



Extend Learning
Academies Network

Lone Working Policy

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Introduction

At Extend Learning Academies Network (ELAN) the wellbeing of all of our pupils and staff is paramount. We recognise there may be increased health and safety risks when working alone. Due to the nature of our provisions staff will at times be required to undertake lone working practice with pupils, parents or individually in one of our settings. We therefore need to ensure staff fully understand the procedures within this policy to keep all staff and pupils safe.

This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly. The Trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of employees. Within this policy, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone either within one of our schools or buildings, in pupils homes, on transport or on enrichment activities in the community and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance.

1. Policy Statement

This policy is designed to raise staff awareness of safety issues related to 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.

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:

Signpost	Document Title	Responsibility
Policy	Health & Safety Policy	ELAN Estates Lead
	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	ELAN Safeguarding Leads
	Acceptable Use Policy	IT Strategy Group
	Staff Code of Conduct	ELAN HR Lead
	ICT and Online Safety Policy	IT Strategy Group
	Flexible Working Policy and Procedure	ELAN HR Lead
	Data Protection Policy	ELAN HR Lead

2. Scope

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those ‘who work by themselves without close or direct supervision’. This can be split into two main groups:

- People who work in fixed establishments e.g., site staff, cleaners, staff working after normal hours
- Remote Workers working away from a fixed place of work e.g., home educators

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 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees

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

3.2 The CEO

- The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Trust’s working from home policy is applied consistently. 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.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating, and managing risks associated with lone working (in particular regard to the Central Team).

3.3 The Local Governing Body

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

3.4 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.
- To ensure procedures are in place in an emergency

Lone working should carry no more risk than normal working however Headteachers 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, Headteachers should be able to eliminate, or reduce to an acceptable level, the risks associated with lone working.

3.5 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.
- Staff must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance
- Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

4. Classification of Lone Workers

To assist in determining the level of risk the following levels of risk have been identified by the Trust's Estates Manager:

Low risk situations include:

- Staff working outside normal school office hours, e.g., site staff, cleaners, staff working through holidays.

Medium risk situations include:

- Use of receptions 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.
- Working away from fixed place of work e.g., home educators visiting pupils in their home.

High risk situations include:

- 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.
- Where serious injury may be incurred by the type of work being carried out.

This is a guide only and headteachers (or person they appoint to conduct this task) are required to complete a risk assessment to determine the level of risk and control measures required.

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

5. Key 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 schools policy on lone working and any relevant risk assessments.

Wherever possible staff should not work alone. For example, families should be invited into school or an agreed local venue to avoid home visits.

Staff must not take pupils in cars without another adult present.

It is recognised that on occasion staff might be alone in a building. These staff should ensure someone knows where they will be working and what time they will finish.

When working in school during the holidays all staff must either sign in and out in reception or other agreed location or inform the site staff via email that they are onsite, where they are working and what time they anticipate leaving.

Staff making a lone visit away from school must inform their line manager of the address of the visit and the estimated time of return. If the estimated time of return changes, then the school must be updated of the new expected time of arrival.

There may be occasions when contact with children and parents will require staff to work outside of normal working hours. For example, if a parent is not available during the day due to work commitments. Visits must be discussed with a member of the Leadership team, taking into account any risk factors that may be pertinent, and a risk assessment be in place.

Appropriate control measures, such as a buddy system described below, must then be agreed, and implemented.

If no risks are identified normal protocols will apply. Wherever possible these visits should not take place alone.

In cases where a monitoring/buddy system has been agreed as part of a risk assessment process the following will apply:

- If during office hours the agreed member of staff will alert a member of the Leadership team if staff member has not returned to or contacted the school within 30 minutes of expected return time/finish time.
- Leadership team member to contact the staff member by mobile, if unable to do so will inform the Police.

- If out of hours, it is the worker's responsibility to contact the agreed designated contact person (Member of the Leadership team) to advise they have finished and are on their way home.
- If no contact is made within 30 minutes of expected finish time, designated contact person will attempt to make contact with staff member, and if unable to do so will contact the Police.
- Mobile telephones must be kept switched on until contact has been made with the designated member of the Leadership team.
- In all instances, if an individual staff member for any reason is aware that they will not be contactable on their mobile they must ensure that an alternative contact number is given.
- A code word should be agreed so that emergency help can be requested during a phone call, e.g., '*Please tell ERIC I will be late for my next visit*'.

Staff must be aware of health and safety and must not take unnecessary risks. For example, avoid potential hazards such as working at height or manual handling.

6. One to One Teaching and Support

There will be many occasions where staff work one to one with pupils. This must always be considered as part of a risk assessment. Rooms/ locations for this must be carefully considered. For example, doors should have viewing panels, staff should leave the door open and public spaces are better than out of the way parts of the school.

Outside agency staff must sign in at the main entrance of the school. Carefully consider where they work especially if they have been instructed to work one to one with pupils. Pupils must not be seen without parent / carer permission.

7. 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. The Headteacher is responsible for organising all relevant training.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. Headteachers 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

8. Wellbeing

To support the wellbeing of staff who may lone work from home or from Trust buildings for extended periods, 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.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://nopanics.org.uk/> No Panic is an anxiety-based charity. Their helpline is open 10:00 am - 10:00 pm (365 days of the year) 0300 772 9844

9. 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.

In other potential lone working safeguarding situations, the following will apply:

- If lone working is an integral part of an employee’s role, a full and appropriate risk assessment will be conducted and agreed.
- Full and ongoing training regarding child protection, physical restraint and the use of reasonable force, and lone working procedures will be provided for all staff with regular lone working responsibilities.
- Meetings or sessions with children will never be held in remote or secluded areas.
- Colleagues will be informed beforehand when holding one-to-one sessions or discussions.
- The use of ‘engaged’ or equivalent signs is prohibited.
- Doors will be kept open when conducting one-to-one sessions. Where this is not possible, for example in a music lesson, it will be ensured that both parties can be seen through one or more windows.
- When holding one-to-one sessions, staff members will talk to the child with a desk between them, or otherwise arrange the room or environment to avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Both parties will sit near to the door.
- If a child becomes emotional, distressed, or angry, the staff member will seek assistance, it will be reported to a senior colleague and a record kept of the employee’s concerns.

10. Technical support

10.1 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.

10.2 IT Support

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

10.3 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

11. 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.

12. Assessment of risk

12.1 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 Trust's risk assessment policy.

12.2 Lone worker identification and risk assessment process:

- Headteacher/line manager to identify lone working and the hazards.
- Headteacher/line manager to complete a lone working risk assessment
- Ensure control measures are adequate
- Review assessment on an annual basis (at least annually) or if there have been any significant changes.

12.3 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.

Employees 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 occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available
- Fire
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building e.g., danger of being accidentally locked in
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone

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. e.g., will the member be using machinery/equipment/ handling chemicals that could be hazardous? Will the member be working at height e.g., putting up or dismantling a display? 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.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk. i.e., is the member vulnerable, e.g., pregnant/young/ disabled/have English as a second language/have a particular medical condition? Is the member vulnerable to malicious accusations? History – any previous incidents of violence or aggression 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.

12.4 Planning:

- Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc. for example, 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.
- 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.

12.5 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.

13. Unacceptable Lone Working

The following activities are not to be carried out by lone workers under any circumstances:

- Working at height
- Manual handling of heavy or bulky items
- Transport of injured persons (this must be undertaken by more than one member of staff or the emergency services).

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1 Lone workers must report incidents such as accidents and near misses, including all incidents where they feel threatened, to the Headteacher. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

14.2 During supervision, line managers will ask staff working on their own whether there are any safety concerns that are not being addressed. Lone workers are encouraged to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.

14.3 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 staff, as appropriate. Lone workers are encouraged to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.

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

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