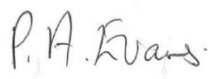www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk

2023/2024
Lone Working Policy

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	**09/11/2023**
Signed by Chair of Governors:	*P. A. Evans*
Head Teacher:	**O M Flowers**
Lead Personnel:	**A Gibson**
Date of Review:	**09/11/2025**

Policies and Procedures

Introduction

The Westminster School and its Governing Board have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff while they are at work. At any given time, there are numbers of staff who are working alone, whether as a substantial part of their working life or on an occasional basis. The School Leadership team and the Governing Body have the responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary; and staff have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe and proper precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to outline the Governing Body's responsibilities towards staff working alone by:

- Defining what 'lone working' is
- Taking action to reduce risk to lone workers
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibility to use necessary guidance to assist lone workers

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including temporary workers and those employed on a casual basis. It should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those 'who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. They may include:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues, e.g. visiting people in their homes
- People who work at home

The definition can cover staff in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures. This policy will refer to high risk and low risk activities.

Some staff members may spend most of their working lives with others but find themselves working alone occasionally, for example, when working late. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy will refer to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers.

Potential Hazards of Lone Working

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)

The perception of these hazards or the actual risks may be different for different people. For example, some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace or after dark; or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone.

The School must consider these factors when doing risk assessments. If there are lone workers within an area the manager must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk, particularly for frequent lone workers or lone workers engaged in high-risk activities. They should consider:

- Does the workplace present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used on the premises be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence? Is the nature of a visit or the person being visited likely to increase the risk? Will the staff member be alone in a dark or remote location?

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment for any further staff who wish to work alone should be completed as required.

Measures to Reduce the Risk of Lone Working

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. However, line-managers can ensure that staff understand the risks associated with their work and the relevant safety precautions. They can put into place arrangements for the individual to contact a line-manager if they need additional guidance. Occasional site visits may be appropriate, particularly if there are high-risk activities. Staff new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially. Regular contact by phone or radio may be appropriate. The Site Manager (person in charge of Health and Safety) should assess what level of supervision is required.

Checking System

All out-of-hours 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 (eg Line Manager's) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

Reporting Back

For occasional lone workers or low risk lone workers, they should inform a colleague where they are going and when they are expected back; arranging to ring the office at the conclusion of the visit or call; issuing a mobile phone number to allow a contact call to be made if the staff member's return is overdue. Use of diary systems or notice boards to indicate whereabouts can form part of this system. All staff involved share a responsibility to maintain such informal systems for safe lone working. It is imperative that staff make their line manager aware of their intended visit and the nature of the visit as it may be deemed appropriate that an additional member of staff supports the visit.

The school should also consider staff who meet with visitors on a one-to-one basis on the school premises. Whilst they are not alone in the building, they may be alone with the visitor in a place where other colleagues cannot see them. The school should consider systems for

ensuring that they have emerged safely from such a meeting and systems for raising an alarm if necessary.

Accidents and Emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. This should include being made aware of special arrangements for out of hours incidents. First aid may be available from school staff, or it may be prudent for an individual frequently working away from the base to carry a basic first aid kit if there is a foreseeable risk of injury.   Staff working alone should be able to access a first aid kit in school Medical Rooms. It is also necessary for staff working alone in a building or part of a building to let the Business Manager (Lance Goodby) know they are there, so they can be accounted for in case of fire.

Medical Conditions

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

Task Not Suitable for Lone Working

Risk assessment will identify the hazards of work. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another member of staff or done in hours when they are not alone. For example, a staff member who arrives before other colleagues may be instructed not to attempt heavy manual lifting until another colleague arrives to assist.

Intruder

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

Violence at Work

Staff who undertake home visits must use a system to reduce the risk of violence by not visiting alone or meeting in another location. The risk of violence may not be directly related to a particular property. It may be associated with the environmental issues like working alone outside after dark, or a situation may arise where there was no previous history of incidents. Staff likely to be lone workers in such situations should be trained in dealing with difficult people, in ways to recognise a risk and in behaviour which may reduce the risk (up to and including terminating the visit). All incidents of violence must be reported.

For Staff Travelling to Other Campuses, Places of Work (eg DPD) or Visits

- Think about arranging a call with Reception if there is an emergency situation. Have a predetermined code word ready in case you want to summon help. Ask Reception to call you at a certain agreed time to check in with you.
- Plan your journey – Google Street View is particularly useful for identifying landmarks in an unknown area.

When travelling on foot:

- Conduct your own dynamic risk assessment. In situations, if you feel at all uncomfortable or unsure, leave and contact a member of SLT.
- Try to use well-lit, busy streets and use the route you know best.
- Plan your route, and look confident as you travel.
- If you do have to pass higher-risk areas, consider how you'd respond if you felt threatened.

- If you think you are being followed, trust your instincts and take action. As confidently as you can, cross the road, turning to see who is behind you. If you are still being followed, keep moving. Head to a busier area. Call the police if necessary.
- Keep your mind on your surroundings – avoid distractions such as your mobile phone or headphones.

When Travelling on Public Transport:

- Know where you are going and which stop you need.
- Check departure times, especially of last buses or trains.
- Try and have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so your purse or wallet is out of sight.
- If travelling out of hours or in an unfamiliar area, try and arrange for someone to meet you at the bus stop or train station. Otherwise try to walk purposefully to your destination.
- Wait for a bus or train in a well-lit place near other people whenever possible.
- Carry extra money in case you get stranded and need to take another bus, train or cab.
- If a bus is empty or it is after dark, it may be safer to stay on the lower deck and sit closer to the driver (maintain recommended social distance).
- On trains avoid compartments which have no access to corridors or other parts of the train. Try to sit with other people (maintain recommended social distance) and avoid empty carriages.
- If you feel uneasy, move to another seat or carriage. If you feel threatened, make as much noise as possible to attract the attention of the driver or guard.
- British Transport Police non-emergency text number is 61016 for reporting any incidents.

When Travelling in Taxis:

- Licensed minicabs cannot be hailed in the street. They must be pre-booked. The driver should have ID and the vehicle will have some sort of license displayed on it. Always carry the telephone number of a trusted, licensed company with you.
- When booking a taxi or minicab, ask for the driver's name, as well as the make and colour of the car – use app or website to pre-book. Confirm the driver's details when they arrive – is it the taxi or minicab you ordered?
- If you chat to the driver, be careful not to give out any personal details.
- Remember - Minicabs that pick up fares on the street, without being pre-booked, are illegal, uninsured and potentially very dangerous.
- If you feel threatened:
- Trust your instincts - If you are at all worried, ask the driver to stop in a busy area and get out of the car.
- If the driver refuses to stop, use a mobile to call the police and alert other drivers and pedestrians by waving or calling out the window.

When Travelling by Cycle:

- Keep your bike in good working order. Repairs are best done at home rather than on the road.
- Always look like you know where you are going.
- Dress to be seen and to be safe. Remember to wear a safety helmet.
- Obey the rules of the road and make sure you are aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid short-cuts even if you are in a hurry. Never cycle anywhere where you would not be comfortable walking.

Student Lone Working

The member of staff in charge of the lone worker should ensure that the student understands the risks associated with lone working and the relevant safety precautions. The teacher should ensure that they check on the lone worker at least every half an hour and more frequently if necessary. Students should be informed that if the fire alarm sounds they should leave the building by the nearest fire exit and not return to the teacher.

Student Lone Working Guidance is given to students prior to carrying out independent work expected as part of their studies (Appendix 1).

Conclusion

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors. The school must ensure that they have not only introduced measures to reduce any risk but must also ensure that they have communicated their expectations to lone workers and trained them appropriately. All staff, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and all staff can take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal working life.

Student Lone Working Guidance – Working Offsite and Onsite Without Staff Supervision

At times students may work alone on tasks outside of the school classroom and it is important that students and parents assess the risks and take steps to avoid or control these where necessary, as responsibility for safety and welfare when undertaking such activities out of the classroom lies with the school

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those 'who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

Potential hazards of lone working:
- Accidents or sudden illnesses may happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)

Students should understand the risks associated with lone working and the relevant safety precautions.

Consideration should be given to the following:
- Does the work area present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence?
- Will the student be alone in a dark or remote location?

Accidents and Emergencies

Medical conditions
- Students should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness but should make arrangements for somebody to accompany them.

There are specific situations in which lone working is highly inadvisable and students should be accompanied (e.g. work on or near to bodies of water).

As well as the danger of personal injury, the possibility of exhaustion or hypothermia should be considered.

Possible Scenarios of Lone Working at TWS

Scenario	Control Measures
Visiting a student or staff member's home for work reasons	• If travelling via own transport, staff member must have business insurance on their vehicle • Liaison with line manager of location of visit and purpose for the visit (it may be deemed that an additional member of staff is required depending on the nature of the visit) • First aid kit taken • Sign out on InVentry • Inform member of the Admin Team what time they are expected back • If the time expected to return to work member of admin team to inform member of the Senior Leadership Team • If the time expected back at work is later than the contracted hours of the member of the Admin Team then line manager informed
Working with a student on a one-to-one basis	• Ensure work completed is situated in view of CCTV • Work should be completed in a room with a vision panel • Work should be completed near to where help can be given quickly – i.e. near a classroom
Member of staff takes a group of student (s) on a visit by themselves	• Offsite risk assessment is completed and checked by Pathway Lead and senior leadership team • Students attending the visit with the member of staff should have the cognitive ability to raise alarm and get help if something was to happen to the member of staff • Staff should have the facility to raise alarm and know who to contact in an emergency (i.e. mobile phone) • Students attending the visit should be capable of remaining safe and following instructions in the event of an emergency.
A meeting with a visitor where a member of staff is by themselves	• Consideration of seating plans to ensure the staff member is close to a point of exit must be employed. • Meeting should occur near to where a member of staff can get assistance quickly • Where possible it is advised for a staff meeting to be conducted in a room where CCTV is in operation. • If staff have any concerns or anxieties about having a meeting alone they should see their line manager. • Anxieties about face-to-face meetings can be mitigated by conducting these on the phone or via MS Teams. • All proposed meetings should be recorded on the school weekly briefings
A member of staff works out of hours and is on their own	• Any staff who have medical conditions that may result in loss of consciousness will be covered by individual risk assessments. • All staff must be offsite by 6pm unless agreed in advance by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. • Staff must have the ability to make and receive calls through MS Teams and/or a Mobile Phone. • Recommended that family members of staff have the sickness and absence number to contact in case they do not return home from work. This number is **07973771782.** • Staff members **MUST** sign in and out using the InVentry System. If in the school holidays staff must make themselves known to the Mitie Site Team.

Appendix 2

Risk Assessment for: **Lone Working**   Location: Rowley Learning Campus

Assessment Date**:**   **10/10/2023**   Name of Assessor(s)**:**   **A Gibson**   Assessment Ref No**:**   **RA32**

Note: if assessing a task/activity/event, please give detail here: (outline the activities, tasks, work practices, equipment/materials used, environment, people involved etc)
Click or tap here to enter text.

Is any of the following required due to the high-risk nature of the task/activity/event?
Method Statement/Safe System of Work Yes ☐ No ☒   **Permit to Work** Yes ☐ No ☒
If you've answered **Yes**, please provide a link in the body of the RA and/or here, as to where this/these can be located: Click or tap here to enter text.

Risk Matrix scoring guide:

Likelihood	
1	Very unlikely
2	Unlikely
3	Likely
4	Very likely
5	Certain

Severity:	
1	No Lost time
2	Under 7-day injury or illness
3	Over 7-day injury or illness (RIDDOR)
4	Specified injury or illness (RIDDOR)
5	Fatality, disabling injury or illness

High (15-25)	These risks are unacceptable; significant improvements in risk control are required. **The activity should be halted with immediate effect** until risk controls are identified/implemented that reduce the risk to an acceptable level
Medium (5-12)	Additional control measures should be identified and implemented to reduce the risks associated with the activity or workplace so far as reasonably practicable
Low (1-4)	Minimal control measures are required to be implemented to satisfy the level of risk. Maintain current arrangements for risk control

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
Personal safety	• Pupils and staff • Personal injuries (eg bruises, broken bones)	• Entry by card only and other doors locked. • Guidelines in Lone Working Policy for staff to stay safe whilst travelling to other workplaces or on visits (eg home visits)	Always carry a charged mobile phone with contact numbers of other staff.		1	5	5	
Tripping , falling or becoming ill	• Pupils • Falling off • Loss of control Personal injuries (eg bruises, broken bones)	• Only working while managers are present at agreed times and dates. • Sign in and out at front desk. • Not climb ladders or work at any height during holidays.	Always carry a charged mobile phone with contact numbers of other staff.		1	3	3	
Attempting tasks meant for two people (eg heavy lifting)	• Collisions • Falling off • Personal injuries (eg bruises, broken bones)	Carrying or heavy lifting must not be undertaken when working alone			1	3	3	
Risk of injury from working	• Collisions • Falling off	Ensure Risk Assessments and COSSH sheets are in place and staff member has read them	Do not use high risk chemicals during periods of lone working		1	3	3	

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
with any chemicals	• Personal injuries (eg bruises, broken bones)							
Fire	• Trips • Falls	• Sign in and out. Keeping up to date with fire safety procedures.	Being aware of designated exits for evacuation.		1	5	5	

Assessment reviewed [Date]:	Reviewed by [Name]:	Comments: