



015 – Lone Working Guidance 2021-22

Guideline Lone working in schools	Issue Date and Version Number: September 2021	Page: 1 of 8
Review Date: September 2022 (or sooner if there is a change in legislation or to reflect best practice)	Related Policies and Guidance:	
For further information please contact:		
Name	Position	Contact Number
Miss K Hayward	Executive Principal	07530226366

INTRODUCTION

This guidance sets out the approach that schools should take for managing lone working. The Executive Principal has day-to-day responsibility for health and safety in the school, with the governing body having a legal duty to look after the health, safety and welfare of the school's staff. This includes a duty of care to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable the risks associated with lone working both on and off the school premises.

The school should be committed to the provision of a safe place of work for all staff, pupils, contractors, visitors and volunteers as well as those affected by, or involved in school activities. The school should also ensure that any staff who may work alone (i.e., out of hours) are not exposed to additional or greater risk than any other person. More specifically the school should ensure that lone workers are identified, risks are assessed; and appropriate action is taken to reduce these risks.

DEFINITION OF LONE WORKING

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

This can be spilt into two main groups

- People who work in fixed establishments e.g. site agents, cleaners, staff working after normal hours.
- Remote Workers working away from fixed base e.g. music teachers, etc.

There is no general legal prohibition on lone working, however the employer must identify the hazards, assess the risks involved, and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements need to be put in place.

Classification of Lone Workers

To assist in determining the level of risk the CBC health and safety team have identified examples of Low, Medium and High risk.

Category 1 - **Lower risk** situations includes:

- Staff working outside normal school office hours, e.g. cleaners, caretakers, staff working through holidays.
- Staff who travel alone for significant periods or in circumstances that may give rise to additional risks, e.g. music teachers

Category 2 - **Medium risk** situations includes:

- Use of receptions, neutral rooms, or similar where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable and where colleagues cannot be readily called on by the lone worker in the event of an adverse situation arising.

Category 3 - **High-risk** situations included: -

- Visiting domestic houses where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable.
- Working out of hours (not in a school controlled facility)
- Working alone with hazardous plant, tools, equipment or chemicals i.e. D&T or science labs
- Where serious injury may be incurred by the type of work being carried out

This is a guide only and the Executive Principal is required to complete a risk assessment to determine the level of risk and control measures required.

NOTE: Young or inexperienced employees who require direct supervision due to the nature of the task should not be permitted to work alone.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO LONE WORKING

Each school is responsible for implementing arrangements to ensure lone working is effectively managed and that all staff are made aware of the school's policy on lone working and any relevant risk assessments.

EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Lone working should carry no more risk than normal working however the Executive Principal must recognise that the risks to lone workers are greater because there is a reduced level of immediate support available. By following normal risk assessment methods, the Executive Principal should be able to eliminate, or reduce to an acceptable level, the risks associated with lone working.

Key responsibilities are:

- To identify lone workers and hazards
- To carry out a lone working risk assessment for staff or department.

- To implement suitable control measures as identified in risk assessment.
- To distribute and monitor lone working device usage (if necessary)
- Ensure that any accident, hazard and violent incidents are reported and any control measures identified are implemented (in accordance with the accident, incident and near miss guidance and the school's violence and aggression policy).
- Ensuring that identified lone working staff, attend relevant training.
- Ensure that permanent staff, agency or voluntary workers, during their induction period, have adequate additional controls in place.
- To ensure procedures are in place in an emergency.

EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- To assist there in completing Executive Principal a lone working assessment.
- Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others.
- Take part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Training to ensure competency is particularly important where assistance is limited, and may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. Governors and Executive Principal need to set limits on what can and cannot be done when working alone and staff must be competent to deal with circumstances that should arise.

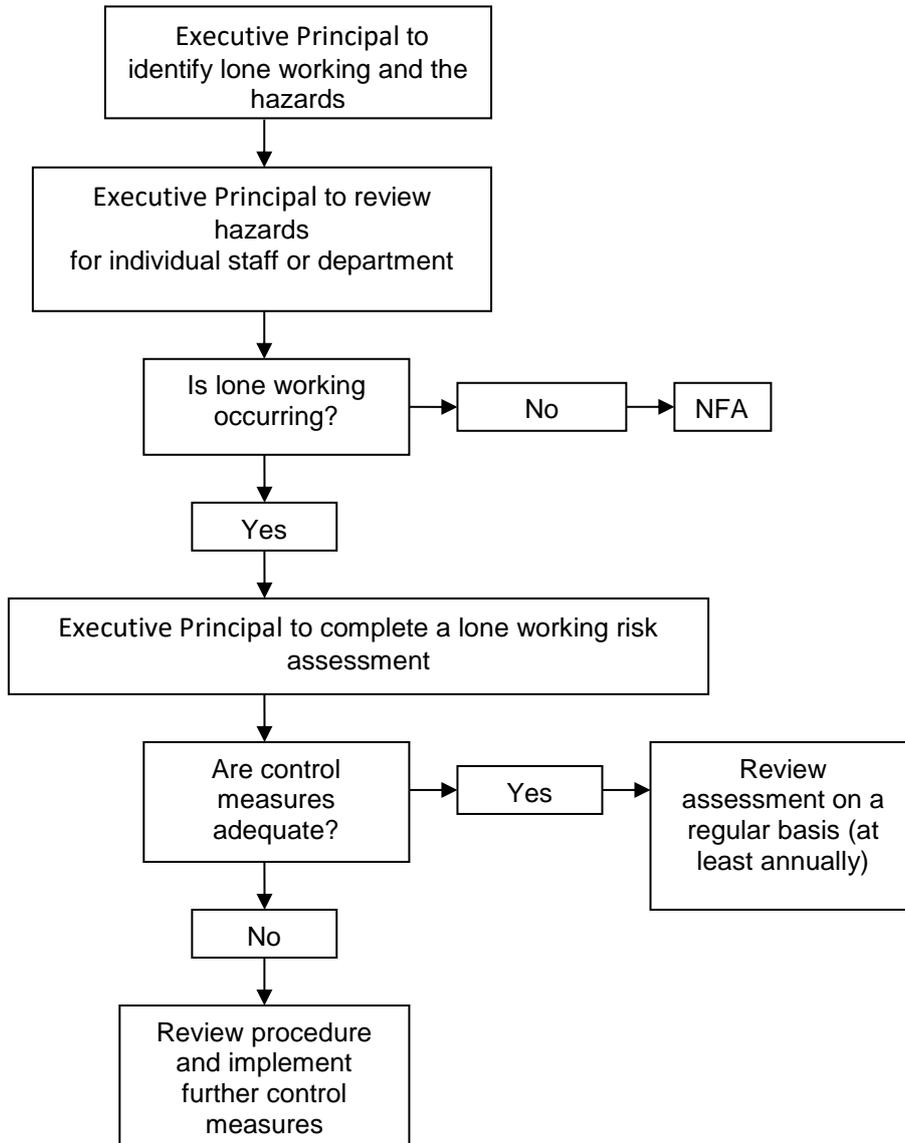
Personal safety training available to staff lone working should cover:

