



Extend Learning
Academies Network

Lone Working Policy

Including home working

Version:	3.0	
Written by:	ELAN Executive Team	
Reviewed by:	ELAN Finance, General Purposes, Audit & Risk Committee	Date: 13/06/2022
Ratified by:	Name: Claire Williams Signed: Claire Williams Chair of the Finance, General Purposes, Audit & Risk Committee	Date: 13/06/2022
Adopted by Academies:	Banwell Primary School Bournville Primary School Locking Primary School Mead Vale Primary School Mendip Green Primary School Milton Park Primary School Oldmixon Primary School Walliscote Primary School Windwhistle Primary School	
Review:	1 Year	
Next Review Due by:	June 2023	

Document Control

Document Information

	Information
Document Name	Lone Working Policy
Document Author	Estates
Document Approval	Operations
Document Status	Version 3.0
Publication Date	June 2022
Review Date	June 2023
Distribution	General

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Amended by	Comments
1.0	19/01/2019	New policy	Board approved
2.0	12/02/2021	Estates/HR	Review to reflect the national pandemic and increased homeworking requirements as part of the government COVID safety control measures.
3.0	June 2022	Estates/HR	Annual review – updated roles and responsibilities. Removed policy statement for COVID.

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1. Policy Statement

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) definition of lone working is ‘someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision’, this include those who:

- Work alone at a fixed base
- Work separately from others (but on the same premises) or outside normal working hours
- Work at home
- Work away from a fixed base.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies including, where relevant, those of Extend Learning Academies Network member schools.

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.

- This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.
- Volunteers would not normally be expected to work alone and so should be outside the scope of this policy.

Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role (i.e. tutors, caretakers etc). Extend Learning Academies Network’s principles for supporting lone workers include:

- a commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- recognising and reducing risk
- a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
- a clear understanding of responsibilities
- the priority placed on the safety of the individual over property
- a commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
- Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate.

Some staff may work remotely (from home or other location). In addition to the principles for supporting lone workers, Extend Learning Academies Network’s will also ensure that:

- Regular times are established to catch up from a professional point of view, both as a group and on a one-to-one basis
- Work expectations and boundaries are clearly set out to help with time management and ensuring there are regular break routines in place
- Less formal gatherings are provided to allow colleagues to catch up over a virtual coffee
- Colleagues are encouraged to ‘buddy up’ with one or two other people from their team
- Colleagues are signposted to opportunities for training
- Regular advice and guidance is provided on health, wellbeing and stress management techniques.
- Regular engagement with remote workers to discover the challenges they are facing

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Board of Trustees

- The Board of Trustees will approve this policy and hold the CEO to account for its implementation.

2.2 The CEO

- The CEO is responsible for ensuring that this working from home policy is applied consistently across the trust. The CEO will be supported in this role by the executive team. The CEO will delegate responsibility for the implementation of this policy to the Headteacher of each trust school.

2.2 The Local Governing Body

- The local governing body will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

2.3 Headteachers

- Ensuring all staff are aware of the policy.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks of lone working.
- Ensuring all staff groups and individuals identified at being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction, and training, including training at induction, updates and refresher training as necessary
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.
- Ensuring there are arrangements for monitoring incidents and near misses linked to lone working and regularly reviews the effectiveness of the policy.

2.4 Employees

- Taking responsible care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- Cooperating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working.
- Reporting all incidents and near misses that may affect the health & safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

3. Definitions

3.1 Lone working

Refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in another building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

3.2 Home working

Staff may work from home if they are:

- Doing flexible working – see also section 4.1
- Following clinical/and or public health advice
- Maintaining socially distant work spaces – with prior agreement or
- For some other specific reason agreed in advance by their line manager

Where staff are unsure about whether they can or should work from home, they must speak to their line manager or the Headteacher.

If a staff member is unable to work for any reason when they would be working from home, for example due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they will report this using the trust's normal absence procedure.

3.3 Flexible working

Our policy on flexible working continues to apply where staff are working flexible hours from home.

3.4 Working hours

When working from home, staff are expected to be available as per their usual contractual hours.

Outside of these hours, staff are not required to correspond with other staff members, parents or pupils – unless in an emergency, they're working flexible hours or they have prior written agreement from the trust.

3.5 Duties

Wherever possible, staff working from home will carry out their normal duties in line with their job description/contract of employment, with adaptations where necessary. Any adaptations will follow trust practice or otherwise be agreed with the Headteacher or CEO.

Where it is not possible for a staff member to carry out some or all of their normal duties from home, their line manager will discuss and agree alternative arrangements with the individual concerned.

Where staff are unsure about what work they should be carrying out while working from home, they will speak to their line manager.

