

# Home Visits and Lone Working Policy



**Approved by:** Governing Body

**Last reviewed on:** September 2021

**Next review due by:** September 2022

## **INTRODUCTION**

This guidance applies to all work carried out in isolation during home visits. The school is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all staff and volunteers for which there is a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and further detailed within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The decision of whether a member of staff can carry out a home visit alone will depend on the findings of the risk assessments; these must be undertaken for each initial home visit ideally carried out by two members of staff. The level of detail required for each risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk to a member of staff returning to the home alone to conduct another home visit.

## **AIM**

The policy is to support any practitioner supporting children and families to help develop an effective lone working home visiting policy and practice.

The school has a legal responsibility to provide safe systems of working when home visiting alone, individual staff must also take responsibility to follow safe working practices when working in the community.

To ensure that a standardised, practical and knowledge-based approach for home visiting is taken by senior managers, in line with current legislation and best practice.

## **KEY DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this guidance, lone worker home visiting is defined as any work carried out in isolation from other practitioners. Lone working home visiting activities are those that are carried out without close or direct supervision often working and travelling in the local area working one to one with parents and carers. In these situations, procedures and policies relating to the lone worker home visiting policy must be applied and adhered to.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ensuring that lone working risk assessments are carried out and all control measures are implemented is a managerial responsibility. All relevant members of staff should be consulted when carrying out the risk assessment and must be informed of the findings. Members of staff have a duty to co-operate with their manager and comply with all controls in place to ensure safe working.

## **SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK:**

Before staff set out:

- Has an initial health and safety risk assessment been carried out and if so, is it safe to visit alone?
- Has the lone worker ensured they have as much information as possible about the family and the location to be visited?

- What pre-contact has there been with the family? e.g. a phone call or written appointment to ensure the family knows who is visiting and what their role is.
  - How does the lone worker let the family know if you are unable to keep an appointment?
  - The lone worker must ensure their weekly work plans are kept up to date as this will ensure that the school is fully aware of where staff are at ALL times.
  - The lone worker must also ensure they record the location (address) of the home visit in the main diary.
  - The lone worker should ensure information is left at reception of the expected time of return or ring time.
  - When home visiting, staff should minimise personal risk by not wearing valuable looking jewellery and if travelling by car not to leave any items of value visible inside.
  - Consideration should be given to ensure shoes and clothes do not impede staff's ability to move quickly in case of an emergency.
  - When approaching a family's home an assessment of the situation is important, staff can abandon or postpone the visit if they are in any doubt of their own safety.
  - Lone workers must always wear name badges.
  - Lone workers need to remain aware of the behaviour of all persons in the house, looking for any signs or signals that may indicate a potential problem.
  - Lone workers to ensure that as a guest in the family home, a non-judgemental approach should be adopted, showing sensitivity and respect for each families' culture and circumstances.
  - It is vital that staff are aware of maintaining professional boundaries in their relationship with the family.
- If there is an aggressive animal in the house lone workers should be assertive enough to request that the animal be placed in a separate room.
- When the home visit is complete ensure that everyone is satisfied with the interaction that has occurred, make sure that everyone knows what should happen next and that they honour their commitment to all they have agreed to.
  - Recorded information regarding the home visit is recorded back at work and kept up to date.

- ❖ All staff must carry a mobile phone when working alone outside the school.
- ❖ Staff must notify colleagues of name and address of family they are visiting and expected time of return.
- ❖ If going straight home after their visit staff should pre-arrange to phone or text their Headteacher on their safe return home. This also applies to evening and weekend work and parenting assessments.
- ❖ Partners/family members should have the phone number of the Headteacher if the work is out of hours

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:**

- The Headteacher will be responsible for the implementation, review and evaluation of the Lone Home Visitor Worker Policy.
- All staff will be aware of who the designated person is.
- The policy will form part of the staff induction. On induction staff will receive an awareness raising session on lone with suitable training provided within a reasonable timescale.
- The Headteacher will ensure that all lone workers understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary precautions are carried out.

- The Headteacher will give guidance in situations of uncertainty and will report on a regular basis any incidents that have taken place in line with the reporting procedures for critical incidents.
- Training is key for the successful implementation of the Lone Worker's Home Visiting Policy. All potential lone working staff will on induction receive copies of relevant policies relating to lone work and be more familiar with the procedures and processes in place for practising safe and competent lone working during home visits.
- All staff working with this policy should take ownership of this process in order to develop their own awareness of the policy and related procedures enhancing their professional development and establishing their responsibility to ensure it is implemented effectively.

## **LONE WORKING POLICY**

There are times when staff need to work alone in the school. All staff should take responsibility for their own safety and always inform the Headteacher or another named person of when they will be working alone, and when they have finished.

### **CATEGORIES OF LONE WORKERS**

A lone worker will most probably fall within one of the following categories:

1. Staff that are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working in the evening or early mornings.
2. 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
3. Staff who are key-holders.

### **KEEPING SAFE IN THE SCHOOL.**

- Any person working alone in the school will not allow anyone else to enter, unless they are sure the caller is known to them and they consider it safe to be alone with them. The front door should be kept locked when working alone in the building.
- The first person to enter the building in the morning must ensure that it is safe to do so, if the alarm is ringing or there are signs of forced entry no one must enter the building alone. The person must wait until another member of staff is present and also inform the school staff of the situation and find another person to accompany them. If it is considered unsafe to enter the building the Police must be called, then the Headteacher must be informed.
- All Fire doors must be checked to ensure they are not locked with the master key. If so all doors must be unlocked to ensure safe exit in event of an evacuation. Fire doors should be kept clear and unblocked when anyone is in the building.

**Anyone working alone in the building should have a buddy system in place so that they phone or text when they are leaving.**

- When someone is working alone in a room they should always tell someone where they are.
- When working alone in the building it is important to be aware of the risks associated with working with machinery, electrical equipment, hazardous substances etc. Whenever possible these should be kept to a minimum.
- No one will use ladders or work at height when alone in the building
- When it is dark, security lights will be on around the outside of the building. If anyone notices that the lights are not working properly they should report it to the Headteacher immediately.
- Any incidents or accidents must be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

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

<b>RISK ASSESSMENT FOR:</b>  <b>Cornfields School</b>	<b>LONE WORKING</b> working offsite / conducting home visit	
	<b>Assessment by:</b> Mary McKeeman, Headteacher	<b>Date:</b> April 2019

<b>Hazard / Risk</b>	<b>Who is at Risk?</b>	<b>How can the hazards cause harm?</b>	<b>Normal Control Measures</b>	<b>Are Normal Control Measures Y/N/NA</b>	
				<b>In Place</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Lone working</b> Working offsite alone Home visits etc.	Staff Colleagues	Accident / injury, delayed assistance in emergency  Physical assault / verbal abuse  Cuts / abrasions, muscular skeletal and other physical injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For home visits background information on the family is gathered beforehand, a specific risk assessment conducted where necessary.</li> <li>• Where higher risk identified visits not to be conducted alone</li> <li>• Reduce time spent working alone so far as is reasonably practicable.</li> <li>• All staff to be familiar with lone working procedures.</li> <li>• Mobile phone available, charged and switched on.</li> <li>• Agreed schedule –times and location of visits to be known.</li> <li>• Response procedure in event of overdue contact.</li> <li>• Contact point available in office</li> <li>• Staff own experience and training in recognising signs of aggression and avoiding / de-escalating this.</li> <li>• Regular supervision and arrangements for debrief / feedback from staff.</li> </ul>	Y	Y