

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL



## Thomas Hickman School

### Lone Working Policy

**Adopted by Governors Full GB:** .....

**Governing committee accountable for review:** .....

**Date of last review:** February 2025

**Date of next review:** February 2028

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Alan Sherwell- Chair of Governors**

### **General Policy Statement:**

Lone Workers as defined by the Health and Safety Executive are, "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision."

As part of the Management structure, it is the duty of care for all Managers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their staff, as it is also the employee's responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by their work activity.

### **Aim:**

To ensure adequate control measures are put into place to safeguard all employees who work alone at any point during their contractual duties.

### **Lone Workers:**

People working alone or in isolation from others may be at particular risk either because of circumstances of their day to day working or because an emergency may occur. They are at extra risk if they are not in regular contact with others and are not kept informed of any changes that may affect them. Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

1. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
2. Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
3. Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
4. Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.
5. Is there a risk of violence?
6. Does the person have any medical condition that may affect their suitability to work alone?
7. What happens if the person either becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?

There are various work activities that result in staff members working alone; for example:

1. Staff that are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working at night or early morning.
2. Staff staying on to finish urgent work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building.
3. Staff who are key-holders or who are left to turn out the lights, set the alarm and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home.
4. Peripatetic workers whose work involves travelling or home visits to service users.

Many lone workers could come into more than one of the categories below. These categories can be split into levels of risk as follows:

- Category One: Staff working in offices or other secure locations outside of normal working hours or who routinely work in these locations on their own.
- Category Two: The caretaker and cleaning staff that have to work out of hours; (refer to caretakers and site manager section, under activities to be avoided).
- Category Three: Key holders on a call out.

### **Manager Duties:**

1. Provide safe systems of work for all staff.
2. Ensure that there are appropriate security systems in place to secure the building.
3. Provide security devices for members of staff when they are working in the office or out in the community, if assessed as appropriate.
4. Carry out personal risk assessments for all staff working alone.
5. During one-to-one sessions, discuss the control measures that are in place to ensure they are still adequate or discuss amendments.
6. Identify any training needs and ensure these are met.
7. Set up an adequate system for recording home and out of office visits. Ensure this is kept up to date on a daily basis, for example: staff reporting to the office; their location and general movements for the day, where this is required as part of the risk assessment.
8. Ensure systems are agreed, on how to raise the alarm and copies of the procedures are given to all relevant staff.
9. Ensure that anyone who is not able to raise the alarm is not left alone.
10. Ensure that during induction all procedures are discussed, a copy of relevant information is obtained, and a training plan is agreed by both the staff member and the manager.
11. Ensure that the staff members are suitable to be left working alone.
12. Ensure that your procedures allow for lone workers to request additional support when they feel vulnerable.
13. Discuss this policy on a regular basis during team meetings, and especially if an incident has occurred.
14. Provide practical support when needed.
15. Report any incidents to the Headteacher.
16. Record and monitor all accidents and incidents and report findings to the Headteacher.

### **Staff Responsibilities:**

Staff members have a duty of care for themselves and anyone else who could be affected by their actions. Therefore, they have a responsibility to ensure that they:

- Are aware and follow all policies or procedures.
- Always plan ahead.
- Are fully aware of the risks when working alone.
- Do not put themselves in potential danger.
- Ensure that they have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.
- Be aware of the on-site security procedures.
- Ensure that access is available to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.

### **Risks Associated with Violence**

Below are some indicators that may make violence more likely, and should be taken into account in staff risk assessments. Staff may need to consider if the people they are providing a service to could:

- Threaten violence
- Be a menace with weapons
- Bear grudges
- Feel victimised
- Harbour a grievance
- Suffer from mental health issues
- Have a dependency on drugs or alcohol
- Associate with violent people

### **Control Measures**

Listed in the sections below are various control measures that can be put into place to reduce the risk to staff when working alone. Not all measures will be applicable as circumstances vary in different situations; therefore the controls need to be re-evaluated for each individual occasion to ensure that the correct measures are in place to reduce the risk to its lowest level. Staff need to consider the person or persons that they may be visiting or attending to alone, and the risks involved in each situation.

### **Threats to Staff:**

Very occasionally staff may find themselves, through the job they carry out alone, the subject of threats from children, parents, carers and other family members and very occasionally, members of the public. The following actions and options should be considered where staff members are the subject of threats or acts of violence when working alone:

- Report the threat to the police and seek their advice;
- Vary personal routines and travel routes;
- Use an alternative entrance and /or exit to and from the place of work;
- Accessing personal safety training;
- Reporting whereabouts to office at all times, when changing venues or set up buddy system.

### **Key Holders:**

Key holders may need to attend premises outside of normal business hours. This may be to carry out normal work activities or following the activation of an intruder alarm or because of some other emergency that might have occurred.

Key holders should be registered with the Alarm company operative (Matrix) and/or the Police in case there is an out of hours emergency. This is essential when the building is protected with an intruder alarm system. Good practice dictates that at least three key holders should be appointed in order to cover holidays and sickness etc. At Thomas Hickman School and nursery, there are 3 appointed key holders.

Key holders that are just carrying out normal work activities should be following the general lone working guidance in this policy.

Key holders that are attending the premises in the event of intruder alarm activation should use the following procedure:

- On receiving a telephone call notifying of intruder alarm activation, confirm the identity of the person making the call, i.e., Police Officers name and number or Alarm Company operative's name.
- Use telephone numbers previously obtained, call back and verify the detail.
- Arrange with either a member of their family or other responsible person to call the Police to the premises if they have not heard from the Key Holder attending the site that they have arrived safely, have assessed the situation and have stated their intended further actions. This call should be made between 30 to 45 minutes after the estimated time of arrival.

