

Kesgrave High School



Lone Worker Policy

This policy reviewed **triennially**

Policy Approval

Where	Chair	When
Operations	Eunice Brain	24 February 2021

Chair of Governors	Sue White
Headteacher	Julia Upton

Policy History

Issue No.	Author	Date written	Approved by governors	Comments
1	J Logan/A Collett	May 2016	May 2016	
2	J Upton/A Collett	Feb 2021	24 Feb 2021	Review and inclusion of one-to-one remote working with students

Introduction

Kesgrave High School is committed to provide a safe working environment and ensuring the health and safety of all staff, including those working alone. The school has a legal and moral responsibility to manage the risks associated with individual members of staff working alone.

The school will use a risk assessment process to raise awareness amongst all staff of all procedures that must be followed to reduce the risk associated with working alone.

Definition of a Lone Worker

The Health and Safety Executives definition of a lone worker is someone who 'work(s) by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

This can be defined as a member of staff who, for significant periods of their working time, is engaged in activities which places them in a situation without direct contact with other staff.

Some examples include:

- People working outside normal hours e.g. cleaners, caretakers, teaching staff, Business Manager
- Caretakers working separately from others e.g. in a boiler room
- Working alone in an office which is not linked to other areas e.g. AGP staff
- Staff working with students in a one-to-one manner in a remote (home) environment

Implementation

The school will ensure that:

- Risk assessments are undertaken for lone workers – looking at physical environment, work activities, safeguarding and people likely to be encountered to determine whether or not such activities can be safely carried out by a single person.
- Agreements with parents and carers will be put in place before any one-to-one working beyond the school environment takes place
- Ensure that staff are medically fit and suited to working alone
- Train staff to understand the risks involved and how to respond to hazardous situations that might occur.
- Provide facilities, systems and equipment to enable lone workers to deal with hazardous situations e.g. first aid kits, fire extinguishers

- Suitable arrangements for communicating with lone workers shall be put in place including procedures when the lone worker returns to base and when contact is overdue.
- All incidents involving lone workers are investigated thoroughly and staff consulted. Any related preventative measures introduced. Incidents will be recorded within the school incident log.
- These procedures, including the risk assessments are communicated to all staff during the induction process and when any amendments are made. This includes all temporary staff.

Employees Responsibility

Staff working alone are required to read the policy and follow the safe working procedures developed for lone working applicable to their own departments/job roles and also take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety. This will include notifying management/supervisors of any incident, hazardous condition or safety concern as soon as possible. If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury and any compensation claims for damages may be reduced accordingly.

Risk Assessment Process

A risk assessment must be undertaken and the findings recorded. Appendix 1 will be used to assist the process. The assessment should include:

- Hazards associated with the area to be visited e.g. how will the workplace be accessed, identify the tasks which are medium to high risk for lone workers (i.e. working at height), is the workplace excessively hot or cold, are there any hazardous substances which may be present.
- Is the workplace in a remote location, or in an isolated place within an otherwise busy area? For example, boiler room, separate kitchen block, is the area safe to visit alone.
- What safeguarding measures have been put into place? Have all pre-employment checks taken place and have any risks associated with the environment been assessed?
- What is the condition of the workplace, are there any uneven floors, lights not working, locked doors.
- Methods of communication – will mobile phones be used and do they receive a signal in all areas where the lone working will be taking place, how often communication will take place, procedure for returning to base
- If problems are anticipated then working in pairs
- Possibility of violence, does the activity involve cash handling or carrying valuables
- Are there any additional risks for higher risk groups such as expectant mums, inexperienced workers and disabled staff?
- The medical fitness of the person working alone – possibility of illness.

- Possibility of accidents – consider the activities taking place
- Requirements for first aid training
- How can supervision/advice be provided easily
- Method of raising the alarm in the event of no contact within an agreed time
- The assessment should be reviewed routinely, following any incident and before each occasion of lone working if a change in circumstances becomes known.

Some control methods are listed in Appendix 2.

Key Holders

Key holders (caretakers) will need to attend the premises following the activation of the intruder alarm and to unlock and secure the school during out of hours use.

The key holders' details are registered with Suffolk County Council and the Red Care monitoring station via the alarm maintenance company.

Please see Appendix 3 for intruder alarm activation procedures.

Audit and Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. Its effectiveness will be measured by reviewing the number of incident reports and investigations, reviewing the control measures introduced from the risk assessments and use of support system information.

Appendix 1

Set out below are several questions which need to be put to all staff who might work alone, to build up a picture of lone working practices and the arrangements which are already in place. From this information those at risk can be identified and the level of risk can be agreed. If considered more than a low risk further measures can be identified and activated. The findings can then be formalised into a risk assessment:

- Do staff work in holidays or outside of normal 'office' hours? What are the patterns of work and who is involved, males, females, teaching and non teaching staff?
- Cleaners and caretakers may be particularly vulnerable in terms of personal safety and are the most likely to be regular lone workers.
- Do all lone workers have charged mobile phones when lone working?
- The lone worker may walk to and from their car before, during or after their working period? Though the person may not be "at work" they may be more vulnerable in terms of their personal safety. How good is the outside lighting?
- Is there a good rapport with parents and neighbours, and minimal vandalism? This scenario should be monitored and the risk assessment reviewed if any abusive/problems with parents or visitors happen in the future.
- Are general members of the public likely to be on or around the site? Alcohol and drug use may make these members of the public unpredictable requiring staff to have well developed communication senses & skills for volatile situations.
- Is the lone worker potentially vulnerable to accusations of impropriety of any kind?
- Are there isolated work areas? Might a worker begin their working period with others nearby, but routinely be working alone at the end of that period?
- Does the caretaker undertake security checks around the building in the evening?
- Are lone working arrangements and procedures made clear in written guidance to staff?
- Do staff receive adequate induction and refresher health and safety awareness training? For Example no working at height e.g. putting up displays, and no manual handling which would usually involve 2 persons are allowed.
- Is personal safety training undertaken, if not is it required? This could include providing the means to raise an alarm, improve personal assertiveness and hazard recognition, and provide break-away or self-defence skills. Any of these may reduce the likelihood or severity of an undesirable event. These include: personal safety alarms (screachers) Unisafe, S Lamplugh Trust or other recognised personal safety training.
- How will the review of the lone working risk assessment be structured into the management systems in school to ensure that it is routinely monitored and jointly reviewed at least annually?

- Do any staff have health problems or are pregnant which could affect lone working?
- Are the arrangements adequate if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency?
- Could the lone worker administer first aid to him or herself – is the person trained in first aid and is there an accessible first aid kit? Is there a possibility that an injury could be too severe for the person to deal with on their own?
- Is cash taken at different times of the day and on different days?
- Are the buildings well maintained?
- Are torches provided if the emergency lighting provision does not extend to all areas of the school?
- Does the lone worker know how to report incidents using the proper procedures and paperwork?
- Is regular monitoring and feedback undertaken?
- Have reasonably foreseeable difficulties been considered (fire, power cut, extreme weather conditions, poor signal/flat batteries for mobile phones), including the least likely or worst case scenarios (vehicle accident)?
- Are all staff competent to undertake all their duties?
- Do the Police maintain a community presence, and/or are neighbours vigilant?
- Is the site secured when lone working takes place?
- Is a buddy scheme in operation as far as possible?
- Is the outside security lighting and emergency lighting well maintained and regularly checked and is car park lighting in place?
- Is there a security alarm in place and/or CCTV camera?
- Are consistent reminders and the raising of staff awareness on procedures and working safely undertaken?

Please note that this list is not exhaustive or exclusive; it can be used as a starting point in the risk assessment process.

Appendix 2

Control Methods

The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will need to be considered before allowing lone working.

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with family, friends and work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

During the school holidays, staff must sign in and out at the Reception and follow the fire safety information and any other site safety information which is communicated (normally via email before the holiday period commences).

Staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police.

Staff should secure themselves in the building when working in the evening as far as is reasonably practical and ensure that areas of the school not in use are kept secure.

Staff must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance. Equally they should not get into confrontation with aggressive individuals and contact the police if they do not respond to polite requests to leave the site.

Staff should not work alone if they have a medical condition which may cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

Only agreed tasks are to be undertaken avoiding high risk activities such as working at height, confined spaces and manual handling loads requiring more than one person.

Staff will receive information and/or training to help ensure they understand the risks associated with lone working and to minimise these risks. All lone workers in an otherwise unoccupied building, should follow the School's 'Fire Evacuation Procedures'.

Staff provided with mobile phones should ensure they are kept fully charged and in good working order. Although phones can give extra reassurance, they do not provide complete protection and staff should still be alert for their own personal safety at all times.

Lone workers should not undertake activities which have been identified as medium or high risk or which are potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

Appendix 3

Alarm Activation Procedures

On receiving a phone call notifying of intruder alarm activation, establish the identity of the person making the call – i.e. the monitoring station.

Arrange with a relative or other responsible person to contact the Police to the school if they have not heard from you confirming all is well. This call should be made within the first 30 – 45 minutes of arrival.

You should take with you your staff badge to confirm who you are to the Police, a torch of reasonable size and power, your mobile phone.

Arrival at the Premises

If the Police are in attendance, make sure they have checked all sides of the site and then enter the school with the Police and check the area where the alarm has been activated from.

If the Police are not in attendance, unsecure as normal and make your way to where the activation has been made from. If there are signs of a forced entry leave at once and call the police.

If in any doubt leave the site immediately and arrange to meet the Police nearby. Do not put your safety at risk.

If necessary, contact another colleague or the Business Manager to attend site depending on the extent of any damage that has been caused in order that the site can be made secure again.

If all appears to be quiet, enter and check the premises, re-set the alarm or wait for an engineer and secure the premises. Inform the Business Manager the next working day.