

# Home Visits and Lone Working Policy

## ISP School Battle



**Approved by:**

Local Governing Body

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## **Contents**

## **Page no.**

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Aim	3
3.	Key Definitions	3
4.	Responsibilities	3
5.	Safe Systems of Work	3
6.	Policy Implementation	5
7.	Lone Working Policy within the School Premises	5
8.	Categories of Lone Workers	5
9.	Keeping Safe in the School	5
	Appendix 1 Risk Assessment	7

## **1. Introduction**

This guidance applies to all work carried out in isolation during home visits. The school is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all staff and volunteers for which there is a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and further detailed within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The decision of whether a member of staff can carry out a home visit alone will depend on the findings of the risk assessments; these must be undertaken for each initial home visit ideally carried out by two members of staff. The level of detail required for each risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk to a member of staff returning to the home alone to conduct another home visit.

## **2. Aim**

The policy is to support any practitioner supporting children and families to help develop an effective lone working home visiting policy and practice.

The school has a legal responsibility to provide safe systems of working when home visiting alone, individual staff must also take responsibility to follow safe working practices when working in the community.

To ensure that a standardised, practical and knowledge-based approach for home visiting is taken by senior managers, in line with current legislation and best practice.

## **3. Key Definitions**

For the purpose of this guidance, lone worker home visiting is defined as any work carried out in isolation from other practitioners. Lone working home visiting activities are those that are carried out without close or direct supervision often working and travelling in the local area working one to one with parents and carers. In these situations, procedures and policies relating to the lone worker home visiting policy must be applied and adhered to.

## **4. Responsibilities**

Ensuring that lone working risk assessments are carried out and all control measures are implemented is a managerial responsibility. All relevant members of staff should be consulted when carrying out the risk assessment and must be informed of the findings. Members of staff have a duty to co-operate with their manager and comply with all controls in place to ensure safe working.

## **5. Safe Systems of Work**

Before staff set out:

- Has an initial health and safety risk assessment been carried out and if so, is it safe to visit alone?

- Has the lone worker ensured they have as much information as possible about the family and the location to be visited?
- What pre-contact has there been with the family? e.g. a phone call or written appointment to ensure the family knows who is visiting and what their role is.
- How does the lone worker let the family know if you are unable to keep an appointment?
- The lone worker must ensure their weekly work plans are kept up to date as this will ensure that the school is fully aware of where staff are at ALL times.
- The lone worker must also ensure they record the location (address) of the home visit with the school administrator.
- The lone worker should ensure information is left at reception of the expected time of return or ring time.
- When home visiting, staff should minimise personal risk by not wearing valuable looking jewellery and if travelling by car not to leave any items of value visible inside.
- Consideration should be given to ensure shoes and clothes do not impede adult's ability to move quickly in case of an emergency.
- When approaching a family's home an assessment of the situation is important, adults can abandon or postpone the visit if they are in any doubt of their own safety.
- Lone workers must always wear name badges.
- Lone workers need to remain aware of the behaviour of all persons in the house, looking for any signs or signals that may indicate a potential problem.
- Lone workers to ensure that as a guest in the family home, a non-judgemental approach should be adopted, showing sensitivity and respect for each families' culture and circumstances.
- It is vital that staff are aware of maintaining professional boundaries in their relationship with the family.
- If there is an aggressive animal in the house lone workers should be assertive enough to request that the animal be placed in a separate room.
- When the home visit is complete ensure that everyone is satisfied with the interaction that has occurred, make sure that everyone knows what should happen next and that they honour their commitment to all they have agreed to.
- Recorded information regarding the home visit is recorded back at work and kept up to date.
- All adults must carry a mobile phone when working alone outside the school.
- Adults must notify colleagues of name and address of family they are visiting and expected time of return.
- If going straight home after their visit adults should pre-arrange to phone or text their Head Teacher as they leave the property. This also applies to evening and weekend work and parenting assessments.
- Partners/family members should have the phone number of the Head Teacher if the work is out of hours

## **6. Policy Implementation**

- The Head Teacher will be responsible for the implementation, review and evaluation of the Home Visitor Lone Worker Policy.
- All adults will be aware of who the designated person is.
- The policy will form part of the adult induction. On induction adults will receive an awareness raising session on lone working with suitable training provided within a reasonable timescale.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that all lone workers understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary precautions are carried out.
- The Head Teacher will give guidance in situations of uncertainty and will report on a regular basis any incidents that have taken place in line with the reporting procedures for critical incidents.
- Training is key for the successful implementation of the Lone Worker's Home Visiting Policy. All potential lone working adults will on induction receive copies of relevant policies relating to lone work and be more familiar with the procedures and processes in place for practising safe and competent lone working during home visits.
- All adults working with this policy should take ownership of this process in order to develop their own awareness of the policy and related procedures enhancing their professional development and establishing their responsibility to ensure it is implemented effectively.

## **7. Lone Working Policy within the School Premises**

There are times when adults need to work alone in the school. All adults should take responsibility for their own safety and always inform the Head Teacher or another named person of when they will be working alone, and when they have finished.

## **8. Categories of Lone Workers**

A lone worker will most probably fall within one of the following categories:

1. Adults that are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working in the evening or early mornings.
2. Adults staying on to finish work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building
3. Adults who are key-holders.

## **9. Keeping Safe in the School**

- Any person working alone in the school will not allow anyone else to enter, unless they are sure the caller is known to them and they consider it safe to be alone with them. The front door can only be accessed via a call entry system therefore this must be used to ascertain who is at the door. The penultimate person to leave must ensure the building is secure, and inform the remaining adult that they are the last adult in the building.

- The first person to enter the building in the morning must ensure that it is safe to do so, if the alarm is ringing or there are signs of forced entry no one must enter the building alone. The person must wait until another adult/member of staff is present and also inform the school adults of the situation and find another person to accompany them. If it is considered unsafe to enter the building the Police must be called, then the Head Teacher must be informed.
- All Fire doors must be checked to ensure they are not locked with the master key. If so all doors must be unlocked to ensure safe exit in event of an evacuation. Fire doors should be kept clear and unblocked when anyone is in the building.

**Anyone working alone in the building should have a buddy system in place so that they phone or text when they are leaving.**

- When someone is working alone in a room they should always tell someone where they are.
- When working alone in the building it is important to be aware of the risks associated with working with machinery, electrical equipment, hazardous substances etc. Whenever possible these should be kept to a minimum.
- No one will use ladders or work at height when alone in the building
- When it is dark, security lights will be on around the outside of the building. If anyone notices that the lights are not working properly they should report it to the Head Teacher immediately.
- Any incidents or accidents must be reported to the Head Teacher immediately.
- Adults should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

## Appendix 1

Risk Assessment: ISP School, Battle		Lone Working Home visits/working offsite			
		Assessment by: Caroline Belchem, Head Teacher. Date: 28 November 2021, 26 07 2022, 27 07 2023			
Hazard/Risk	Who is at risk?	How can the hazard cause harm?	Normal Control Measures	Are normal control measures in place Y/N/NA	
				In place	Adequate
Lone working: Working offsite alone Home Visits	Adults Colleagues	Accident/injury, delayed assistance in an emergency  Physical assault/verbal abuse  Cuts/abrasions, muscular skeletal and other physical injuries	Home visits background information on the family is gathered beforehand, a specific risk assessment conducted where necessary  Where higher risks are identified visits not to be conducted alone  Reduce the time spent working alone so far as is reasonable practicable  All adults to be aware of lone working policy and procedures  Mobile phone charged and switched on  Staff own experience and training in recognising signs of aggression and avoiding/de-escalating this  Regular supervision and debrief	Yes	Yes