



**The STAR Multi-Academy Trust**

# **LONE WORKER POLICY**

Approved by the Trust Board	19 July 2022
Review Date	July 2025

## **General Statement**

The STAR MAT recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees whilst working alone. For this reason, we have devised a procedure which sets out our approach in both identifying these risks and adequately managing them.

## **Definition**

For the purposes of this procedure, the term lone worker applies to anyone who works by themselves, without close or direct supervision, and therefore applies to:

- working alone at a fixed base e.g. reception area staff in a unoccupied building,
- work separately from other people on the same premises or outside normal working hours, for example security staff, cleaners, caretakers, maintenance and repair staff;
- working on own at home;
- working away from a fixed base, such as: pastoral workers visiting family homes etc; workers involved in inspection, surveying.
- volunteers, working on own, carrying out work on behalf of STAR

## **Legal Position**

Our duty to both assess and control any risks from lone working is governed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA). S.2 requires us to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of our employees. This will be achieved by carrying out risk assessments in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended).

## **Risk Assessment**

See appendix A

Our risk assessments will cover all work currently undertaken alone (or proposed to be), where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or by the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong. Once all job roles involving lone working have been identified, the following factors will be considered:

### **Risk of Violence;**

- All jobs involving an element of lone working will be assessed for a risk of verbal threats, or violence. The priority will be those involving face-to-face dealings with members of the public and/or cash handling.

### **Plant and Equipment;**

- The plant and equipment used by lone workers will be assessed to ensure that it is suitable for use by one person.

### **Work at Height;**

- Working at height must not be undertaken when working alone.

### **Chemicals;**

- Any existing, or planned use of chemicals will be considered with regards to their suitability for use by those working alone.

### **The Worker;**

- It may be inappropriate for some staff to work on their own e.g. due to their experience, training or maturity.
- Individual staff may be prohibited from lone working due to a medical condition/specific need e.g.:
  - Uncontrolled/poorly controlled diabetes
  - Epilepsy
  - Serious heart conditions

- New and expectant mothers if identified as a significant risk in the specific New and Expectant Mothers risk assessment
- History of fainting / blackouts
- Anxiety / panic attacks
- Severe asthma
- Drug-related problems both in relation to legal and illegal substances (some over the counter/prescribed medication can impair performance)
- Alcohol-related problems
- Visual impairment (which cannot be corrected by spectacles/contact lenses)
- Hearing impairment (which cannot be corrected by electronic aids)

In the above, or any other situations, where there is known specific health related issues which may pose a risk of being able to work safely, then an individual risk assessment should be completed. If there is any doubt as to whether or not an individual is fit to undertake lone working then a referral is to be made to Occupational Health for advice, and until that advice has been received the individual must refrain from lone working.

### **Access and Egress;**

- Some lone working may require access to locations which are difficult to access or exit. Where this is the case, an assessment will consider whether this type of task is suitable to be carried out by only one person.

## **Control Measures**

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

### **Risk of Violence:**

- All Staff are required to lock themselves in the buildings when lone working.
- Staff are required not to arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. All meetings must be arranged during main school occupancy times or when there is more than one member of staff on site for the duration of that meeting.
- Late meetings must be arranged so as to finish promptly and so as not to leave one member of staff alone on site.
- Staff are required not to approach or let into the buildings unauthorised persons when lone working.

### **Communication:**

- Staff are required to avoid lone working wherever possible by arranging to work in pairs or as a group.
- All staff are required to sign in and off the site
- Staff are required to carry a mobile phone at all times when lone working.
- Staff are required to let someone know they are coming into work, how long they are expected to be on site and when they are leaving site.

### **First aid:**

- For those lone working on STAR MAT premises, signage is available indicating the whereabouts of first aid kits, which will vary from school to school.

### **Emergency procedures:**

- In the event that a lone worker falls ill, or into difficulties, they are to use their mobile phone. The main point of contact with those allocated phones is the staff member's nominated person and the emergency services.

### **Access and egress:**

- Staff are required to consider weather conditions before coming into and while at work.

## **Unacceptable Lone Working**

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

- Any form of working at height (other than low risk activities which have been suitably assessed e.g. use of a step ladder where this can be used safely);
- Manual handling of heavy or bulky items, or moving people, where otherwise identified as two person task;
- Use of solvent based chemicals, paints or glues;
- Confined space working
- Electrical work on exposed live conductors
- Fumigation work
- Transport of persons must always be undertaken by more than one member of staff.

Other activities should be assessed on a case-by-case basis e.g.:

Working in or near deep water

Working with individual persons who have a known history of violence or you are unsure of their history/behaviour

Exercising authority / withholding a service

## **Training**

All lone workers will be fully trained in the safe working practices to be adopted in order to carry out their tasks safely. This will apply to employees and other workers where applicable, such as agency staff and contractors.

## **Line Managers**

It is the responsibility of individual line managers to monitor the tasks being carried out by their staff. In particular, they are responsible for ensuring that any tasks described in the Unacceptable Lone Working section are not carried out by one person alone. If the nature of the tasks change in any way, the manager must ensure that a new risk assessment is carried out. They also need to ensure that any lone worker follows good working practices and safe systems of work.

## **Lone Worker Duties**

All lone workers are expected to co-operate fully with any instructions given by their managers. They are also expected to follow the organisation's safe systems of work and any associated procedures. Failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence.

## Appendix A – Lone Worker Risk Assessment:

The potential for staff to undertake lone working is present across all sites and across a diverse range of roles. Prior to lone working taking place, managers must ensure that:

- A suitable & sufficient risk assessment of the activity/task has been undertaken
- Any control measures identified are implemented
- Staff are informed they are classed as a lone worker
- The findings and control measures identified in the risk assessment are clearly communicated to staff
- Where required due to an individual's needs then a specific risk assessment for that individual is undertaken to determine if lone working is suitable or whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

The risk assessment should consider whether a lone worker can do the work safely, and what arrangements are required to ensure they are at no more risk than employees working together. It should include the following:

- Lone working risks e.g. unable to summon assistance, risk of assault, unsafe premises
- Activity specific risks e.g. weather, driving, cycling, violent persons, manual handling, fire
- Person-specific risks e.g. lack of experience, age, physical/health issues
- Preventative measures e.g. training, access to relevant information (Staff Warning Register), personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Emergency measures e.g. communications – logging in and out, mobile phones, monitoring technology, first aid provision
- Incident reporting e.g. completing an appropriate incident report

The risk assessment must be carried out using the STAR agreed proforma. The risk assessment is used to inform any decisions regarding the type of support that may be required or if a lone worker device may be required to be used.

Following the risk assessment, the risk rating will lead to the following recommended systems to reduce the risks involved in lone working to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable:

Risk Rating	Recommended lone worker monitoring arrangement
Low	"White board" or electronic/diary scheduling logging in/out system (often office-based during normal working hours), WhatsApp, buddy systems
Medium	As per low, use of mobile phone to call preprogramed numbers. Each visit considered and where risk may occasionally be high consider two person visit or implement team lone worker arrangements eg use of a pool lone worker device if available
High (Unlikely or Possible)	Requires specific STAR lone worker device solution either as an individual when frequent use is expected or as a team device if activity is infrequent.
High (Likely or Highly Likely Residual risk still high)	STOP! Review risk assessment & contact your manager/head of service for further advice and support. Lone working will need to be prohibited.

For risk ratings scoring High please contact your line manager/head of service to escalate the risk and decision regarding whether an alternative solution can be sought.

Further guidance can be found: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>