



# Lone Working Policy

Date of Adoption by Governing Body: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be Reviewed: July 2018

## Policy Statement

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and Headteacher have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which Lone Working presents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Health and Safety policy.

### Purpose

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by Lone Working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations and unplanned events including callouts to site after indication that an automated alarm has been activated.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Joseph Rowntree School staff and CYC or authorised outside agencies who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

### Definition

Within this document, 'Lone Working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the community, in the homes of parents or pupils, in their own home, or may be the only staff member present on the School premises. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building, but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas. The term "*Lone Worker*" applies to anyone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision, and therefore applies to:

- Those who work at a fixed workplace who due to the nature of their role work separately from other colleagues;
- Staff who work outside normal office hours, e.g. security, caretaking, cleaning, where these are employed by or contracted directly to the school;
- Staff working from home;
- Within the legislative definitions, one member of staff with a group of children would be classed as a Lone Worker.

There are some high-risk activities where Lone Working is prohibited by legislation e.g.

- Confined space working
- Electrical work on exposed live conductors
- Fumigation work

Aside from legislation there are some activities where it is unsafe to carry out while Lone Working. In these instances the control measures within the Risk assessment can be used to prohibit that particular activity e.g.

- Manual handling of loads (including customers) which have been identified as a 'two-person' job;
- Working at heights;

- Working with, or exposure to individual customers (e.g. visiting parents) who have a known history of violence;
- Pregnant workers – certain activities that were acceptable to be undertaken as a Lone Worker may no longer be acceptable, e.g. manual handling tasks, dealing with stressful situations, working at height, etc.

Individual staff may be prohibited from Lone Working due to a medical condition/disability e.g.

- Uncontrolled/poorly controlled diabetes;
- Epilepsy;
- Heart conditions;
- New and expectant mothers;
- History of fainting / blackouts;
- Anxiety / panic attacks;
- Severe asthma;
- Drug-related problems both in relation to legal and illegal substances (some over the counter/prescribed medication can impair performance);
- Alcohol-related problems;
- Visual impairment (which cannot be corrected by spectacles/contact lenses);
- Hearing impairment (which cannot be corrected by electronic aids).

If there is any doubt as to whether or not an individual is fit to undertake Lone Working than a referral is to be made to Occupational Health for advice, and until that advice has been received the individual must refrain from Lone Working.

### **Categories of Lone Workers**

At The School, a Lone Worker will most probably fall within one of the following categories:

- Those who choose, or are required, to arrive at school early; leave school after other staff; work from school during a holiday period.
- Those who work in an isolated part of school (e.g. the Boiler Room) or its grounds either during, before or after normal working hours.

### **Context**

In line with the School's overall vision, its premises are made available to the community for extended periods of time. This situation may require individuals to manage the site alone at certain times. Occasionally some staff may be required to work alone with parents or pupils in their homes, this may well be outside normal office hours and may involve accompanying parents or pupils in public places. On occasion staff may also work from their own home.

Within the School, support for Lone Workers is essential and the following principles apply:

- a commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices at all times;
- recognising and reducing risk;
- a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff;
- a clear understanding of responsibilities of all individuals on site;
- the priority placed on the safety of the individual over property;

- a commitment to providing appropriate training for staff.

Equipment such as mobile phones, personal alarms and torches will be made available as appropriate.

## **Mandatory Procedures**

### **Security of buildings**

- Managers are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible.
- Alarm systems must be tested regularly.
- Key codes for access should be changed from time to time, and as a matter of course if a breach of security is suspected.
- Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with the exits and alarms.
- There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone.
- If there is any indication that a building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter alone, but must wait for back-up.
- In buildings where staff may be working with parents or pupils in relative isolation, there should be an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency.

### **Risk assessment**

Risk assessments are the responsibility of the person in school designated as the Responsible Person for Health and Safety. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, 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. Although not a statutory requirement it is good practice to keep a record that all staff are aware of and understand this policy. The record may be a printed form on which all staff sign to state that they have read and understood the policy and will adhere to it at all times.

