



## **Foxton Primary School**

### **Lone Working Policy**

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Date:	May 2022
Reviewed by:	Janet Muir
Next Review date:	May 2025
Signed:	

## **General Policy Statement:**

Lone Workers as defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”.

As part of the management structure it is the duty of care for all Managers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their staff, as it is also the employee’s responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by their work activity.

Staff should be actively discouraged from working alone at Foxton Primary School before and after certain times. Unless approved by the Head Teacher, staff should not be on the school premises any earlier than 7 a.m. and no later than 7 p.m.

## **Aim:**

To ensure adequate control measures are put into place to safeguard all employees who work alone at any point during their contractual duties. All hazards should be identified and all significant risks should be recorded on a risk assessment which should be reviewed regularly.

### **1. Lone Workers:**

- 1.1 People working alone or in isolation from others may be at particular risk either because of circumstances of their day to day working or because an emergency may occur. They are at extra risk if they are not in regular contact with others and are not kept informed of any changes that may affect them.
- 1.2 Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:
  - 1.2.1 Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
  - 1.2.2 Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
  - 1.2.3 Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
  - 1.2.4 Is there a risk of violence?
  - 1.2.5 What happens if the person either becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?
- 1.3 Staff should ideally work out of hours at school in pairs; however, there are various work activities that may result in Foxton Primary School staff members working alone. Some examples are staff who:

- 1.3.1 are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working at night or early morning;
- 1.3.2 remain on the school premises when the rest of the school (staff and pupils) are out e.g. Church services at Christmas etc;
- 1.3.3 stay on to finish urgent work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building;
- 1.3.4 are key-holders or who are left to turn out the lights, set the alarm and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home;
- 1.3.5 work in isolated parts of the school e.g. in the POD during parents' evenings.

It is important to remember there is regular movement of adults and children around the school site and the alarm should be raised if there is a concern.

## **2. Manager Duties:**

- 2.1 Managers have a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of all their staff, to include:
  - 2.1.1 provision of safe systems of work for all staff;
  - 2.1.2 appropriate security systems in place to secure the building;
  - 2.1.3 carrying out personal risk assessments for all staff working alone;
  - 2.1.4 discussion during one-to-one sessions the control measures in place, to ensure they are still adequate or discuss amendments;
  - 2.1.5 identifying any training needs and these are met;
  - 2.1.6 agreement of systems, on how to raise the alarm and copies of the procedures are given to all relevant staff;
  - 2.1.7 discussion of all procedures during induction, a copy of relevant information is obtained, and a training plan is agreed by both the staff member and the manager;
  - 2.1.8 procedures to allow for lone workers to request additional support when they feel vulnerable;
  - 2.1.9 provision of practical support when needed;
  - 2.1.10 reporting any incidents on accident/ incident forms and these are sent to the relevant people;

2.1.11 recording and monitoring all accidents and incidents and report findings to the relevant people.

### **3. Staff Responsibilities:**

3.1 Staff have a duty of care for themselves and anyone else who could be affected by their actions. Therefore, staff have a responsibility to ensure that they are:

3.1.1 aware and follow all policies or procedures;

3.1.2 always planning ahead and inform others of concerns, especially the Head Teacher;

3.1.3 fully aware of the risks when working alone;

3.1.4 not putting themselves in potential danger;

3.1.5 aware of the nearest place of safety;

3.1.6 aware of the on-site security procedures;

3.1.7 able to access to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.

### **4. Risks Associated with Violence**

#### **4.1 Threats to Staff:**

Very occasionally staff may find themselves, through the job they carry out alone, the subject of threats from service users, family members or members of the public. The following actions and options should be considered where staff are the subject of threats or acts of violence when working alone:

4.1.1 report the threat to the police and seek their advice;

4.1.2 vary personal routines and travel routes e.g. for bank runs;

4.1.3 arrange an awareness of each other's situation so that each is able to notice the unusual including a possible check out at the end of the school day;

4.1.4 Managers to hold personal records on each member, with contact details and a photograph, for identity purposes.

## **4.2 Reception Areas and Meeting Rooms:**

4.2.1 Reception Areas - when a service user first enters a building in order to make contact with a member of staff or to access services, the first impression is very important, and can set the tone for the subsequent relationship with that service user.

