



Lone Working Guidance

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Approved By	FARR Committee	Review	Non-Statutory
Last Review	July 2026	Next Review	July 2028

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details
July 2024	Remove reference to 'Corporate Safety Information System'
	Remove Appendix 5 'Lone Worker Monitoring Form'
July 2026	Appendix 1 - replaced 'caretaker' with 'site assistant'
	Section 7 – Home Visits updated to reflect that the risk assessment will inform a decision on whether the visit can be undertaken solo or should be carried out in pairs

1. Policy Statement:

North Star Academy Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working alone. This guidance has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

North Star Academy Trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees.

2. Definition

Within this guidance, 'lone working' refers to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of lone working:

"Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision."

This includes situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the school and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance. It is possible for a staff member to be 'lone working' with other staff members in the building due to the nature of the building creating isolated areas.

Where associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and North Star Academy Trust 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.

3. Scope

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. They also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them.

These responsibilities cannot be transferred to any other person, including those people who work alone.

Workers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work activities and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

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 are classed as lone workers.

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, i.e. – 18.00 – 08.00;
- School staff working during holiday periods;
- Staff working in an environment away from the school, i.e. attending meetings off-site and carrying out home visits.

(This list is by no means exhaustive)

Consideration therefore 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 by adopting a systematic approach to undertaking regular risk assessments extending to regular reviews;
- 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.

4. Context:

This policy should be considered in the context of:

- The Trust's Health and Safety Policy;
- The HSE documents "Working alone – Health and Safety guidance on the risks of lone working."

5. Roles and Responsibilities

As the employer North Star Academy Trust has ultimate responsibility for the Health and Safety of all employees.

The Trust Board has responsibility under the relevant legislation for ensuring that there is due regard to matters of health, safety and environmental matters within the Trust.

The Headteacher has delegated the Estates Manager to act as the Competent Person acting as adviser to the Headteacher on health, safety and welfare issues, including Lone Working, and ensuring that the objectives of the policy are achieved in practice.

The Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, Middle Managers, Subject Team Leaders and all staff are responsible for the detailed adoption and implementation of the Lone Working Policy in their respective workplaces and ensuring that they follow a safe approach to their working practices.

6. Assessing the risks:

The employer has a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. The following needs to be taken into consideration for risk assessing:

- Involving workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them;
- Taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or putting in place control measures, e.g. carefully selecting work equipment to ensure the worker is able to perform the required tasks in safety;
- Instruction, training and supervision;
- Reviewing risk assessments periodically or when there has been a significant change in working practice;
- The different categories of staff who have to lone work or choose to lone work;
- The different aspects of their job that could cause harm;
- The remoteness or isolation of workplaces within the building;
- Any communication problems;
- The possibility of interference, such as violence;
- Criminal activity from other persons;
- The nature of potential injury or damage to health;
- Previous incidents in relation to lone workers and their work activities;
- The level of experience and knowledge of individuals;
- Existing risk assessments and safe systems of work;
- Anticipated “worse case” scenario;
- The nature of the activity, i.e. whether it is a chosen activity or part of the job description;
- Hazards that may affect certain groups of employees due to race, gender, age, disability or sexual persuasion;

This may include:

- Being aware that some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by a lone worker;
- Where a lone worker is working at another employer’s workplace, informing that other employer of the risks and required control measures;
- When a risk assessment shows it is not possible for the work to be conducted safely by a lone worker, addressing that risk by making arrangements to provide help or back-up.

Risk assessment should help employers decide the right level of supervision. There are some high risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present. Examples include:

- Working at height;
- Excessive manual handling;
- Working with substances that are hazardous to health including flammables;
- Working in a confined space;
- Working with electricity;
- Dealing with unpredictable partners and stakeholders.

North Star Academy Trust must record the significant findings of all risk assessments. See Appendix 1 for guidance on completion of risk assessments for Lone Working and Appendix 2 for a risk assessment template.

7. Home Visits

Staff may visit student's homes for a variety of reasons. These may include home tutors, home-school liaison, etc. The health and safety of staff takes precedence when the need for a home visit is being considered. The following procedures should be followed:

- A risk assessment must be undertaken before a home visit;
- The risk assessment will inform a decision on whether the visit can be undertaken solo or should be carried out in pairs (eg. with another member of North Star staff or a Social Worker, Educational Welfare Officer etc);
- A designated member of staff should be nominated as the school contact, they should be contacted immediately before and after the visit;
- The designated contact should have contact details for the Lone Worker, a copy of the risk assessment and details of the home visit (See Appendix 4).

