THE SPIRE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND LEARNING TRUST

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POLICY NAME
Lone Working Policy

adopted by

SCHOOL NAME -

DATE - 2021 – 2022

This policy was reviewed/updated by Anne Salsano
and is reviewed at least annually by The Trust

Reviewed: July 2021
Next Review Date: July 2022

in collaboration with

Policy Statement/Source

There is no overall legal prohibition on working alone. But the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the specific duties of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 still apply.

Where associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and senior leaders have a duty of care to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. While many hazards at work are relatively easy to identify and control, other health and safety aspects are less easy to define.

Identifying Lone Workers

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".

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the school and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without access to immediate assistance. The situation may arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

Examples of employees who may be classed as lone workers include:

- Staff with responsibility for opening up and closing buildings
- Staff working outside normal working hours
- School staff working during holiday periods
- Staff working in an isolated part of the building

This list is by no means exhaustive.

Context

Consideration needs to be given to the potential risks faced by lone workers, as follows:
- A commitment to supporting staff both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- Recognising and reducing risk
- A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
- A clear understanding of responsibilities
- The priority placed on the safety of the individual
- A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
- Equipment such as mobile phones, personal alarms, etc. made available

Assessing the risks

Having identified lone workers, the risks to which they are exposed need to be assessed. This assessment should take into account the risk inherent in the task and the environment, along with any additional risks associated with the fact that the employee is working on their own. The main risks associated with lone working may be identified using the checklist below:

Access

- Is access to the building adequately controlled? All staff should log in using the systems in the main office. Identify hazards specific to the workplace e.g. remote areas and confined spaces. All doors should be secure.
- Who knows who is in the building? Identify hazards specific to the individual e.g. medical conditions, disabilities, expectant mothers, etc.
- Is there any way of identifying legitimate visitors? Identifying forms of ID as genuine not fake. Ensure all visitors to the school have been signed in.
- Could people just wander in? Ensure security doors throughout the building are locked preventing access from outside the building.
- Is there a procedure for removing people from the building if necessary?

For employees who are required to work alone and away from a fixed location, procedures below must be followed:

- Ensure you sign in and out from your location. Signing in/out register situated in the main office.
- Tell other staff where you are going, how long you will be and your estimated time of return. Information should be indicated in the signing in/out register.
- Ensure communication network is in place throughout the working day by regular contact i.e. advise designated staff of whereabouts and safe conclusion of visit.
- Ensure you are accompanied if making sensitive visits.
- Ensure you inform a designated member of staff of your proposed visit, proposed time and return.

Isolation

Are employees working alone in isolated offices or parts of the building? Advise staff within other areas you are in school.

- Do employees meet with outside agencies or members of the public in isolated offices? Ensure you inform staff of your whereabouts and who you are with.
- Who knows where employees are and whom they are with? Identify a designated member of staff to inform i.e. line manager.
- Are there suitable lines of communication between the lone worker and a designated person? Ensure regular contact/communication throughout the day.

- Are there procedures in place if contact with the lone worker cannot be established, as required? Regular communication network should ensure appropriate contact and wellbeing of lone worker.
- Can employees in isolated areas summon help or raise an alarm? Provision of mobile phones may be considered.
- Have there previously been any problems arising from employees working in isolation? Ensuring the appropriate member of the site team is informed when staff leave the premises should avoid the situation of staff being locked in school at the end of the day.

Personal Safety

- First priority is to plan for a reduction of risk for staff working alone.
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Line Manager.
- Staff should inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person and the relevant member of the site team when leaving the building. The school log in the main office should identify personnel in school.
- A robust system is in place for signing in and out within the main office, and staff should follow these procedures.
- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, procedures should be in place for regular contact between staff, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
- Where staff are issued with mobile phones; they are responsible for ensuring that the phone is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining. Personal alarms may also be considered.

Assessment of risk

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, safety
- 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
- Any other special circumstances

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

Planning

- Staff should be fully briefed in relation to possible risks involved in lone working.
- Plans for responding to those who present a known risk should be regularly reviewed and discussed with the line manager/SLT.
- Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place for all lone workers.
- Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the conditions affecting the staff.

Reporting

Should an incident occur, reporting and de-briefing should follow appropriate guidance procedures via regular meetings with the line manager. Identified person should debrief in the first instance; if this is not the member of staff's line manager, that manager should be informed as soon as is practicable.

Monitoring and Review

- Ongoing yearly review of the Lone Working Policy.
- Lone working and risk assessment included in regular Health and Safety agenda schedules i.e. governors.
- Staff with a concern should ensure the issue is discussed with their Line Manager or designated person.

Management Controls

Having carried out a risk assessment affecting lone workers both in-house and away from school, it is important to ensure that suitable and sufficient control measures are identified and put in place.

A summary of suitable controls would be as follows:

- Are there suitable lines of communication and monitoring?
- Have emergency procedures been identified, and are staff aware of these, are they clear about the action to be taken?
- Have staff received suitable training i.e. dealing with difficult situations?
- Have lone workers been given all necessary information (copy of the Policy) to enable them to carry out their job safely?
- Have considerations been given to procedures for fire evacuation or first aid procedures? Revisit copy of Fire Regulation Procedures & Evacuation Plan (as in school day) and identification of First Aiders, as listed.
- Have clear procedures been established which the lone worker can follow, as identified in the Lone Working Policy.
- Staff are encouraged to seek advice/assistance from their line manager if they are unsure about a situation.

It is evident that having undertaken appropriate risk assessments and implemented all necessary controls it is important that all lone working situations are monitored and continually reviewed.

Signed…………………………………………………..
    Executive Headteacher/CEO for and on behalf
    of The Spire Church of England Learning Trust

Signed…………………………………………………
    Chair of The Spire CE Learning Trust

Appendix A: Lone Working Incident Report Form

To: Line Manager (name)
                                     Head of School (name)

From	

School	

Contact details	

Subjects of Incident (name all people involved)

Full details of the incident (where, when, what, how)

Detail any recommended action to be taken
(to reduce likelihood of re-occurrence/protect staff etc.)

Comments from Line Manager

[blank box]

Action taken (full details + responsible staff member)

[blank box]

Name…………………………………………...
        Position…………………………………………

Signed…………………………………………
        Date…………………………………………