



Lone Working Policy

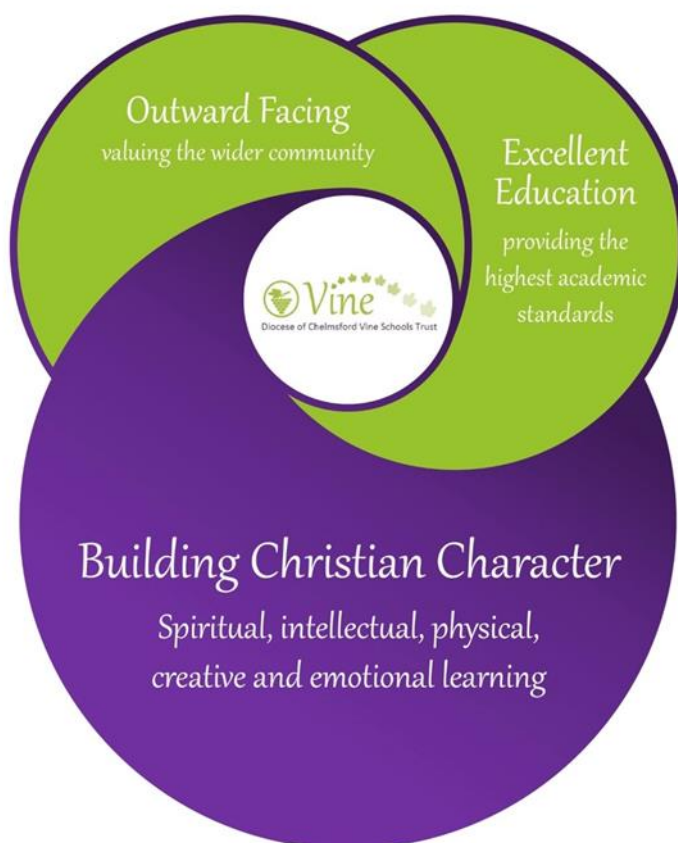
**"I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit"
(John 15:5)**

This is a model policy for all Vine schools that has been reviewed and adapted for Mistley Norman Church of England Primary School and Nursery

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Vision & Values

V **Valuing every person**
I **Inspiring great teaching**
N **Nurturing academic excellence and Christian Character**
E **Excelling, unlocking great potential**



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1.0 OBJECTIVE

1.1 Aim

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, contractors and volunteers whose work activities involve working alone.

1.2 Objectives

For employees, contractors and volunteers to understand their responsibilities when working alone.
For risk assessments to be carried out where relevant and adequate safe working practices to be followed.
Our School expectations are communicated in the use of agreed control measures

2.0 SCOPE

This Lone Working Policy applies to all Vine School Trust establishments and Schools.

This Policy covers all employees of our School and persons contracted to the School or working voluntarily, irrespective of their hours worked and regardless of length of contract or service.

This Policy set out the organisations expectations of the management of Lone Working at our School. It covers the responsibilities of Managers to their staff, contractors and volunteers who are required to work alone. This includes adequate risk assessment and safe working practices.

This Policy also includes the expectations that employees, contractors and volunteers are to follow the agreed lone working safe practices as the result of risk assessment.

This document will also provide a list of documents which will assist in the management of Lone Working.

Please note that the School does not ordinarily encourage, endorse or condone lone working where it can be avoided. However, it does acknowledge that with some posts, it is not practical to avoid lone working.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE THE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THIS POLICY

This policy has replaced the previous Essex County Council Lone Working Policy v3.2. Contains new references and Communication and Control Measure changes.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Lone Worker

The HSE guidance (INDG73) defines 'Lone Workers' as *'those who work by themselves without direct or close supervision'* and are found in a wide range of situations.

The following is a list in which staff, contractors or volunteers carrying out their duties for our School, may be involved in lone working:

- Undertaking a visit to a non-school controlled premises alone (including visits to pupil's homes)
- Working in a Council controlled premises alone or working alone in isolated parts of a building or grounds (including out of hours)
- Travelling alone on School Business

- Persons who open (or reopens) and close school buildings
- Responding to an alarm outside the normal opening hours of a building

Please note this is not an exhaustive list of examples of all lone working at the School.

Any School representative who works alone faces the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, lone workers are often more vulnerable due to the possible exposure to violent/ criminal acts, physical harm or medical emergencies occurs and where there is no one present to assist.