8. Reporting

Should an incident occur the Lone Worker should report this to their Line Manager and a debriefing should occur following any incident.

Any incidents or concerns in relation to Lone Working should be reported to the Director of Finance and Operations.

Appendix 1

Guidance for the Risk Assessment of Lone Working

Task Analysis

Are there any hazards that you could reasonably expect to result in harm for the lone worker due to conditions of the work area?

The following is an aide memoire to produce risk assessments.

1. Personal ability
2. Access and egress
3. Accidents
4. After hours
5. Aggression and violence
6. Animals
7. Cash
8. Chemicals
9. Communications
10. Competency
11. Previous complaints
12. Electrics
13. Environment
14. Equipment
15. Experience
16. Fire
17. First Aid
18. Ground conditions
19. Heights
20. Illness
21. Instructions
22. Ladders
23. Lighting
24. Machinery
25. Manual Handling
26. Night work
27. Noise
28. Parking
29. Protective clothing
30. Recording in and out
31. Remoteness
32. Restrictions
33. Time constraints
34. Tools
35. Training
36. Trip/slip/fall hazards
37. Weather

The lone worker's line manager must ensure that the lone worker has full knowledge of the known and considered hazards and the risks associated with them.

The lone workers' whereabouts must be communicated to either the Headteacher, the lone worker's line manager or designated school contact and have a means of communicating with them. There should be contingency plans in place for any breakdown in communication or any other emergency that could develop.

The following needs to be considered for any lone working to be considered:

The Lone Worker

- Is s/he medically fit to be working alone?
- Are there personal factors that may pose additional hazards? (race, age, gender, disability)

The task

- Only tasks that are relatively safe should be attempted when employees are working alone. There should be no working at height, manual lifting etc. Any use of tools and machinery should be thought about.

The Working Environment

- The building is fairly isolated and employees should have a mobile 'phone with them at all times.
- Consideration should be given to parking and easy access to vehicles.

Supervision

- Anyone working alone should ensure that someone is aware of their movements, when they plan to leave, etc.

Communication

- When working alone employees must have a mobile 'phone with them and keep it with them as they move around the building.

First Aid

- First aid kits are located in the schools, staff need to consider access to first aid when off site.

Accident and Emergency

- The contact for the site assistant out of hours is their line manager.
- The contact for other staff out of hours is the Headteacher or designated school contact.
- All lone working for staff other than the site assistant has to be arranged beforehand with their line manager.

Double Staffing

- Whenever possible staff should try not to work alone but have someone else with them.

Personal Assessment Advice

All employees should carry out their own personal assessment of risk before undertaking any work activity.

The following should be considered:

1. Does someone know where you are and when you expect to leave?
2. Do you have any means of communicating with that person or others?
3. Do you know what you will do if an accident occurs?
4. Do you know what you will do if unknown persons come on to the site?
5. Do you have telephone numbers with you that might be useful?
6. Have you parked in a place that can give you easy access to your car?



Risk Assessment

Date of Initial Assessment:

Last Reviewed Date:

Reviewed by:

What is the task/activity or environment you are assessing?	What hazards are present or may be generated?	Who is affected or exposed to hazards	What degree of injury can reasonably be expected (Risk Rating Matrix Table 1)?	What precautions are already in place to either eliminate or reduce the risk of an accident happening (Existing Controls)?	What likelihood/probability is there of an accident occurring? (Risk Rating Matrix Table 1)?	What is the risk rating (See note below & Risk Rating Matrix Table 2)?

RISK RATING MATRIX (Notes to aid completion of the risk assessment format)

Table 1

Potential Severity of Harm	Meaning	Likelihood of Harm	Meaning
Fatal/Major Injury	Death, major injuries or ill health causing long-term disability/absence from work.	High (Frequent)	Occurs repeatedly / event only to be expected
Serious Injury	Injuries or ill health causing short-term disability/absence from work (over three days absence)	Medium (Possible)	Moderate chance/could occur sometimes
Minor Injury	Injuries or ill health causing no significant long-term effects and no significant absence from work	Low (Unlikely)	Not likely to occur.

