p> <p>Examples would include: Teachers, office based employees, travelling to meetings.</p> | <p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>For guidance and consideration</p> <p>Refer to low risk office lone working procedure</p> |
| <p>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 Trust property out of hours. Fire fighters conducting fire risk assessments or similar activities.</p> <p>Examples would include: Groundsmen / school caretakers, employees whose duties include responding to out of hours intruder alarm calls, Trust employees working in shared offices.</p> | <p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 as delegated by the Head Teacher 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 and appropriate measures introduced. • Daily work tracking arrangements must be put in place in line with the level of risk |

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| | <p>involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees must record an itinerary of their movements that is accessible to their manager/ Head Teacher PA. Details made available should include location, car make, model, registration number and mobile phone number. • Consider issuing a personal safety alarm if this is deemed necessary to move the activity to acceptable risk category. • Provide all other relevant assessment information, for example, how to gain assistance from meeting rooms. <p>For guidance and consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to ensuring that employees receive appropriate training in dealing with confrontational situations. |
| <p>Category 3 Employees who visit unknown clients or pupils known to present challenging or aggressive behaviour in other schools or their own homes in order to provide a service. Employees who routinely work alone in remote locations.</p> <p>Examples would include: Outreach workers or school managers.</p> | <p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees dealing with clients must receive training on dealing with confrontational situations. 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. • Employees must be briefed on the procedures for lone working before they start such work for the first time and at least 6 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 available. If there are particular reasons for the visit to take place at the client's home then at least 2 people should attend. • Provide all other relevant assessment information |

6.5 Personal safety - guidance on lone working control measures

A guide on control measures will be developed. This guide includes information that can be used in the development of a lone working risk assessment, for example, supporting staff in meeting rooms.

6.6 Violence at work

The school has a policy of supporting the safety of employees and this 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 needs. 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. 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 – 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). 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.

Head Teachers representatives 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.

LONE WORKING GUIDANCE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Title | Information from School |
| School Assessment No. | |
| Title of Activity: | |
| Location(s) of work: | |
| Brief Description of Work: | |

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION:

Identify all the hazards specific to the lone working activity; evaluate the risks (low / medium / high); describe all existing control measures and identify any further measures required.

Specific hazards should be assessed on a separate risk assessment form and cross-referenced with this document. Specific assessments are available for hazardous substances, biological agents, display screen equipment, manual handling operations and fieldwork.

| HAZARD(s) | RISK L / M / H | CONTROL MEASURES | RISK AFTER CONTROL L / M / H |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| WORKPLACE: Identify any hazard specific to the workplace / environment, which may create particular risks for lone workers | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| e.g. confined spaces | | | |
| PROCESS: Identify any hazards specific to the work process, which may create particular risks for lone workers e.g. electrical systems | | | |
| EQUIPMENT: Identify any hazards specific to the work equipment, which may create particular risks for lone workers e.g. manual handling | | | |
| VIOLENCE: Identify the potential risk of violence. | | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: Identify any hazards specific to the individual, which may create particular risks for lone workers e.g. medical conditions, inexperience, etc. | | | |
| WORK PATTERN: Consider how the lone worker's work pattern integrates with those of others workers, in terms of both time and use of school site. | | | |
| OTHER: Please specify. | | | |

* Continue on separate sheet, if necessary

Persons at Risk:

Identify all those who may be at risk.

| TYPE | NAME | TYPE | NAME |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| SMT | | NHS Staff | |
| Teachers/TAs | | Office Staff | |
| Caretakers | | Emergency Staff | |
| Cleaning Staff | | Visitors | |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Contractors | | | |
| Others – please specify role | | | |

Training:

Identify the level of information, instruction and training required. Consider the experience of workers.

| TRAINING: | YES | NO | N/A |
|---|------------|-----------|------------|
| Has necessary information, instruction and training been given? | | | |
| Expand and clarify, if necessary. | | | |

Supervision:

Identify the level of supervision required.

| | YES | NO | N/A |
|---|------------|-----------|------------|
| Is suitable supervision in place? (identify all necessary supervisory measures). | | | |
| Periodic telephone contact with lone workers | | | |
| Periodic site visits to lone workers | | | |
| Regular contact (telephone) | | | |
| Automatic warning devices e.g. motion sensors, etc | | | |
| Manual warning devices e.g. panic alarms if deemed necessary. | | | |
| End of task / shift contact | | | |
| Other, specify | | | |
| Expand and clarify, if | | | |

| | |
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| necessary. | |
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Additional Information:

Identify any additional information relevant to the lone working activity, including emergency procedures/first aid provision.

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Assessment carried out by:

| Assessment carried out by: | | Dates: | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Name: | | Date: | |
| Signature: | | Review Date: | |
| Signed off by Head Teacher | | Date: | |

Names of Persons Involved in Lone Work:

| Name: | Signature: | Date: |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | |
| | | |

Policy agreed on: 2015_____

Signed on behalf of the Trustees____

Committee: _____

Author: _____

Review date (optional): _____

Website Y/N