



Lone Working POLICY

Date Approved	September 2023
Date of Next Review	September 2026

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Definitions
2. Legal framework
3. Classification
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Training and information
6. Risk assessments
7. Working in Surrey schools
8. Reporting
9. Lone working Aide-memoire

Statement of Intent

Reference to 'the school' in this document represents Inclusive Education Trust. Reference to 'the governing board' represents the Management Committees of all three schools. Reference to the headteacher represents the Heads of each school.

Executive Headteachers have overall responsibility for health and safety in the school. The Headteacher has day to day responsibility for health and safety in the school, and the governing body has a legal duty to look after the health and safety of staff. This includes a duty of care to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable the risks associated with lone working both on and off the school premises.

The school is committed to the provision of a safe place of work for all staff, pupils, contractors, visitors and volunteers as well as those affected by, or involved in school activities. The school will also ensure that any staff who may work alone (i.e., out of hours) are not exposed to additional or greater risk than any other person. More specifically the school will ensure that lone workers are identified, risks are assessed; and appropriate action is taken to reduce these risks.

1. Definition of Lone Working

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 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 agents, cleaners, staff working after normal hours.
- Remote Workers working away from fixed base e.g. music teachers, etc.

2. Legal Definition

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 risk 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. Classification of Lone Workers

Category 1 - **Lower risk** situations includes:

- Staff working outside normal school office hours, e.g. cleaners, caretakers, staff working through holidays.
- Staff who travel alone for significant periods or in circumstances that may give rise to additional risks, e.g. home tutors.

Category 2 - **Medium risk** situations includes:

- Use of receptions, neutral rooms, or similar where colleagues cannot be readily called on by the lone worker in the event of an adverse situation arising.
- Staff attending students' residence for attendance purposes.

Category 3 - **High risk** situations included:-

- Visiting domestic houses where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situations is reasonably foreseeable.
- Working out of hours (not in a school controlled facility).
- Working alone with hazardous plant, tools, equipment or chemicals i.e. D&T or science labs.
- Where serious injury may be incurred by the type of work being carried out.

Headteachers should complete risk assessments to determine the level of risk and control measures required.

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

4. Roles and Responsibilities

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.

Headteacher Responsibilities

Lone working should carry no more risk than normal working however Heads of School 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.

Key responsibilities are:

- To identify lone workers and hazards
- To carry out a lone working risk assessment for staff or department.
- To implement suitable control measures as identified in risk assessment.
- To distribute devices to aid lone working (if necessary).
- To ensure that any accident, hazard and violent incidents are reported and any control measures identified are implemented
- To ensure that identified lone working staff, attend relevant training.
- To ensure that permanent staff, agency or voluntary workers, during their induction period, have adequate additional controls in place.
- To ensure procedures are in place in an emergency.
- To ensure a specific risk assessment is in place for new and expectant mothers.
- To ensure fellow staff members are made aware before lone working is conducted

Employee Responsibilities

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- To assist their Head of School in completing a lone working assessment.
- Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others.
- Take part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

5. Training and Information

Lone workers will be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. Governors and Heads of Schools 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 is available to staff lone working and covers:

- 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

6. Risk Assessments

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 risk assessment guidance. The Heads of school are to identify lone working and hazards, review hazards, confirm control measures are adequate, produce a risk assessment and review annually.

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.

The following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the visit, special circumstances, likely outcomes
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- Any other special circumstances

The environment

- It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to assess the risks presented by the location of any meeting – access, layout, furnishings, lighting and temperature control – and to take appropriate action.
- 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.

Personal

- In order to make a complete assessment, any history of challenging behaviour (i.e. a potentially violent parent) should be investigated.
- Any information regarding known triggers must be recorded.
- Staff must be aware of the effect they may have on the situation through their verbal and non-verbal communication, and take steps to avoid provocation.

Planning

- If visiting a property or individual as part of a teaching or pastoral 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 be done.
- Ensure there are agreed contacts in case of an emergency and a system for reporting back at the end of a visit.
- Take into consideration the current situation and any previous events, which have caused problems.

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.

Review of risk assessment

All risk assessments must be reviewed at least annually or following a change in circumstance e.g. as reported incident, change in work pattern etc.

Be aware of the environment

- Know what measures are in place at the school: Procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon by the aggressor and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in the school building.

Be aware of yourself

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything, which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

Be aware of other people

- Take note of non-verbal signals from others.
- Be aware of the other person's triggers.
- Don't crowd people – allow them space.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or on someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?

- Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

Always report any incidents of violence and aggression to the Headteacher.

<http://www.suzylamplugh.org> has various information and tips on how to reduce risk to you.