### **On arrival at the premises:**

- If the Police are in attendance make sure they have checked all sides of the building.
- Then enter with the Police and check all areas.
- If the Police are not in attendance drive slowly round as much of the premises as possible (using public roads if necessary) checking for signs of entry including the roof and walls. If in any doubt leave the site and from the first available telephone, call the Police by dialling 999.
- If all appears to be quiet, enter and check premises. If there are signs of a break-in leave at once and call the Police as above.
- If in doubt leave the site immediately, even if you have the use of a mobile phone.
- Arrange to meet the Police nearby. This is for own safety.

#### **On entering the premises:**

- Carefully note all information displayed on the alarm controls. Take no action at the control panel beyond un-setting the protected areas.
- Check that the telephones are in working order. If the telephones do not work, it is likely that the lines have been cut by intruders who have, or who may try again, to attack the school. If the Police are in attendance they should be made aware of the telephone not working.
- If alone and, at any point, it is suspected there has been a break-in, then leave the premises and call the Police.
- If there has been a break-in, re-enter the premises and check carefully with the police and following their instructions. Please note that a crime reference number will be required for insurance purposes.

#### **After checking the premises:**

- If there is no apparent break-in, the alarm company should be called to arrange for an engineer to attend. Obtain his/her name and estimated time of arrival.
- Notify the member of family or other responsible person, who is expecting to be contacted, to let them know that all is in order. Consider arranging to make further calls if appropriate.
- Check identification of alarm engineer on arrival; call the alarm company to verify details if necessary.
- Insist on a complete repair of alarm system if reasonably practicable. Only agree to part of the system being disconnected if a fault is identified and it cannot be corrected within a reasonable time. The staff on site will stay until the system is fully operational.
- Never leave the premises unprotected. If necessary, arrange for other staff to join you or relieve you as appropriate. This call-out list is stored in the caretakers office.
- If you are not responsible for opening the premises at the start of the next day, leave a note on the office reception desk for the person who will be undertaking this responsibility; advising them of the problem and instructing them to liaise with the alarm company for further engineer attendance, if this is necessary.

- Ensure that all written logs detailing what has occurred are correctly completed by both the key-holder attending and the alarm engineer. These logs must be returned to the first aid room by the main reception office.
- Advise the Headteacher and other members of staff at the earliest opportunity on the next working day.
- Arrange for any emergency repairs to be made so the premises can be secured by contacting the help desk out of hours phone number. This is also stored in the caretakers office.
- Secure the premises and set the alarm system.
- On your next return to the premises advise the relevant members of staff about the situation.

### **Caretaker:**

The caretaker is more likely to be lone working and is a key holder, responsible for opening and locking up the premises. They are also the person who would attend the premises when there has been a suspected break-in; if this is the case then they should follow the guidance given in this document for 'Key Holders'.

### **Hazards**

Key holders may be required to undertake a number of potentially hazardous activities whilst working alone which could require additional control measures to be implemented. These may include:

- Checking security
- Turning the heating back on after a break
- Laying grit and clearing paths in icy and snowy weather
- Locking up after events
- Patrolling or visiting the site after the hours of darkness
- Opening the building first thing in the morning
- Changing Light Bulbs
- Using hazardous chemicals
- Manual Handling

### **Control Measures**

As well as considering the guidance contained in this document there are some activities which should be avoided when lone working. These include:

- Working at height
- Work in confined spaces

Consideration should also be given to any pre-existing medical conditions that key holders may have that could put them at increased risk and the control measures required to safeguard them when working alone.

Examples of control measures that can be adopted may include:

- Only use equipment provided by the employer
- Follow 'key holder' guidance in this document when checking security of building or site

- Ensure any procedures are known and followed for re-lighting boiler after period of shut down
- Ensure employee is adequately trained for the required task
- Check weather forecasts and put grit on hazardous pathways before ice or snow forms
- Ensure access and egress from site are free from defects and well lit
- Carry a fully charged torch when attending site after dark
- Ensure all necessary Risk Assessments have been undertaken and (where necessary) Method Statements are in place e.g. Manual Handling.

### **Training**

Depending upon the staff member's job role, a Training Plan should be prepared and introduced through induction. This should cover all aspects of lone working and ensure that the staff member is able to safeguard their welfare whilst alone on premises.

### **First Aid Requirements:**

First aid for travelling, remote and lone workers: employers are responsible for meeting the first aid needs of their employees working away from the main site. The assessment of first-aid needs should determine whether those who travel long distances or are continuously mobile should carry a personal first-aid box; and whether employees should be issued with personal communicators/mobile phones.

### **Risk Assessments:**

Risk Assessments should be in place for all anticipated risks (see appendix A Risk Matrix) and should be reviewed on a regular basis, especially if there is a change in situation, a near miss has occurred or an accident or incident has taken place.

### **Reporting of Accidents and Incidents:**

- Any accidents, incidents or near misses must be recorded in the accident book.
- If an accident happens and causes either a major injury or the loss of over 3-days work or unable to carry out normal duties for over 3-days then a F2508 form must be completed by the headteacher and/or finance and admin officer and send it to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995.
- The Headteacher is to be informed of any incident involving violence, which includes verbal abuse, physical assault and property damage.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing:**

All accidents, incidents or near misses should be logged and monitored by the caretakers of the school. The caretakers should then be looking for trends and seeing if a review should be carried out on any of the Risk Assessments due to the outcomes. These should also be reported back to the Headteacher, so that they are aware of any situations that may have arisen and reported to Governors as appropriate.