

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School

Lone Working Policy



Introduction

Lone working is not covered by any specific legislation, but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply.

This legislation states that "It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all of his employees" and

"It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; "

Employers and employees therefore have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety and this school recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees whilst working alone.

For the purposes of this policy, lone working will be defined as:

"a situation where staff are engaged in work where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to come to their immediate aid in the event of an incident or emergency."

School Ethos

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment.

It is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative or cleaning staff may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This, however, may introduce risks for a normally non-hazardous work activity.

Persons at Risk

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary School, people at risk may include anyone who comes into school alone during closure times, employees attending out of hours meetings, and particularly the Premises Manager opening/closing the building for contractors out of normal school hours. It also includes members of staff taking cash to be banked.

There is no legal prohibition to working alone, however any hazards must be identified, risk assessments carried out and measures put into place to control any risks. All employees should consider whether it is necessary for them to work alone and if

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arrangements can be made for others to work at the same time. As this is not always possible, all staff are made aware of this policy and the procedures required for lone working.

All school staff are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

Lone working

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School recognises that there are various work activities that may result in staff members working alone for example:

1. Staff that are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working at night or early morning.
2. Staff 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. Staff who are key-holders or who are the last to turn out the lights, set the alarm and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home.

Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Lead together with the Head Teacher to ensure that an annual Health and Safety and Risk Assessment is undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this, as well as the risks of Lone Working.

The risk assessment will consider the type of tasks undertaken, the environment, health and safety instruction and training received in addition to the individual's medical history.

An example Risk Assessment is included in the appendices.

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Health and Safety Lead for the likelihood of the hazard causing harm. Measures will be introduced if the assessment shows that existing precautions are inadequate to eliminate or adequately control the hazard.

Hazards

These may include, for example:

- A potential for violence or threatening behaviour towards an individual carrying cash or high value equipment.
- The use of machinery, electrical or other equipment or chemicals.

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- Encountering intruders.
- Working at heights, using step stools and lifting.
- Competency, ability and medical condition of the individual.

The risk assessment will be subject to review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the school.

Contractors will be given the opportunity by the Health and Safety Lead to complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment as necessary and receive the appropriate Health and Safety information e.g. the Asbestos Register.

Control Measures

In order to manage the risks identified, we have introduced the following control measures:

- Ensure that external doors are kept locked when lone working.
- Staff must not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. All meetings must be arranged during school occupancy times or when there is more than one member of staff on site for the duration of the meeting.
- Late meetings must finish promptly and not leave one member of staff alone on site.
- Know, and follow, relevant safe working procedures and guidelines including operating machinery and using hazardous substances
- Staff must not approach, or let into the building, unauthorised persons when lone working.
- Inform the headteacher or Health and Safety Lead of any relevant medical conditions.

Staff are advised to:

- Not to do anything to put themselves in danger.
- Carry a mobile phone at all times, when lone working, in case of emergency. Although phones can give extra reassurance, they do not provide complete protection, and staff should still be alert for their own personal safety at all times.

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- Let someone know you are coming into work (the nominated contact), how long you expect to be and when you are leaving. Lone workers should provide updates to the nominated contact via call, text or email.
- Share the nominated contact's details with that of the Head Teacher
- Consider weather conditions before coming into and while at work.

Protocol

Staff should seek the permission of the Head Teacher to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours. The experience and training of staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working.

Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague and ensure that they are aware if they are to be left in a lone working situation, for example if a colleague who had previously been on site has subsequently left.

Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

Staff Responsibilities:

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

- Are aware and follow all policies or procedures.
- Always plan ahead.
- Are fully aware of the risks when working alone.
- Do not put themselves in potential danger.
- Ensure that they have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.
- Be aware of the on-site security procedures.
- Ensure that access is available to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with family, friends or work colleagues.

It is essential that lone workers keep a mobile phone with them in case of an emergency.

Emergency procedures:

It is the responsibility of all school personnel and contractors to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Lead. If

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members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury and any compensation claims for damages or unfair dismissal may be reduced accordingly.

In the event that a lone worker falls ill, or into difficulties, they are to use their mobile phone to contact a family member, the headteacher or the emergency services.

Site security must be maintained at all times; however, staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police.

Staff must not put themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals.

All staff receive training to help ensure they understand the risks associated with lone working and to minimise these risks.

All lone workers, in an otherwise unoccupied building, must follow the school's fire and evacuation procedures in case of an emergency.

Staff are responsible for making themselves familiar with and following the school's safety procedures and knowing the location of safety equipment.

Contractors are responsible for assessing their own risk and for providing their own first aid kit, suitable for treating minor injuries.

Unacceptable Lone Working

The following activities are not to be carried out by lone workers under any circumstances:

- Working at height.
- Manual handling of heavy, unstable or bulky items.

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School respects the right of the employee, under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger.

Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the Head Teacher/ Health and Safety Lead any aspect of work-related risks.

It is the responsibility of all school staff and contractors to be aware of, and adhere to, the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the Health and Safety Lead or Headteacher.

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Members of staff are expected to follow the details of the Lone Working Policy and associated Risk Assessments. Failure to follow procedures designed to protect their safety may be a disciplinary offence, as they will have contributed to their injury and any compensation claims for damages or unfair dismissal may be reduced accordingly.

Following any incident, a thorough investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.

This policy was last reviewed in: September 2025

This policy is to be reviewed in : September 2026