LONE WORKING POLICY

Policy Statement
Where it is necessary and / or unavoidable for 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies.

Purpose
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.

Scope
This policy applies to all York Childcare (YC) staff and Trustees who may be working alone.

Context
Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role.
YC is committed to support staff and managers in establishing and maintaining safe working procedures and practices by recognising and reducing any risks involved in situations of lone working.
YC is committed to providing appropriate inductions for staff who will work alone at times.
This policy sets out a clear understanding of responsibilities both for the individual and for the manager, and places a priority on the safety of the individual over property.

Definition
Within this document, '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 the building, but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

Personal safety
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made. This may be done verbally through conversation with a colleague or line manager or more formally in writing using YC's Risk Assessment form, subject to the severity of the situation and associated risk.
- Staff must inform someone (eg a work colleague or relative) if they deviate from what has been agreed.
- Staff must carry their own mobile phone fully charged and working at times when they are working alone.

Assessment of risk
- Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, lone working should be avoided.

Planning
- Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time.

Practice Guidance
- Staff should take care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.
- Staff should not arrange meetings at times when there is no-one else present (on-site and elsewhere).
- Staff should ensure that items such as laptops are carried discreetly when outside the building.

Monitoring and Review
Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager.
This policy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Examples Demonstrating how to Manage Risk to Promote Safe Working Practice

A. An employee working at head office arrives before the nursery is open and before any other work colleagues are present.
   This risk is managed by ensuring that a family member knows that s/he has entered the building safely each day and that the doors remain locked with keys until there are other people present on the building.

B. An employee working at head office continues to work after the nursery has closed for the day and there are no other work colleagues present.
   This risk is managed by ensuring that doors are locked with keys at times when there is no one else on the building. The member of staff notifies a family member that s/he is working alone and confirms when s/he has left the building safely via mobile phone.

C. An employee holds a meeting with one person in a room with a closed door.
   This risk is managed by work colleagues being made aware that this meeting is taking place with possible pre-arranged planned interruptions (eg offering drinks, notifying of a message).

D. An unknown visitor to the office arrives when an employee is working alone.
   This risk is managed by checking the identity of the visitor via the intercom system prior to entry. The visitor would be asked to come back another time.

E. An employee working at home.
   This risk is managed by the employee utilising their own domestic security arrangements (eg ensuring the doors are locked and there is access to a phone).

Further examples of safe lone-working practices and general advice on personal safety can be found at: www.suzylamplugh.org