



Newnham Croft Primary School

Lone Working Policy January 2021

Overview

As an employer, we will manage any health and safety risks before people can work alone. This applies to anyone contracted to work at the school, including self-employed people.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, and include:

- as site staff and cleaners
- staff conducting work duties away from the school site
- school staff working after hours
- staff working from home

We recognise that there will always be greater risks for lone workers without direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, we will manage the risk to lone workers.

This will firstly involve thinking about who will be involved and which hazards could harm those working alone.

We will:

- train, supervise and monitor lone workers
- keep in touch with them and respond to any incident

Risks to consider

Risks that particularly affect lone workers include:

- violence in the workplace
- stress and mental health or wellbeing
- a person's medical suitability to work alone
- the workplace itself, for example if it involves working in an isolated place

High-risk work

Certain high-risk work requires at least one other person. This includes work:

- in a confined space, where a supervisor may need to be there, along with someone in a rescue role

- near exposed live electricity conductors
- with fumigation

Working from home

We understand that we have the same health and safety responsibilities for homeworkers and the same liability for accident or injury as for any other workers.

This means you must provide supervision, education and training, as well as implementing enough control measures to protect the homemaker.

When someone is working from home, permanently or temporarily, we will:

- keep in regular touch with them via digital communication and telephone
- ensure that the activity is appropriate and that they don't work for too long
- ensure that the job is safe to conduct from home
- put any control measures in place to protect them, as required

Lone working without supervision

There will always be greater risks for lone workers with no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. We will keep in touch with lone workers, including those working from home, and ensure regular contact to make sure they are healthy and safe.

If staff are working late at school they should notify the site manager in writing.

We understand that if contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect stress levels and mental health.

Working with display screen equipment

For those people who are working at home on a long-term basis, the risks associated with using display screen equipment (DSE) must be controlled. This would include them doing workstation assessments at home.

There is no increased risk from DSE work for those working at home temporarily. So in that situation employers do not need to ask them to carry out home workstation assessments.

However, we will provide workers with advice on completing their own basic assessment at home. This practical [workstation checklist \(PDF\)- Portable Document Format](#) may help them.

There are some simple steps people can take to reduce the risks from display screen work:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- avoiding eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time

Specialised DSE equipment needs

We will respond to any DSE equipment needs where possible.

For some equipment (eg keyboards, mouse, riser) this could mean allowing staff to take this equipment home.

For other larger items (eg ergonomic chairs, height-adjustable desks) encourage staff to try other ways of creating a comfortable working environment (eg supporting cushions).

Keep DSE arrangements under review

If any period of temporary home working extends, then we will have regular discussions with staff to assess whether additional steps are needed, for example where they report:

- aches, pains or discomfort related to their temporary DSE arrangements
- adverse effects of working in isolation, on remote IT systems
- working longer hours without adequate rest and recovery breaks

Stress, mental health and wellbeing

We recognise that home working can cause work-related stress and affect people's mental health. Being away from managers and colleagues could also make it difficult to get proper support.

The school will keep in direct contact with home workers so you can [recognise signs of stress](#) as early as possible. All staff will be informed that the emergency point of contact is Head@newnhamcroft.cambs.sch.uk or eferguson@neewnhamcroft.cambs.sch.uk and that we can access help if they need it.

Violence

Lone working does not always mean a higher risk of violence, but it does make workers more vulnerable. The lack of nearby support makes it harder for them to prevent an incident.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines violence as 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work' – this includes verbal threats.

We recognise that key workplace violence risks include:

- late evening or early morning work, when fewer workers are around
- lone workers, such as site staff, who might need to confront people accessing the site without authorisation.
- carrying money or valuable equipment
- dealing with adults who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs

The school also has a policy on acceptable parental behaviour which should support staff protection.

The school will follow up any instances of violence by putting measures in place to support any staff member who's experienced violence. Staff can play their part by identifying and reporting incidents immediately.

Any staff member should:

- recognise situations where they feel at risk (including from personal violence)
- notify other staff members and senior management if possible for support
- use conflict resolution techniques or leave the workplace area

Impact of violence

The impact of violence can lead to physical injury and work-related stress, which may have serious and long-term effects on the staff member's physical and mental health. The school will support all members of staff for whom this is the case.

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Working alone with a medical condition

If any member of staff has a health condition which means they may be at more risk if working alone, the school will seek medical advice and make appropriate reasonable adjustments.

The school will monitor the health of lone workers and respond to emerging health issues.

First aid and emergencies

Many members of school staff who will be working alone will be first aid trained, however not everyone. The emergency procedure for lone workers requiring first aid is for them to ring either the site manager or the headteacher immediately who will be able to come and assist. Risk assessments for lone working are carried out by the site manager.

First aid equipment will be available to all lone workers and they should be aware of their locations around the school.

Training

All staff working alone will have been suitably trained to safely undertake their tasks. They will also be made aware of any risks in their work and how to control them. They should feel competent to deal with the requirements of the job and recognise where to get any additional advice.

Supervision

If there is a higher level of risk to a particular task then the more supervision staff will need. This will also depend on their ability to identify and handle health and safety issues.

The school will ensure that they can request supervision if they are dealing with new situations or new risks.

Monitoring and keeping in touch

Senior management and the site manager will monitor lone workers (as appropriate) and keep in touch with them. Staff will be made aware of any monitoring system and procedures used. These may include:

- supervisors visiting and observing lone workers
- knowing where lone workers are, with pre-agreed intervals of regular contact, using phones, email etc
- other devices for raising the alarm
- a reliable system to ensure a lone worker has returned to their base if they are doing tasks off site

When workers' first language is not English

We recognise that lone workers from outside the UK may come across unfamiliar risks, in a workplace culture very different from that in their own country.

We will ensure they have received and understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely.