



# OLD BUCKENHAM HALL

Lone Working Policy

OBHP55

## **Lone Working Policy**

Lone working is a part of normal working life. Staff who work alone need to take sensible precautions to ensure their safety. Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. In practice this means staff who are totally remote from others, due to their location, the time of day, or the day of the week.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, requires Old Buckenham Hall School to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. In addition, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, we are required to assess the risks to our employees, including the risks associated with lone working. Once the risks have been assessed we will take reasonable steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Employees also have to take sensible precautions for their own safety.

### **Issues Taken Into Account When Considering Lone Working**

Hazards and risks associated with the work activity, and foreseeable emergencies e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents are many considerations for Lone Workers.

- The working environment should not present a special risk to the lone worker
- There must be a safe way in and a way out for one person
- Plant, substances and goods involved in the work must be safely handled by one person
- Further risk assessments must be performed for women or young workers especially at risk if they work alone
- If there is a likelihood of violence for the employee when working alone, further control measures must be introduced to mitigate any risk.

### **Staff medically fit and suitable to work alone**

We will assess that all lone workers have no medical conditions which may make working alone higher risk for them, e.g. workers with a history of heart problems or those suffering from diabetes.

### **Special training requirements**

Lone workers will receive sufficient training or/and have adequate experience so that they fully understand the risks and necessary precautions associated with the tasks they are undertaking. Staff must be competent to deal with new or unusual circumstances, and know when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor/manager.

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Lone workers will be issued their Lone Working Risk Assessment to review on an annual basis. This will clearly demonstrate the duties that can and cannot be performed when lone working.

### **Safe Systems in place for lone workers**

Although lone workers will not be closely supervised, there will be a system in place to ensure they are safe at work:

- Supervisors periodically visiting people working alone;
- Regular telephone or radio contact between lone worker and supervisor/colleague;
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task. Alternatively, the lone worker themselves may contact an agreed colleague after having arrived home/at base safely.

The extent of supervision required will depend on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues. Completion of a task specific lone working risk assessment will help inform this management decision.

### **Lone Workers becoming ill, having an accident, or experience an emergency during work**

As far as possible the lone worker must be capable of dealing with all foreseeable emergencies identified via the risk assessment. The lone worker will be trained in suitable emergency procedures.

Lone workers will have access to first aid facilities and be able to easily contact a first aider. The level and location of first aid facilities will be identified during the risk assessment process.

### **Risk Assessment**

Lone working activities will be risk assessed in order that suitable controls are identified and implemented. The risk assessment and control measures will be documented and brought to the attention of all lone workers. Steps will be taken to ensure these procedures are being followed by the relevant staff.

### **Identify Lone Workers**

Employees who spend all, or part of their day, working on their own without close or direct supervision will include the following members of staff:

- Estate and cleaning staff working alone early in the morning or in the evening
- Ground keeping staff working away from the main school building

- Minibus Drivers transporting children during early morning or evenings
- Teaching, boarding and admin staff working outside normal school hours, e.g.
  - During school holidays and weekends
  - SMT
  - Running evening classes/clubs

## **Hazards Affecting Lone Workers**

Below is a list of hazards that could affect lone workers. However, members of staff who work alone may be aware of other hazards that will be included in their Department Risk Assessment. Any incidents that have involved lone workers in the past will prompt a review of our Lone Working Policy and Risk Assessment.

- Not being able to get immediate help or support in the event of:
  - Injury
  - Ill-health
  - Violence (verbal or physical abuse)
  - Robbery
- Feeling vulnerable/insecure:
  - Staff working on their own (particularly at night or in locations where they feel unsafe)
  - Staff working in a location or at a time when they are entirely alone, e.g. during the school holidays

## **Factors that Increase the Risks**

Some factors increase the risks to lone workers. These include:

- Lack of experience:
  - New or young members of staff
- Individual members of staff's health:
  - Pregnancy
  - Health problems (permanent or temporary) e.g. asthma, vertigo, heart problems, diabetes,
  - Disabilities which may make them particularly vulnerable in the event of an emergency, e.g. being unable to hear fire alarms, or evacuate the building without assistance

If these factors are present, an additional risk assessment will be completed by the line manager and reasonable controls will be put in place. If required management will obtain guidance.

## Controlling the Risks Associated With Lone Working

In order to ensure lone worker's safety, it is important that:

- The lone worker themselves takes sensible precautions to ensure their safety. This should include:
  - Ensuring they understand the hazards and risks associated with the task, and working alone,
  - Ensuring other people, e.g. manager, colleagues, or if appropriate close personal contacts, know they are lone working, where and when they are working, and what time they are expected to cease lone working, be 'back at base', or be home (if working out-of-hours),
  - Ensuring they know what to do if something goes wrong, and are able to call for assistance in the event of an emergency, e.g. by use of radio or mobile phone,
  - Following standard safe working procedures,
  - Not taking 'short cuts' or any unnecessary risks.
- The school implements safe working procedures that are appropriate for the task.

For lone working activities during the normal working day then appropriate procedures will include:

- Training the lone worker in order that they understand the hazards and risks associated with the task, and working alone;
  - Ensuring new, young and inexperienced members of staff are adequately supervised and do not work alone until they have adequate training and experience;
  - Ensuring that someone, e.g. the lone worker's supervisor, or a previously nominated colleague, knows where they are, what work they are planning to undertake, and what time they are expected back at base;
- Ensuring staff know that tasks which could present a higher level of risk to a lone worker are only undertaken when a second person is present, e.g.
  - Significant manual handling activities;
  - Working at height (using ladders, scaffold towers, etc.);
  - Using potentially hazardous equipment and machinery, e.g. major power tools such as band saws, circular saws;
  - Using hazardous cleaning chemicals;
  - Working in potentially hazardous locations such as on roofs;
  - Dealing with trespassers;
- Providing mobile phones or two-way-radios;
- Providing emergency call-buttons;
- Providing training, e.g. in conflict avoidance, emergency procedures.

For lone working activities outside the normal working day, appropriate procedures will include:

- Training the lone worker in order that they understand the hazards and risks associated with the task, and working alone;
- Encouraging staff who need to work outside normal school hours to arrive and leave work with a colleague;
- Signing in/out at reception so other staff on site know who is on the premises. Ensuring that if a member of staff hasn't signed out at the expected time, that this is promptly followed up;
- Where no-one else is on-site staff call their manager (or another nominated person) to advise they have safely finished lone working, and ensuring that if a member of staff hasn't called to say they are safe by a previously agreed time, that this is promptly followed up;
- Ensuring there is adequate first aid cover for staff who routinely work out of normal school hours;
- Ensuring external walking routes and car-parks used on dark evenings are well-lit.