



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

YC recognises that situations may arise where some staff are required to work outside usual operating hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns.

YC is committed to support all employees 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.

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, a risk-assessment should be undertaken. 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 a senior member of staff if they will be working alone.
- 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 seek approval for pre planned lone working away from their own home.
- Staff should ensure someone from YC is always aware of their movements and expected return time.

- Staff should ensure someone e.g a relative 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. A Nursery Manager works alone at the Nursery on a weekend.
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 Head Office that they intend to work and the timings. The member of staff should also notify 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 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.
- D. 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).
- E. 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.
- F. An employee working at home.
This risk is managed by the employee utilising their own domestic security arrangements (e.g. ensuring the doors are locked and there is access to a phone).

Buddy System

A '**Buddy**' is defined as - 'a person who is their nominated contact for the period in which they will be working alone'. A buddy system can be implemented as a control measure according to the risks presented and whether this control is required will be determined by undertaking a risk assessment.

Any staff members expecting not to return to their setting following an offsite visit, working out of office hours, on a visit that may be difficult or on the last visit of the day will use the Buddy system which requires them to:

- Ensure a colleague is aware and has the following information before attending the visit/meeting:
- Name and address of setting/school/ meeting location
- Vehicle make and registration (if using)
- Confirm contact telephone number
- The time they expect to leave the visit/meeting and phone the buddy
- Use the Buddy System to confirm they have safely arrived home.
- On leaving, contact their designated buddy to confirm they have completed the visit/meeting.

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