- Advice and guidance not to go into a situation if they feel at risk.
- The use of conflict resolution or defusing techniques. These include being aware of non-verbal communication; how to behave in a non-confrontational way; the importance of empathy; being polite; and listening.
- To be aware of surroundings, your own actions and how others may perceive you.
- Dynamic risk assessments

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Risk assessment is an integral management tool that should be completed to ensure that staff are safe in their work. Normal school risk assessments should be completed in accordance with the risk assessment guidance.

Lone worker identification and risk assessment flow chart



ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Employees involved in lone working must have access to all available relevant information in order to make a reasoned judgement of any potential risk.

The following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the visit, special circumstances, likely outcomes
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- Any other special circumstances

The environment

- It is the responsibility of the Executive Principal to assess the risks presented by the location of any meeting – access, layout, furnishings, lighting and temperature control – and to take appropriate action.
- If pupils are being accompanied on transport or in a public place, or visited at home, there must be an appropriate assessment of the risks this might present.

Personal

- In order to make a complete assessment, any history of challenging behaviour (i.e. a potentially violent parent) should be investigated.
- Any information regarding known triggers must be recorded.
- Staff must be aware of the effect they may have on the situation through their verbal and non-verbal communication, and take steps to avoid provocation.

Planning

- If visiting a property or individual as part of a teaching role, where a risk has been identified, always consider a visit with two staff members or a school-based meeting as alternatives. In some cases, it may not be appropriate to hold a face-to-face meeting, and a telephone meeting may have to do.
- Ensure there are agreed contacts in case of an emergency and a system for reporting back at the end of a visit.
- Take into consideration the current situation and any previous events, which have caused problems.

Support can also be obtained by contacting the CBC health and safety team.

DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT

Whilst a lone worker risk assessment has been carried out during the period of lone working, the staff member should be constantly reviewing the situation as part of a dynamic risk assessment.

If at any time the lone worker is uncomfortable with their position they should call for assistance or remove themselves from the risk. Personal safety training will cover dynamic risk assessments.

REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENT

All risk assessments must be reviewed at least annually or following a change in circumstance e.g. as reported incident, change in work pattern etc.

BE AWARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- Know what measures are in place at the school: Procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.

- Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon by the aggressor and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in the school building.

BE AWARE OF YOURSELF

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything, which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

BE AWARE OF OTHER PEOPLE

- Take note of non-verbal signals from others.
- Be aware of the other person's triggers.
- Do not crowd people – allow them space.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and do not make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

Always report any incidents of violence and aggression to the Executive Principal.

<http://www.suzylamplugh.org> has various information and tips on how to reduce risk to you.

Lone Worker Protection Aide Memoir

Before any Lone Working Undertaken

All lone working should have a risk assessment, and any staff identified as risk should undertake relevant training. Executive Principal should hold a record of all lone working staff including photograph, personal details (inc Next of Kin) and vehicle details.

Prior to a visit

Check the following:

- Schools prior experience
- Any other known source if information

Do:

- Let someone know that you are going out.
- When you expect to return
- The location and work to be undertaken, including who you are going to meet.
- How to contact you
- Ensure any lone worker protection procedures are in place and working

Working outside the school

On arrival at the property or in a lone working situation you should undertake a dynamic assessment of the risk this need NOT be documented.

Factors such as unexpected visitors, strange behaviours, layout of the area or any other factors that give rise to your concern

Ensure lone working monitoring systems are not too obvious but readily accessible and operational e.g. mobile telephones / radios

If you are uncomfortable or have concern for yourself or others safety, use the skills taught (e.g. Conflict Resolution skills) to try and diffuse the situation. If in doubt, make an excuse to leave e.g. need to contact school

If you are at risk call for assistance immediately and remove yourself from the area by any safe means.

Contact your Executive Principal /Police (if not already done) / report the incident and raise an immediate violence and aggression report.

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT AND NEAR MISS REPORTING

Any accident/incident or near miss and this includes threat of violence and aggression whilst lone working should be reported to the Executive Principal and recorded on AssessNet the council's on-line accident and incident system. For further information on accident/Incident reporting, refer to the accident and incident reporting guidance.