

Oaklands School



Lone worker's Personal Safety Policy

Approved by:	Julie Smith	Date: January 2024
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Guidance:

Working alone: Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working (HSE, 2013)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

Advice on personal security when working alone is also available from the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) 

LONE WORKERS / PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

Oaklands School is committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, grounds, cleaning staff may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This however may introduce risks for a normally non-hazardous work activity.

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. They also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people working on their behalf.

Employers and employees have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety and there is an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when they work remotely from other colleagues or other persons and/or outside 'normal' working hours.

Serious accidents are fortunately rare. However, an accident-free record does not mean that safe practice has always been followed. It is not possible to issue guidance that will guarantee total safety. It is also not desirable to have a totally risk-free environment. Accidents and incidents do occur due to unforeseen circumstances, even when good practice is being followed. The guidance in this policy will assist in minimising risk to reasonable levels so that staff can concentrate on valuable learning experiences with some reassurance.

2. Purpose

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone. Lone working is not covered by any specific legislation but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply.

3. Categories of Lone Worker

Within the school, a lone worker will most probably fall within one of the following categories:

- Those who work in an isolated or otherwise unoccupied part of the school grounds
- Staff who are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working in the evening or early mornings.
- Staff staying on to finish work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building
- Staff who are key-holders or who are left to turn out the lights, set the alarm and lock up the premises after everyone has gone home.

4. Definition of Lone Working

Where staff are engaged in work (either outdoors or indoors) where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to come to their immediate aid in the event of an

incident or emergency.

5. Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher/School Business Manager to ensure that an annual Health and Safety and Risk Assessment is undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this, as well as the risks of Lone Working. The risk assessment will take into account the type of tasks undertaken, the environment, health and safety instruction and training received and the individual's medical history.

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Headteacher/School Business Manager for the likelihood of the hazard causing harm. Measures will be introduced if the assessment shows that existing precautions are inadequate to eliminate or adequately control the hazard. The risk assessment will be subject to review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the school.

Contractors will be given the opportunity by the Headteacher/ School Business Manager to complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment as necessary and receive the appropriate Health and Safety information.

6. Hazards

These may include, for example:

- A potential for violence or threatening behaviour towards an individual carrying cash or high value equipment
- The use of machinery, electrical or other equipment or chemicals
- Working in remote areas, particularly after dark and outside normal working hours
- Encountering intruders
- Working at heights, using ladders and lifting
- Competency, ability and medical condition of the individual
- General incidents or accidents leading to an inability to communicate

This is not an exhaustive list; individuals will be expected to report all situations to the Headteacher or Health and Safety Co-ordinator/Nominated Person which leave them open to any health and safety issues. The risk can then be assessed and control measures applied where necessary. Through the risk assessment process, existing control measures will be assessed for their effectiveness.

7. Controls

Staff should seek the permission of the Headteacher to work alone in the building outside normal school hours.

The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working. Lone workers must be considered capable of responding correctly in an emergency situation by the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-Ordinator/Nominated Person. Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague.

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

Staff should activate the door security system when working alone 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.

Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (Headteacher's or Health and Safety Co-Ordinator/Nominated Person's mobile phone numbers) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

It is not normally practicable for the Headteacher to periodically visit and visually monitor people working alone.

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, have a responsibility for making themselves familiar with and following the school's safety procedures and location of safety equipment.

Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

If staff rely on mobile phones they must ensure that their network has good reception within the school. 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.

In the situation where two or more people are working in isolated areas of an otherwise unoccupied building, personnel should keep each other informed about their movements.

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height, any task that has been identified as medium or high risk or which are potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task. Staff working at height in an isolated building must understand Oaklands School Working at Height policy.

All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

It is the responsibility of all school personnel and contractors to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health

and safety to the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-Ordinator/Nominated Person. 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 or unfair dismissal may be reduced accordingly.

The school respects the right of the employee, under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. They also can advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-Ordinator/Nominated Person any aspect of work-related risks.

The Headteacher, School Business Manager and/or Health and Safety Governor will regularly monitor the implementation of this policy. Following any incident an investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to policies and working practices.