



The Stonebridge
School

LONE WORKING POLICY

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1. Statement of intent

The Stonebridge School recognises that some staff may, as part of their duties, work alone or without close or direct supervision. This may occur on the school site, outside normal school hours, during school holidays, on home visits or while carrying out work away from the school.

The school will manage the health and safety risks associated with lone working before lone working takes place. Lone working will only be permitted where the risks have been assessed and suitable control measures are in place.

- increase staff awareness of the risks associated with lone working;
- avoid lone working where reasonably practicable when the risk cannot be adequately controlled;
- ensure risks are assessed systematically and proportionate control measures are put in place;
- provide appropriate information, instruction, training, supervision and monitoring;
- maintain effective arrangements for communication, check-ins and emergency response;
- ensure staff know when to stop work, withdraw from a situation and seek assistance; and
- encourage prompt reporting of accidents, near misses, threats, aggression and other concerns so that lessons can be learned.

2. Legal framework and guidance

This policy has regard to relevant health and safety legislation and current guidance, including:

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;

Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Lone working: Protect those working alone; and

HSE guidance on work-related violence, stress, training, supervision and monitoring.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

Health and Safety Policy;

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;

Staff Code of Conduct;

Restrictive Interventions Policy

First Aid procedures;
Home Visit Risk Assessment; and
any activity-specific or individual lone-working risk assessment.

3. Definition and scope

A lone worker is a person who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. A member of staff may be lone working even when other people are elsewhere in the building if immediate assistance is not readily available.

Examples relevant to the school may include:

- staff working on site before or after normal opening hours or during school holidays;
- site, premises, cleaning or administrative staff working in isolated areas;
- staff attending home visits or meetings away from the school;
- staff travelling or working off site without a colleague; and
- one-to-one work where the circumstances create additional health, safety or safeguarding considerations.

This policy applies to employees and, where relevant, agency staff, volunteers, contractors and self-employed people engaged by the school.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring suitable arrangements are in place to identify, assess and manage lone-working risks;
- deciding whether lone working is appropriate and authorising higher-risk or exceptional lone-working arrangements;
- ensuring appropriate communication, supervision and emergency arrangements are in place;
- ensuring incidents and near misses are reviewed and control measures updated where necessary; and
- ensuring this policy is reviewed at least annually.

4.2 Line managers

Line managers are responsible for:

- identifying lone-working activities within their area and considering whether the work can reasonably be organised so that staff do not work alone;
- ensuring appropriate risk assessments and control measures are in place before lone working begins;
- making sure staff understand the limits of what they may do while working alone;
- ensuring staff have appropriate information, instruction, training, equipment and means of communication;
- agreeing check-in, monitoring and escalation arrangements proportionate to the risk; and
- supporting staff following any incident.

4.3 Lone workers

Staff undertaking lone working must:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work;
- follow this policy, relevant risk assessments and agreed safe systems of work;
- tell their line manager or the Headteacher about any health, safety or personal circumstances that may affect their ability to work alone safely;

- ensure agreed communication equipment is available, charged and working;
- keep the school or nominated contact informed of their location and significant changes to plans;
- report hazards, accidents, near misses, threats, aggression and concerns promptly; and
- stop work and move to a place of safety if they believe the situation has become unsafe.

5. Authorisation and when lone working is permitted

Lone working is not automatically prohibited, but it must not take place where the risks cannot be adequately controlled. Routine low-risk lone working may be covered by an agreed general risk assessment. Higher-risk, unusual or one-off lone working requires specific consideration and, where appropriate, explicit authorisation from the Headteacher or delegated senior leader.

Lone working will not be permitted where:

- the relevant risk assessment identifies that two or more people are required;
- the task requires assistance for safe completion, including certain manual handling, work at height, hazardous maintenance or other high-risk activities;
- there is a foreseeable risk of violence or aggression that cannot be adequately controlled;
- safeguarding arrangements would be compromised; or
- the worker does not have the necessary competence, training, communication arrangements or emergency support.

6. Risk assessment

Before lone working takes place, the school will assess the significant risks and identify suitable control measures. The assessment will be proportionate to the activity and will be reviewed when circumstances change, following an incident or near miss, or where existing controls may no longer be effective.

The assessment will consider, where relevant:

- the task and whether it can safely be carried out by one person;
- the location, including access, egress, security, lighting and isolated areas;
- the time of day and whether fewer people are likely to be present;
- the risk of violence, aggression, threats or challenging behaviour;
- the worker's experience, competence and any relevant medical or wellbeing considerations;
- communication arrangements and the reliability of mobile-phone or other contact;
- how the worker's whereabouts will be known and how often contact is required;
- first aid, fire, accident and other emergency arrangements;
- travel and off-site risks, including home visits;
- safeguarding considerations where pupils or families are involved; and
- the action to take if the worker fails to check in or cannot be contacted.

Where a health condition may affect whether a member of staff can work alone safely, appropriate occupational health or medical advice may be sought, with due regard to confidentiality and reasonable adjustments.

7. Procedures for lone workers

The following minimum arrangements apply unless a risk assessment requires stronger controls:

- the lone worker's location, activity and expected finish or return time must be known to the school or a nominated contact;
- a reliable means of communication must be available and kept accessible;
- pre-agreed check-in arrangements must be followed where required by the risk assessment;
- significant changes to location, timing or plans must be communicated promptly;

- staff must not arrange to meet an individual alone where there is a known or foreseeable risk of violence or aggression unless suitable additional controls have been agreed;
- staff must have access to appropriate first aid and emergency arrangements;
- doors, alarms, access controls and other security measures must not be bypassed for convenience; and
- personal safety takes priority over completing a task.

Where a buddy or nominated-contact system is used, the nominated person will know the worker's expected movements, how to contact them, when contact is due and what action to take if contact is missed.

8. Working alone on the school site and out of hours

Staff who need to work alone on the school site outside normal operating hours, including during school holidays, must have prior agreement in accordance with the school's arrangements.

- The member of staff must sign in and out using the school's current site sign-in system or other agreed method.
- A nominated person must know that the member of staff is on site and the expected leaving time.
- Where the risk assessment requires it, an agreed check-in time will be set. The interval will reflect the risk rather than relying on a single fixed period for all lone working.
- Staff must keep a charged mobile phone or other agreed means of communication with them.
- Staff must not undertake tasks that the risk assessment identifies as unsuitable for lone working.
- The member of staff must secure the building in accordance with school procedures and must not admit unknown or unexpected visitors.
- If an alarm activates, a security concern arises or the member of staff feels unsafe, they must not investigate a potentially dangerous situation alone and should contact the appropriate support or emergency service.

9. Home visits and off-site work

Home visits and other off-site lone working require particular consideration because staff may be away from immediate support. The school will consider whether a visit should be carried out by two members of staff, moved to school or another suitable venue, or otherwise adapted.

Before a home visit, staff will:

- ensure the visit is recorded with the school, including the address, purpose, expected duration and contact details;
- check known information relevant to personal safety and safeguarding and complete a specific risk assessment where necessary;
- agree check-in and escalation arrangements where the level of risk requires them;
- carry school identification and a charged phone; and
- avoid lone visits where there is a known history or credible risk of violence, aggression or other significant danger unless robust controls are in place.

During a visit, staff should:

- make a dynamic assessment on arrival and leave immediately if they feel unsafe;
- remain aware of exits and avoid placing themselves where their exit could easily be blocked;
- ask for animals to be secured where they present a risk;
- maintain professional boundaries and keep personal belongings secure; and
- contact the school or emergency services if circumstances change or assistance is required.

If plans change significantly, the staff member must inform the school or nominated contact. Failure to check in as agreed will trigger the school's escalation arrangements.

10. Safeguarding and one-to-one working with pupils

Lone working arrangements must never undermine safeguarding practice. Where staff work one-to-one with a pupil, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct take precedence.

- one-to-one work should take place in an appropriate, known location and should not be unnecessarily secluded;
- another member of staff should know where and when the session is taking place;
- where practicable, rooms should allow appropriate visibility, for example through a vision panel or open door, while maintaining the pupil's dignity and confidentiality;
- staff must maintain professional boundaries and avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- any safeguarding concern, disclosure or allegation must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures; and
- if a pupil becomes highly distressed, aggressive or presents a risk of harm, the member of staff should seek assistance and follow the school's safeguarding, behaviour and restrictive-intervention procedures as appropriate.

The school's safeguarding arrangements identify the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies. Staff must use the school's current safeguarding reporting routes and should not rely on this policy as a substitute for safeguarding procedures.

11. Training, supervision and monitoring

The level of training, supervision and monitoring will be based on the risk assessment. Staff must be competent to carry out the work safely and understand when they need to stop, seek advice or obtain assistance.

- New or inexperienced staff may require closer supervision before lone working is permitted.
- Staff will receive information or training relevant to the risks they may encounter, including personal safety, conflict management, safeguarding, first aid or use of communication/alarm systems where appropriate.
- The school will maintain suitable arrangements to keep in touch with lone workers and confirm that they have completed the activity or returned safely.
- Monitoring and emergency arrangements will be tested or reviewed periodically to make sure they remain effective.

12. Incidents, emergencies and wellbeing

Lone working can increase vulnerability because immediate assistance may not be available. Staff must prioritise personal safety and are authorised to leave or stop an activity if they believe there is a risk of harm.

- In an immediate emergency, staff should call 999 where appropriate and then contact the school or nominated contact when safe to do so.
- Accidents, near misses, threats, verbal abuse, aggression, violence and failures of lone-working controls must be reported promptly.
- The Headteacher or line manager will ensure appropriate follow-up, recording, investigation and support.
- Risk assessments and control measures will be reviewed after significant incidents or where new information indicates that risks have changed.
- Managers will remain alert to the potential impact of lone working on stress, mental health and wellbeing and will ensure appropriate contact and support.

If a lone worker fails to make contact at an agreed time, the nominated contact will attempt to reach them using the agreed contact details. If contact cannot be established, the matter will be escalated to a senior leader and, depending on the circumstances and level of concern, may include contacting an emergency contact, security provider or the emergency services.

13. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy, including relevant incidents, near misses and feedback from staff. The policy and associated risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation or guidance changes, working arrangements change, or an incident indicates that controls should be revised.

Next scheduled review: September 2027.

Key external guidance

Health and Safety Executive (HSE): Lone working: Protect those working alone - employer guidance.

The Stonebridge School: School website and safeguarding information.

[HSE lone-working guidance](#)

[The Stonebridge School website](#)

[The Stonebridge School safeguarding information](#)