7. Working alone in buildings managed by Surrey County Council

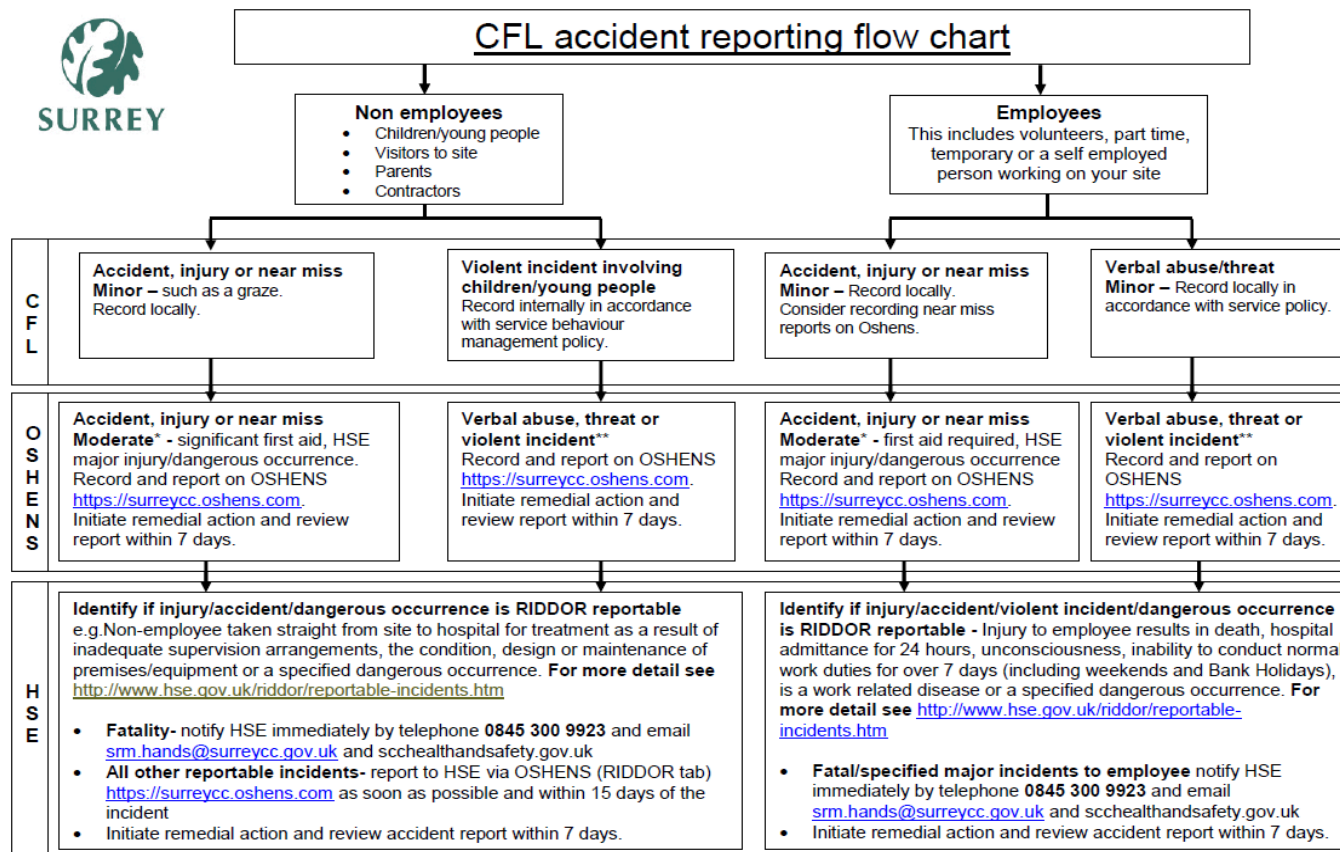
It is essential that when a member of staff is working alone in school that they alert someone to this fact. A manager must always be aware of when and where lone working is taking place. Staff must never enter a building alone if there is any indication of a security breach and must have access to and be familiar with the positioning of telephones, panic alarms, first aid and fire equipment, fire evacuation procedures and fire escape routes. When working alone in a building, staff should continuously risk assess the hazards and decide whether the existing control measures are appropriate or need to change.

8. Reporting

Any accident/incident or near miss should be reported to the Head of School and reported on Oshens using the Accident Reporting Flow Chart



CFL accident reporting flow chart



- **Adult (18yrs plus) accident records need to be kept for at least three years**
- **Children/young people accident records need to be kept for three years from their 18th birthday.**

For further assistance contact srm.hands@surreycc.gov.uk or call Strategic Risk Management on 020 8541 9617 or 7569

Strategic Risk Management V1 May 2018

9. Lone Working Protection Aide-memoire

Before any Lone Working Undertaken

All lone working should have a risk assessment, and any staff identified as risk should undertake relevant training. Heads of School should hold a record of all lone working staff including photograph, personal details (inc Next of Kin) and vehicle details.

Prior to a visit

Check the following:

School's prior experience
Any other known source of information

Do:

Let someone know that you are going out.
When you expect to return
The location and work to be undertaken, including who you are going to meet.
How to contact you
Ensure any lone worker protection procedures are in place and working
Agree a safe word/phrase with the school to be used in the event of the Lone Worker being unable to raise help for themselves

Working outside the school

On arrival at the property or in a lone working situation you should undertake a dynamic assessment of the risk this need NOT be documented.

Factors such as unexpected visitors, strange behaviours, layout of the area or any other factors that give rise to your concern

If a Lone Worker uses their safe word/phrase the Police should be called immediately. It should be explained to them that a lone worker has activated their safe word/phrase and are in danger. The that the incident is taking place at, the name(s) of those likely to be involved and any other relevant details should be passed on

Ensure lone working monitoring systems are not too obvious but readily accessible and operational e.g. mobile telephones / radios

If you are uncomfortable or have concern for yourself or others safety, use the skills taught (eg. Conflict Resolution skills) to try and diffuse the situation.
If in doubt make an excuse to leave e.g. need to contact school

If you are at risk call for assistance immediately and remove yourself from the area by any safe means.

Contact your Head of School /Police (if not already done) / report the incident and raise an immediate violence and aggression report.