The Risk assessment related to Lone Working 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 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 a minimum of at least an annual review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the school.

The Risk assessment should consider whether a Lone Worker can do the work safely, and what arrangements are required to ensure that they are at no more risk than employees working together. It should include the following:

- Lone Working risks e.g. unable to summon assistance, risk of assault;
- Activity specific risks e.g. weather, driving/cycling, violent persons, manual handling, fire;
- Person-specific risks e.g. lack of experience, age, physical/health issues;
- Preventative measures e.g. training, access to relevant information (the CYC Staff Warning Register), personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Emergency measures e.g. logging in and out, mobile phones, monitoring technology, first aid provision;

## **Dynamic Risk assessment**

As it is impossible to consider and document all eventualities, staff must be aware of their own responsibility to undertake an ongoing assessment of the situation as it is unfolding. This should be done on the basis of their existing knowledge, experience, location, time of day and any changing factors such as competency in a particular situation. If the employee is in any doubt about their safety they are to withdraw from the situation and summon assistance, if necessary.

## **Personal safety**

- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk;
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances;
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with their line manager or the Health and Safety Officer for the school;
- Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving details of their location and where it is deemed necessary, following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following a visit rather than returning to the school;
- Managers must ensure that if required by the circumstances, there is a robust system in place for signing in and out, and that staff use it.

Staff such as Home School Workers, who work to a pre-planned programme of visits, must inform their line manager if they deviate from the programme.

- If a plan has been put in place for a member of staff to report in at any time and they do not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate;
- Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include:
  - staffing levels and availability
  - the identified risks
  - measures in place to reduce those risks.
- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation;
- Staff working in the community should be issued with a mobile phone; they are responsible for checking that it is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider. Personal alarms may also be provided if it is deemed necessary;
- Staff should take particular care if transporting individuals in their own cars.

## **Staff working at home**

- Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential;

- There should be regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods, and an appropriate reporting-in system should be used if making visits from home.

### **Assessment of risk**

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- the environment – location, security, access;
- the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances;
- the individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk;
- history – any previous incidents in similar situations;
- any other special circumstances.

All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a Lone Worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

### **Planning**

- Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself;
- Plans for responding to individuals who present a known risk should be regularly reviewed and discussed with the staff team;
- Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place.

The team manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the team.

### **Reporting**

- Should an incident occur, this should be reported using the appropriate incident/accident report form;
- The identified person should debrief in the first instance; if this is not the staff member's line manager, that manager should be informed as soon as practicable, and continue the process.

### **Support following an incident**

- Support will be sought by the school for individuals, using agencies as advised by the local law enforcement agencies and CYC.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- Lone Working and Risk assessment will be discussed at relevant staff/team meetings;
- Any member of staff with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that it is discussed with their line manager or brought to the attention of the Head teacher, as appropriate;

- The policy will be reviewed annually, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

## **Controls**

Staff should normally advise their line manager that they intend to work alone in the building outside of 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.

Whenever possible it is preferable 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 must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance. Staff should activate the door security system when Lone Working and ensure that areas of the school not in use are kept secure.

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

Students are prohibited from Lone Working.

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to ensure that up to date personal details are held in the School Office. All Lone Working staff must establish their own checking in and out system with family, friends or 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.

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, must follow the school's Fire and Emergency Procedures which are posted in every room. Staff 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 and telephone access for more severe cases.

If staff do rely on mobile phones they must ensure that their network has good reception within 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 areas of an otherwise unoccupied building, personnel should keep in regular contact.

Lone Workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height, or any task which is potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance and it is not the policy of the school that staff should attend school out of hours without good reason.

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 or the school's Health and Safety officer. 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.

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 can also advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer or a senior member of staff any aspect of work related risks.

The Headteacher or Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of these procedures. Following any incident an investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices. Other than in response to an incident which results in the identification of a required corrective action or a change to the statutory legislation related to Lone Working, this policy will be reviewed a minimum of every three years or if significant changes in circumstance or practices occur.