*Environment* needs to:

- be welcoming;
- enable communication for service user with staff;
- provide an escape route for reception staff;
- be separated from rest of building with appropriate security measures;
- be able to be viewed from elsewhere, e.g. adjoining corridor through glass.

*Systems* in reception need to:

- keep waiting time to a minimum, to reduce frustration;
- allow for service users to be able to leave easily if they want to;
- include a procedure for lone workers to alert others, such as a panic alarm or code word, or both;
- include a well-understood debriefing procedure for a lone worker should a traumatic incident occur.

4.2.2 Meeting Rooms - ideally, meeting rooms should be designed so that there is clear visibility into them. This provides for a measure of security for any lone worker, as service users are generally less likely to be violent when they know they can be seen.

In all cases, however, a member of staff should consider the circumstances carefully before carrying out an interview alone with a service user.

## **5. Key Holders:**

- 5.1 Key holders may need to attend premises outside of normal business hours. This may be to carry out normal work activities or following the activation of an intruder alarm or because of some other emergency that might have occurred. Should a key holder need to come into school alone they should contact another member of staff or family to let them know their intention and phone again when they leave. If no arranged contact is received from the staff member the school should be contacted/checked in case of an accident.
- 5.2 Key holders should be registered with the alarm company in case there is an out of hours emergency.
- 5.3 Key holders that are just carrying out normal work activities should be following the general lone working guidance in this policy.
- 5.4 Key holders that are attending the premises in the event of intruder alarm activation should use the following procedure:

- 5.4.1 on receiving a telephone call notifying of intruder alarm activation, confirm the identity of the person making the call, i.e. Alarm Company operative's name;
  - 5.4.2 use telephone numbers previously obtained, call back and verify the detail;
  - 5.4.3 arrange with either a member of their family or other responsible person to call the Police to the premises if they have not heard to say that all is well. This call should be made between 30 to 45 minutes after the estimated time of arrival.
- 5.5 On arrival at the premises:
- 5.5.1 if the Police are in attendance make sure they have checked all sides of the building. Then enter with the Police and check all areas;
  - 5.5.2 if the Police are not in attendance drive slowly round as much of the premises as possible (using public roads if necessary) checking for signs of entry including the roof and walls. If in any doubt leave the site and from a mobile phone or the first available telephone, call the Police by dialling 999;
  - 5.5.3 if all appears to be quiet, enter and check premises. If there are signs of a break-in leave at once and call the Police as above;
  - 5.5.4 if in doubt leave the site immediately, even if you have the use of a mobile phone, and arrange to meet the Police nearby. This is for own safety.
- 5.6 On entering the premises:
- 5.6.1 carefully note all information displayed on the alarm controls. Take no action at the control panel beyond un-setting the protected areas;
  - 5.6.2 check that the telephones are in working order. If the telephones do not work, it is likely that the lines have been cut by intruders who have, or who may try again, to attack the school. If the Police are in attendance they should be made aware of the telephones not working;
  - 5.6.3 if alone and, at any point, it is suspected there has been a break-in, then leave the premises and call the Police;
  - 5.6.4 if there has been a break-in, re-enter the premises and check carefully with the Police and following their instructions. Please note that a crime reference number will be required for insurance purposes.
- 5.7 After checking the premises:
- 5.7.1 if there is no apparent break-in, the alarm company should be called to arrange for an engineer to attend. Obtain name and estimated time of arrival;

- 5.7.2 notify a member of family or other responsible person, who is expecting to be contacted, to let them know that all is in order. Consider arranging to make further calls if appropriate;
- 5.7.3 check identification of alarm engineer on arrival; call the alarm company to verify details if necessary;
- 5.7.4 insist on a complete repair of alarm system if reasonably practicable. Only agree to part of the system being disconnected if a fault is identified and it cannot be corrected within a reasonable time (key-holder must understand insurance requirements that apply);
- 5.7.5 never leave the premises unprotected. If necessary arrange for other staff to join you or relieve you as appropriate;
- 5.7.6 if you are not responsible for opening the premises at the start of the next day leave a note for the person who will be undertaking this responsibility; advising them of the problem and instructing them to liaise with the alarm company for further engineer attendance, if this is necessary;
- 5.7.7 ensure that all written logs detailing what has occurred are correctly completed by both the attending key-holder and the alarm engineer;
- 5.7.8 advise the Head Teacher or other members of staff as necessary;
- 5.7.9 arrange for any emergency repairs to be made so the premises can be secured;
- 5.7.10 secure the premises and set the alarm system;
- 5.7.11 on your next return to the premises advise the relevant members of staff about the situation.

## **6. Cleaners / Caretaker / Site Managers:**

- 6.1 Cleaners/Caretakers/Site Managers are a group of workers that are more likely to be lone working. At Foxton Primary School, we employ a Cleaner who is a key holder and responsible for opening and locking up the premises. It is possible that this person would attend the premises when there has been a suspected break-in. If this is the case, then they should follow the Key Holder guidance in this document.
- 6.2 Hazards to consider, may include:
  - 6.2.1 general repair works during holidays or after hours, including use of power tools;
  - 6.2.2 decorating;
  - 6.2.3 checking security;
  - 6.2.4 turning the heating back on after a break;

- 6.2.5 laying grit and clearing paths in icy and snowy weather;
- 6.2.6 locking up after events;
- 6.2.7 patrolling or visiting the site after the hours of darkness;
- 6.2.8 opening the building first thing in the morning;
- 6.2.9 changing light bulbs;
- 6.2.10 using hazardous chemicals;
- 6.2.11 manual handling.

### 6.3 Control Measures

As well as considering the guidance contained in this document there are some activities which should be avoided, if possible, when lone working. These include:

- 6.3.1 working at height;
- 6.3.2 working with dangerous machinery;
- 6.3.3 live electrical work;
- 6.3.4 work in confined spaces.

- 6.4 When considering what control measures can be put in place to keep the lone worker safe you should also take into account any medical conditions the employee may have, which could put them at more risk. The easiest way to reduce the risk is to carry out any hazardous activities during normal working hours and lower risk activities when lone working.

Some other examples of control measures that can be adopted to reduce the risks identified above may include:

- 6.4.1 following general guidance for Managers and staff detailed previously in this document;
- 6.4.2 ensuring that no power tools or equipment are brought in from home. Only use equipment provided by the employer;
- 6.4.3 providing long handled paint rollers for decorating;
- 6.4.4 following the Key Holder guidance in this document when checking security of building or site;
- 6.4.5 ensuring any procedures are known and followed for re-lighting the boiler after a period of shut down;



- 6.4.6 ensuring the employee/s are adequately trained for the required task;
- 6.4.7 checking weather forecasts and put grit on hazardous pathways before ice or snow forms;
- 6.4.8 ensuring access and egress from site are well lit and free from defects;
- 6.4.9 carrying a fully charged torch when attending the site after dark;
- 6.4.10 carrying out Control of Substances Hazardous to Health assessments on any hazardous substances to be used and provide training to the employee/s for their safe use;
- 6.4.11 carrying out manual handling risk assessments to ensure that loads are not too heavy for one individual. Also ensure that the employee/s have had manual handling training;
- 6.4.12 providing correct Personal Protection Equipment where required e.g. gloves and/or goggles.

## **7. Risk assessments:**

Specific risk assessments should be completed and reviewed for individual cases or situations.

## **8. Reporting of Accidents and Incidents:**

- 8.1 Any accidents, incidents or near misses must be recorded in accordance with the Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR 2013) with the South Cambridgeshire District Council at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/health-and-safety-regulation/accidents-at-work/>
- 8.2 A report can be submitted online with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>
- 8.3 An original copy of the report must be retained by the Manager with the employee's records.
- 8.4 If an accident happens and causes either a major injury or the loss of over 3-days work or unable to carry out normal duties for over 3-days then you will also need to complete the relevant form, and send it to the HSE in accordance with RIDDOR 2013. Copies of forms for such reportable incidents should also be sent to the Health and Safety Unit at County Hall.
- 8.5 If you have been subject to an incident involving violence, this should be recorded on an HS157. This includes verbal abuse, physical assault and property damage. Please complete the 'nature of activity' and 'other factors' section also.

## **9. Monitoring and Reviewing:**

All accidents, incidents or near misses should be logged and monitored; you should be looking for trends and seeing if a review should be carried out on any of your risk assessments due to the outcomes. These should also be reported back to management, union representatives and governors (as appropriate) so that they are aware of any situations that may have arisen.