4. Mandatory Building Procedures (ELAN premises)

4.1 Security of buildings

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that
- emergency exits are accessible
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms.
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
- External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone

4.2 Working alone at another building/location

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible
- They are familiar with the fire and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms
- When making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e. Headteacher or Caretaker) and that this person can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit

- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area
- Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed

5. Personal Safety

- Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together
- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a 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
- Where required, staff must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers.
- Staff must inform their Line Manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and 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 an external commitment rather than returning to their base.
- Staff, who work to a pre-planned programme of sessions, must inform the Headteacher / Line Manager if they deviate from the programme.
- If a member of staff does 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 using emergency contact information if necessary.
- 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 – developing links with a residential establishment may be the best out of hour's solution
 - 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 away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff may use their own mobile phone for this purpose or seek to borrow one from their place of work. Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider.
- 'Reasonable precautions' might include:
 - checking directions for the destination
 - ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover
 - ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home
 - avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas
 - taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
 - ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly

6. Wellbeing

To support the wellbeing of staff who are working from home, all staff have access to the Schools Advisory Service (SAS) Whole School Wellbeing services.

During their normal working hours, staff should remember to take regular breaks, exercise if possible and make sure they keep themselves in good health.

Staff may also seek advice and support from the following sources:

- <https://www.headspace.com/> Currently free and has lots of meditation and relaxation resources.
- <https://www.meditainment.com/> free meditation resources
- <https://www.mind.org.uk> great resource with links to helpline. Lots of advice from positive eating, improving sleep and looking after your mental health.
- <https://www.calm.com> good advice and help on how to reduce anxiety, enjoy better sleep and raise self-esteem.
- <https://www.giveusashout.org> crisis text line: 24/7 help if stressed, anxious or worried. Just text shout to 85258 and a qualified trained volunteer will text you back.
- <https://www.stress.org.uk/> good website for advice on positive mind-set.
- <https://anxietyuk.org> lots of advice if you feel anxious. It has a free helpline is open 10:00 am - 10:00 pm weekdays and 10:00 am until 8:00 pm weekends 03444 775774
- No Panic is another anxiety based charity. Their helpline is open 10:00 am - 10:00 pm 0844 9674848
- <https://gaia.com> offering free streaming yoga sessions at the moment

Staff should communicate with their line manager if their wellbeing is being affected while working from home.

Staff working from home should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods.

Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for staff that live alone.

7. Safeguarding

Where staff are interacting online with pupils while working from home, they will continue to follow our existing policies that apply in a safeguarding capacity, e.g. staff behaviour policy, code of conduct, IT acceptable use policy and child protection policy.

- In particular, staff must consider:
- Acceptable use of technology
- Staff/pupil relationships and communication, including the use of social media
- Remote teaching practices – for example, if staff are pre-recording videos to share, live-streaming lessons, making video calls or phoning pupils. Staff will follow guidance from the Department for Education's on safeguarding during remote learning.

8. Technical support

8.1 Equipment

Staff will be able to request the loan of technical equipment in cases where they do not have access to a laptop/tablet that they can use at home during working hours.

All requests will be subject to approval based on a hierarchy of need and availability of equipment at the time.

If staff are loaning equipment, they must agree and sign the trust's IT equipment loan agreement before they receive the equipment.

8.2 IT Support

If staff are having issues with technical equipment while working from home, they should contact their line manager in the first instance.

8.3 Workstation safety

The trust recommends that staff set up an appropriate space for working at home so they do not cause physical injury to themselves. Where possible, it recommends that staff aim to:

- Sit upright at a table/desk, on a chair
- Raise their laptop/tablet (e.g. using books or a stand)
- Use a separate keyboard and mouse
- Have appropriate lighting near to the workstation

Staff working from home have been sent a [work station assessment](#) to complete

9. Data Protection

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure that any personal information they have in their possession, whether on paper, in electronic format or on their devices, remains secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Using a VPN wherever possible and in all circumstances where working remotely is a regular requirement of the role. Where this is not possible, personal information should not be downloaded or stored on personal devices.
- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Making sure that personal information cannot be observed by third parties when working remotely
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates
- Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.
- Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

Particular care should be taken when transporting materials and equipment between home and work locations, and under no circumstances should such items be stored in cars. If unsure, please refer to the data protection Policy.

10. 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.

11. Planning

- Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc.
- Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
- Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time.
- The Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the staff member.

12. Connected Policies

The following is a list of policies or additional documents referenced within this policy and all employees should familiarise themselves with the content of these in order to ensure full compliance with the detail contained within:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy including KCSIE
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- E-Safety/internet Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Data Protection Policy

13. Monitoring and Review

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager or another senior member of the trust, as appropriate.

The policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if circumstances deem it necessary.

At every review this policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees.