



Lees Hill C of E Primary School

Lone Working Policy

POLICY ADOPTED BY FULL GOVERNING BODY: June 2017

Name: Fiona Ritson

Position: Chair of Governors

Next Review Date: June 2020

Aims and Objectives

To comply with Health and Safety Law and use the school buildings responsibly, this policy recognises that members of staff will inevitably find themselves working alone. These situations can occur at the beginning and end of flexible working periods, during holidays, at night and at weekends, and in the majority of cases, they do so without significant risk to their wellbeing.

Role of Pupils

There is no role for the pupils on this policy by its very nature.

Role of Staff and All School Users

Members of staff, contractors and volunteers need to be aware of potential risk and hazards associated with working alone at Lees Hill School; these can be summarised in general in the following areas, although the list is not exhaustive:

- Accidents or illness
- Fire
- Unsafe access or exit
- Equipment failure
- Inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities
- Violence from members of the public
- Manual handling
- Breakdown or other emergency whilst travelling as part of the working day
- Dealing with cash

The Law

There is no overall legal prohibition on working alone. But the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the specific duties of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 still apply. These require the identification of the hazards of work, assessment of any significant risks involved, and devising and implementing safe working arrangements to ensure that the risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled, i.e. if the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements must be in place.

There are, however some situations where lone working is prohibited by law, these are as follows:

- **Entry into confined spaces** where there may be a risk of inadequate ventilation (e.g. tanks, manholes, pipes, ducts and flues, enclosed basement rooms)
- **Use of ladders where the ladder cannot be secured/lashed and requires 'footing' by another person. (SAN(G)19 – Working at Heights gives further information)**
- **Use of specified dangerous machinery** where there is a risk injury from cutting unless the worker has received sufficient training in work at those machines e.g. dough mixers, food processor using attachments for mincing, slicing or any other cutting operations or for crumbling and heat sources.

Safe Working Arrangements for Lone Workers

All situations where staff may be working alone should be identified and any additional risks on the site, the following questions should be considered:

- **Will situations that are legally prohibited arise (see above)?**
- **Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?**
- **Are you medically fit to work alone?**
- **Are you competent and experienced enough to work alone?**
- **Is there safe access and exit from the premises for you?**
- **Can you safely handle all the plant, and goods involved in the work?**
- **Can you safely handle all the substances and materials involved in the work safely?**
- **Are you familiar with fire procedures, first aid and security arrangements and relevant codes of practice?**
- **Are you especially at risk if you work alone?**
- **Do you have access to a telephone or radio communication?**
- **Will cash be handled and is there a risk of violence?**
- **Are you at risk when leaving the premises?**

The Headteacher must be informed of a member of staff's intent to come into school to work out of hours, and the nature of their work. The Headteacher must inform another person if they intend to come into school out of hours.

Training

Risk assessments will help to determine the level of training needed for each type of work.

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision in order to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. It may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and lone workers, therefore need to understand fully the risks involved in the work, the necessary precautions and be sufficiently experienced. Establishments should, therefore, establish clear procedures to set limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, and, where appropriate, when to stop the work and seek advice.

Supervision

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, there is still a duty on the school to provide appropriate control of the work. Supervision complements information, instruction and training and helps to ensure that staff and others understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. It can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty.

The extent of supervision required depends upon the risks involved and the proficiency and experience of the person carrying out the work to identify and handle safety issues.

Whether or not to supervise an individual is a management decision; it is not up to individuals to decide when and where they require assistance.

Illness, Accidents and Emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations. Emergency procedures should be established in schools and the appropriate persons given clear and concise training and instructions on how to implement them. All lone workers should have access to the accident and defect reporting books and procedures and should report any accidents and near misses to their line manager as soon as practically possible.

Monitoring

Suitable systems should be devised to monitor the conditions of lone workers and include at least a check at the end of the working period (this may be via a reporting in system to colleagues, family or friends). In addition, it may be necessary to consider:

- Procedures where a member of supervisory staff periodically visits and visually monitors lone workers;
- Procedures where regular contact between the lone workers and a member of supervisory staff or another colleague is maintained using either a telephone or radio.
- The use of a nominated safety partner or “buddy” system.

Use of a Nominated Safety Partner or “Buddy” System

This is a fairly basic system to minimise the likelihood of an employee being left unaided should something untoward happen to them. Prior to anyone undertaking lone working, the following information should be made available to the nominated safety partner or buddy:

- Contact details e.g. mobile phone number
- Agreed contact times or intervals and planned codes, if appropriate
- Expected time of return, allowing for reasonably foreseeable delays such as traffic congestion, and the fact that meetings, more often than not, overrun rather than finish early
- Information on the route to be taken when travelling
- Colour, make and registration number of the vehicle being used
- Details of emergency personal contacts

The lone worker should make contact with their safety partner at the agreed time or at agreed intervals to reassure them that they are OK. It is important that this includes arrangements for if the last “report in” is to be after normal office hours. Should the lone worker be delayed at any stage they should ensure that they contact their safety partner and revise their itinerary and expected return time.

Should the lone worker fail to make contact the safety partner will try to contact the lone worker using the itinerary and other details provided by the lone worker. If contact can still not be made after a reasonable agreed length of time and the lone worker still has not reported in, then the Police should be contacted for advice.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment should identify all hazards, the risks associated and the control measures to be used when lone working is required.

Those tasks, which are deemed unacceptable to be performed by a lone worker under any circumstances, must be documented in the written record of risk assessment kept by the school/department. Any risk assessment and its resulting control measures **must** be discussed with the individuals concerned.

As with all risk assessments, the findings should be reviewed at reasonable intervals and in the light of experience. This requirement should be part of the school procedures generally.

References

HSE Booklet fee web-friendly version of leaflet INDG73(rev2) published 09/09. Working Alone— Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working
Cumbria County Council Safety Procedures No. 24
Unison Guide – Working Alone

Role of Governors

The role of the Governing Body is to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the risks associated with lone working and are aware of the guidelines within this policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required, by the Governing Body and will be adjusted in line with any subsequent guidelines from the Local Authority or any changes in the Law.