Where staff either; work alone in buildings or carry out domiciliary visits, Line Managers must first complete the Lone Worker Assessment and Safe Systems of Work (HSF083).

4.2 Lone Working Risk Assessment

Lone Working Risk Assessments must be carried out for all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. Our School has a duty to mitigate against the additional risks associated with working alone by carrying out a Risk Assessment that considers:

- Any relevant medical conditions
- Work that the individual carries out
- The location in which the person is working or visiting
- The foreseeable hazards that could be faced and what risks are involved
- Any specific additional risks arising from lone working

This includes staff that are office based but work in isolation, as well as staff whose work takes them out into the community or works outside of hours. Recommendations should be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

The Manager must consider the health and safety implications of the work prior to any off site visit or inspection. This includes relevant assessments of the work that the person would carry out alone. The Lone Working Assessment must take into account any outcomes of these assessments and safe working practices adopted. A manager's consideration should include whether lone working and/or out of hours working activity itself can be avoided or systems can be adopted to avoid staff carrying out higher risk tasks on their own or out of normal office hours. If this is not possible, the working practice of the member of staff plus other contributory factors must be risk assessed.

Managers must ensure that all lone working or out of normal hours working activities are formally identified and appropriate risk assessments undertaken. The assessment must identify the risks associated and then implement the control measures necessary to minimise risks, as far as reasonably practicable.

Lone or out of hours working risk assessments must be reviewed by a competent person (someone with the necessary training and experience) every year, or where:

- there is reason to suspect the assessment is no longer valid
- a significant incident, accident or near miss has occurred
- significant changes have occurred to the workplace, task or employee

Certain risks may not be foreseeable until a site visit is made (e.g. asbestos, working at height etc.). Employees must be made aware of the risk assessments findings and observe the recommended controls. If in doubt do not proceed - contact should be made with Site/Line Manager for further clarification or advice.

4.3 Monitoring the movements of Lone Workers

Appropriate and reasonable arrangements for recording staff movements / whereabouts outside of the office environment must be established, (e.g. utilising an accessible electronic diary schedule).

Points recorded should include:

- Date of visit
- Site / visit address
- Contact phone numbers*
- Purpose of visit
- Expected time of return to office or home
- Name of person meeting
- Travel time between appointments

**Having more than one contact phone number increases the chance of contacting the person.*

Where staff that do not return to their place of work at the pre-agreed time, there must be arrangements to contact the individual through agreed numbers provided (i.e. work mobile, personal mobile, home etc.). If contact cannot be made you may need to then escalate if you are unable to make contact.

4.4 Potential Hazards and Risks Associated with Lone Working

Taking into account the foreseeable scenarios in which an individual works alone the following hazards are likely to include:

4.4.1 Violence and criminal acts

Where someone is alone, they can become a target for physical/ verbal abuse or a criminal act. Also, if an individual were alone, potentially there is no assistance if such a situation was to occur.

When considering the risks to employees/ contractors/ voluntary workers take account of:

- Whether the client (or persons in connection with the client) have a history of violence
- Whether the area being visited is rural or urban
- History of violent acts or crime within the area to be visited
- Will items such as mobile phones or laptop encourage a criminal act (theft/ mugging)
- Whether there is a known risk to a lone worker of an identifiable group with the client (i.e. gender, race religion etc.)
- Safe access and egress at the building being visited

4.4.2 Accident

If an accident were to occur when a person is working alone, they may not have the ability to call out for help or access any sort of assistance. This could mean that urgent medical care cannot be provided to that individual.

When considering the risks to employees/ contractors/ voluntary workers, managers must take account of the activities that are being carried out. For example:

- Someone who works in a kitchen might be susceptible to burns, slips, trips and falls making the likelihood and severity of injury foreseeable. However, someone who works in an office alone could slip, trip or fall but this is less likely as the environment is unlikely to present the same hazards and the risk associated is significantly lower.
- Higher risk activities like working at height, working in confined spaces, working with electricity, fuel, machinery etc. would heighten the risk further. **Higher risk activities must not be done whilst working alone** and must be included in your assessments for high risk activities and include safe working practices.

In general, consider:

- Is there safe access and egress at the building visited?
- Can the lone worker handle all equipment required safely?
- Has there been training of the individual and competency to carry out tasks?
- If there any medical issue that could contribute to an accident occurring?
- Where travelling by vehicle, has all driving checks been carried out (license, MOT and insurance)?

4.4.3 Ill Health

Similar to an accident, a person could have a medical issue where they are alone and may not have the ability to call out for help or access any sort of assistance. This could mean that urgent medical care cannot be provided to that individual.

When considering the risks to employees/ contractors/ voluntary workers, take account of their medical history and what requirements they have.

A higher duty of care is owed to those who have medical issues and fall under this category. Therefore, extra effort should be made to provide them with similar level of safety. Employees are expected to disclose relevant information to their managers.

4.4.4 Entrapment

This is being trapped in part of a building or premises for a period of time without the means to contact anyone. Consider if a person could become entrapped and may not have access to food, water or amenities. This could potentially have a physical/ mental effect on the individual concerned.

When considering the risks to employees, contractors or voluntary workers take account the location in which they are working and the potential for them to be locked into an area of the property.

4.5 Communication and Control Measures

Below provides types of communication and control measures that should be implemented, where relevant, as a result of a Lone Working Risk Assessment.

4.5.1 Lone working at School buildings

In regard to working alone within a school building, the building must have:

- Adequate security on doors and windows, this can include locks and card entry systems
- Accessible first aid provision (based upon assessment of activities on premises)
- Adequate means of exiting rooms and buildings
- Well-lit areas internal and external to the building
- Checking in and out procedures for the building

Where it is relevant, panic buttons for staff must be in place to raise an alert, however managers must not rely on this in isolation.

4.5.2 Buddy System

Where particular risks are identified, regular contact must be arranged with the base or a 'buddy' with knowledge of the location and duration of meetings, visit or travel arrangements.

Where a 'buddy' system exists, this can be utilised to ensure that staff have assistance if required when working alone. This may apply particularly where office based staff are working alone in premises during normal working hours. It is recommended that regular contact be maintained throughout the day, with call back procedures if there has been no response to calls.

Contact schedule should reflect the work that is being carried out. The higher the risk, the more frequent the contact needs to be made. The lone worker must log at the start of the work where they will be on the premises and what activities they will be carrying out. A contact time must be agreed, to check that the lone worker is okay (For example you can have 1-2 hour intervals between calls to check on welfare, each time checking where on the

premises the person is located). Understanding where someone is located on the premises will enable the buddy to help locate the person in an emergency.

If no satisfactory contact is made, either with the individual or 'buddy', the Line Manager, or authorised personnel should attempt to contact the individual, a colleague working close by or the named individual in emergency to check the well-being of the lone worker to advise that the procedure has not been completed. Any information about whereabouts or confirmation of log off should be noted on the schedule. If contact cannot be made, the Police should be informed and an Accident/Incident Report must be completed, recording any actions.

4.5.3 Emergency Contact Details

Emergency contact details must be provided for the base office and also maintained by the individual on people and pay. The responsible Line Manager will hold a register of all lone workers and is responsible for its safekeeping. Lone workers must notify any change in these details, in order to ensure that, should an incident occur, efforts to contact the lone worker or their nominated emergency link can be quickly concluded. This information will be used in emergency situations only.

4.5.4 Travelling

The manager should ensure adequate arrangements are in place for managing staff that travel alone on School business. There is further information on transportation that can be found in the Lone Working Guidance HSG020.

Ensure a first-aid kit is in the vehicle that is suitable for treating minor injuries.

4.6 Violence, Aggressive or Threatening Behaviour to Lone Workers

Our School does not tolerate abuse against its staff, contractors or volunteers. Any aggressive or threatening behavior toward the staff member, contractor or volunteer, they must not proceed with the meeting and leave the premises by the safest route and leave the area immediately. An alternative meeting can then be re-arranged, but this must not be conducted alone.

Staff must be suitably trained in keeping themselves secure and managing violence. They must be supervised before they are permitted to work alone.

Any employee who has received abuse must report this to their manager or supervisor to ensure they are aware of the incident, where it happened and what action was taken.

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Line Manager should immediately ensure that the employee(s) receive any necessary medical treatment and / or advice. Line Managers should be sensitive to the employee's need to talk about the incident and should take care to avoid any impression that this is not accepted or expected.

Discussion should involve identifying any significant learning points for the Line Manager, employee and other colleagues if necessary. Staff should be made aware that a confidential counselling service can be accessed through their Line Manager to Occupational Health.

4.7 School Premises

Line managers must take reasonable steps to ensure that employees are safe when working alone on School Premises; this includes isolated parts of the premises. This includes ensuring the premises:

- Is secure
- has an adequate means of raising alarm

- has first aid provision

When visiting industrial, factory or construction type premises, employees should always be accompanied by a suitable site representative as well as being made aware of and following their safety rules and procedures. Staff, contractors or volunteers must be familiar with the exits and the alarms.

Buildings in which a person is lone working must be secure and that emergency exits are accessible.

There must be a clear written procedure for anyone called out of hours to attend to an alarm.

The employee must be fully inducted into the site and informed of any emergency procedures for the building, including emergency exits and facilities.

4.8 Supervision of Lone Working

Although lone workers are not subject to constant supervision, line managers are still required to ensure appropriate control measures are effective for the work carried out. Supervision compliments information, instruction and training, ensuring that all staff understand the risks associated with their work, and that necessary safety precautions are being carried out. It can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty.

The extent of the supervision required depends upon the risks involved and the proficiency and experience of the person carrying out the work. Persons new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need continuous supervision until such time as they are competent to work alone.

The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through the risk assessment process. It should not be left to individual members of staff to decide that they require assistance / supervision.

4.9 Procedures for Dealing with Animals

If there is a known problem with animals at a particular address or location, the occupants should be contacted and requested to remove or secure the animals before arrival.

If employees, contractors or volunteers do encounter aggressive animal(s) during a visit, they must be instructed to abandon the visit and report the incident to the Manager. Then to rearrange the visit when the animal is not present or arrange an alternative location for the meeting.

4.10 Incident Reporting

In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers, it is essential that all incidents are reported to the Head teacher. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or 'unsafe' (even if this was not a tangible event / experience) are reported, including incidents of verbal abuse.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The below responsibilities complement the Roles and Responsibilities HSP2.0.

5.1 Health and Safety

The Facilities and Compliance team will:

- Promote and monitor the use of Personal Safety devices.
- To set out expectations for Lone Working at our School

5.2 Facilities and compliance team

The Facilities and Compliance team will:

- Act as liaison within their function to ensure that Lone Working arrangements are coordinated
- Help champion the use of personal devices within their services
- Help set expectations for their function on using Lone Working devices

5.3 Function Health and Safety Champions

The Facilities and Compliance team will ensure that they:

- Champion safety whilst lone working throughout their Function
- Monitoring lone working arrangements within the Function

5.1 Managers

The Managers will ensure that:

- All relevant lone working information is communicated effectively to the correct employees and account is taken of their views
- This lone working policy is implemented in their area of control
- Safe systems of work are implemented for those working alone

5.2 Employees, Contractors and Volunteers carrying out activities on the School's behalf

Employees, contractors and volunteers will:

- Follow agreed safe working practices and carry out their health and safety responsibilities in regard to lone working as detailed in this policy
- Report to their line manager any hazards they identify and any inadequacies in lone working procedures
- Take part in any training and development as identified by a Lone Working Assessment.
- Where relevant use personal device equipment correctly, in accordance with instructions and training
- Inform management of any medical condition which may put them at additional risk when lone working

6.0 COMPETENCE AND TRAINING

Line Managers must ensure that everyone who is required to work alone is competent to do so, having received suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training (including refresher training) to enable them to work safely. The extent of the instruction and training provided will vary according to the level of risk identified but will include as a minimum an awareness and understanding of all lone worker standards and personal safety.

With the right training, staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response.

Line Managers will therefore ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

7.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Our School will continually evaluate, monitor and review the procedures and arrangements in place to safeguard lone workers and ensure that our School's legal and moral obligations are being met. If there is a significant change to the way in which work is carried out, or if another individual becomes involved as a lone worker, the assessment shall be reviewed.

8.0 REFERENCES

8.1 Health and Safety Policy References via Essex Schools Infolink.

HSP 4.0 Health and Safety Management Plan

HSP 5.0 Risk Assessment and Risk Control

HSP 9.02 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

HSP 9.07 Personal Protective Equipment

HSP 9.16 Violence at Work

HSP 12.0 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation

8.2 Health and Safety Form References

HSF003 Risk Assessment Form

HSF047 Incident Report Form

HSF083 Lone Working Assessment and Safe Systems of Work

8.3 Health and Safety Guidance References

HSG020 Lone Working Guidance

HSG029 Lone Working IOS User Guide