

Lone Working and Home Visits Policy



Approved by: Penny Harris (Director) Jane Cox (Director) **Date:** 1st September 2025

Last reviewed on: 1st September 2024

Next review due by: 1st September 2026

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to pupils, staff and visitors. All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding and wellbeing at the heart of all that we do.

1. Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive's definition of a lone worker is:

'Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, either employees who work separately from others in an establishment, or mobile workers who work away from a fixed base.'

'Lone Workers' include:

- Teaching, support staff and intervention workers, including travelling, working remotely, in offsite venues and pupils' own homes.
- Staff working out of normal school working hours.
- Staff working separately from each other e.g. in a different unit or building.
- Staff attending meetings at another venue.

Lone working does not refer to a situation where there is another member of staff within earshot or sightline.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues related to lone working.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to staff that equips them to recognising risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

3. Policy Principles

Lone working should carry no more risk than normal working however the risks to lone workers are greater because there is a reduced level of immediate support available.

Staff should not put themselves at personal or professional risk as a result of doing their job. However, staff who lone work will need to make professional judgements about their personal safety and they should consult with senior leadership as required.

4. Context

On Track Education staff are asked to work on a 1:1 basis with young people with a range of special educational needs which may impact on their behaviours. On Track staff may also be asked to carry out a visit to a pupil's home, in order to conduct a meeting or to deliver education.

Within On Track's policies relating to safer working practices, support for lone workers is an essential part, and the same principles apply, particularly:

- A commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children.
- Recognising and reducing risk.
- A commitment to supporting staff and senior leaders to establish and maintain safe working practices.
- A clear understanding of responsibilities.

5. Responsibilities

Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice e.g. the Stay Safe App, mobile smart phones.
- Ensuring there are arrangements for monitoring incidents relating to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

School Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of this policy.
- Identifying situations where people work alone and decide whether systems can be put in place to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work in place, which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.

- Ensuring that staff who work alone are given appropriate information, instruction and have access to the Stay Safe App, mobile smart phone and first aid kit.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.
- Ensuring that there is a robust system in place for staff to report in when working alone.
- 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.
- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, the leadership team must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of lone working.
- Organising outreach work to ensure that it can only take place in a pupil's home if there is a parent or other suitable and responsible adult there.
- Ensuring that staff working at a pupil's home have been given all relevant information about the personal circumstances and this has been taken into account when assessing risk and developing procedures.
- Ensuring that there is a robust system in place for signing in and out of the school buildings.
- Ensuring appropriate steps are taken to control access to the school building and that emergency exits are accessible.
- Ensuring alarm systems are regularly tested.
- Changing access key codes if a breach of security is suspected.
- Keeping keys to the building securely and maintaining an up to date list of key holders.
- Having an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency in buildings where staff may be working in relative isolation.

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions.
- Ensuring they have knowledge of this policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Health and Safety Policy, the Driving Policy, Educational Visits Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring procedures and safe systems of work are in place, and using these efficiently, in order to eliminate or reduce the risks associated when lone working and adhering to these planned procedures.
- Ensuring that they inform their line manager when and where 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 or they are going to deviate from the agreed plan.
- Reporting any risks or potential risks they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

- Asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Reporting all incidents.
- Taking part in appropriate training.
- Ensuring they are familiar with the exits and alarms.
- Being aware that if there is any indication that a building has been broken into, they must not enter alone, but wait for back up.
- Checking that their mobile phone is charged and in working order with Stay Safe enabled at all times when working offsite.
- Reporting any areas where there is a loss of signal on their mobile phones.
- Only working with a pupil in the pupil's own home if an appropriate adult is present.
- Informing the senior leadership of any medical conditions which could affect their safety whilst working alone.

6. Implementation and assessment of risk

All lone working activities should be risk assessed in advance and safe systems of work should be put in place.

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.
- Risk of allegation.
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated immediately as necessary.

Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, action should be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

7. Home visits

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent, carer, or guardian in the case of an emergency, educational or a procedural visit. Staff should always be clear about the purpose of the visit and have made sure that a home visit is really necessary, in consultation with the Senior Leader or Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Senior Leader or Safeguarding Lead will decide whether it is deemed appropriate for the visit to be

made alone or whether an additional person is required to protect professional integrity and ensure staff safety. The Senior Leader or Designated Safeguarding Lead must make sure the staff involved are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.

Staff should not enter the home premises unless invited in by a responsible adult or if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult. Staff should only speak to an adult with parental responsibility or another responsible adult whom has been delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.

Staff should not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult, and then only if they deem it completely safe to do so and necessary. Staff should not enter a child's/young person's bedroom. If staff are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the DSL straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate, the DSL will make a referral to social care. If staff feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger they should contact emergency services 999.

Staff should be sensitive to the culture, religion etc. of the home. Staff should be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions; be sympathetic, but remain neutral; staff should not get personally involved.

If staff are threatened, or prevented from leaving, they should stay calm and try to control the situation. Staff should try to diffuse situation by saying they will seek advice from a senior member of staff or colleague. Staff should keep their distance and never touch or turn their back on someone who is angry. If there are any concerns about personal safety, staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety.

Following any home visit, a record should be made on the school's MIS (Engage platform) as soon as possible.

8. Staff working at home

Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential. There should be regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods, and an appropriate reporting in system should be used if making visits from home.

Practice Guidance - Personal Safety

Reasonable precautions might include:

- Checking directions for the destination.
- Ensuring your car, if used, is roadworthy and has breakdown cover.
- Ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home.
- Avoiding poorly lit or deserted areas when possible.
- Taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.

- Ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

For more advice and information see the Suzy Lamplugh Trust website:

<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/personal-safety-tips/>

9. Review

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant, if you have any comments please email directors@ontrackededucation.com