Table 2

Risk Rating - Degree of Injury by Likelihood/Probability			
	High (Likely)	Medium (Possible)	Low (Improbable)
Fatal/Major Injury	Very High Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk
Serious Injury	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Minor Injury	Medium Risk	Low Risk	No Significant Risk

Table 3

Action Required : Key To Ranking	
High or Very High Risk	STOP ACTIVITY! Action MUST be taken as soon as possible to reduce the risks and before activity is allowed to continue.
Medium Risk	Proceed with Caution! Implement all additional precautions that are not unreasonably costly or troublesome.

Low Risk	Proceed with Caution! Implement any additional precautions that are not unreasonably costly or troublesome.
No Significant Risk	No further action required. The risk is no more than is to be encountered in normal everyday life & is, therefore, regarded as being acceptable.

Appendix 3

Personal Safety Advice

Safety when approaching or opening the workplace

- Be alert.
- If you see broken windows or signs of a forced entry, insecure door, assume that someone is on the premises, do not go in.
- Go to a safe place and telephone the police.

Safety when leaving or closing the workplace

- Look outside and check that no-one is hanging about. If you see someone hanging about do not go out alone, stay inside and telephone the police.
- If you are waiting for a lift wait inside until the car arrives. If you are travelling by public transport do not leave the workplace so early that you have a long time to wait.
- Check the premises are secure before you leave.

Practical points in dealing with possible conflict situations during a home visit.

- Park your car so it can be driven away easily.
- Park in a well-lit area near other vehicles if possible.
- Stay alert when approaching the property, look for hazards, dogs, prowlers, etc.
- After knocking/ringing stand back and to the side of the door.
- Do not look through the letter box.
- Do not stand on the edge of the steps.
- Be mindful of milk bottles, dustbin lids or other potential weapons.
- Ask for dog/pets to be secured where appropriate.
- Make a note of the way in/out the type of catch and how to operate it.
- Assess the situation and the mood of those present.
- If in any doubt or you feel threatened do not enter, make an excuse and leave.
- Only sit down when those present do so.
- Sit in an upright chair if possible or on the edge of an armchair or couch.
- Sit near to the exit if you can.
- Note any items that could be used as a weapon.
- If the situation changes and you feel uncomfortable, make an excuse and leave.
- Back out rather than turning your back on those present.
- Try to leave with everyone's dignity intact.
- If you are unable to leave and the situation warrants it, it may be necessary to take further action such as activating a personal alarm, screaming/shouting to attract the attention of others, or if physically threatened try to use a chair/table as a barrier, not as a weapon.

Safety in the car

- Always lock your vehicle when entering or leaving it.
- Plan your route.
- Check you have not left your lights on when leaving your vehicle.
- Do not leave valuables etc on display.
- Have your keys in your hand so that you can get in straight away.
- Look around as you approach your vehicle in case someone is crouching nearby.
- Look inside before entering to make sure that no-one has gained access.
- When driving consider locking your doors.

- If you are followed in your vehicle do not get out but attract attention to yourself by sounding your horn/flashing your lights. Consider driving to the nearest police station.
- Do not park in dark, deserted streets/car parks.
- Never drive nose first into a parking space, reverse in so that you can drive straight out.
- If you have to use a multi-storey car park, park on the ground floor as lofts and stairs can be dangerous. Have the correct change ready for the machine.
- Don't linger longer than necessary and keep alert at all times.
- Always carry a torch with you.
- If in difficulty and a stranger offers help do not get out of your vehicle, ask the person to 'phone for help.
- If possible always travel on busy roads, avoid isolated areas.
- Be careful if someone flags you down. If in doubt drive on and call the police.
- If you are asked to stop by someone who may be pretending to be a plain clothes police officer, ask to see their warrant card before you open your window.
- Ensure that you have enough fuel for the journey.
- Join a motoring/breakdown organisation.

Safety in the street

- Do not wear an identification badge.
- Be alert walk with purpose and confidence.
- Avoid shortcuts through unlit or deserted areas.
- Do not overload yourself with bags.
- Walk near to the kerb edge and away from buildings.
- Whenever possible do not walk alone.
- Walk facing the traffic.
- If you feel someone is following you cross the road to confirm your suspicions and if you are being followed go to the nearest close place with people, a pub, laundrette, and call the police as soon as you can.
- Ignore kerb crawlers. Make a note of the registration number and turn and walk briskly in the opposite direction.
- If someone approaches you for directions don't let them get too close.
- Keep your bag close to your body but if it is grabbed let it go.
- If you must carry a large sum of money, split it up and carry it in different places.
- Cheque books and cards should be kept separate.
- Do not carry your keys in your handbag carry them in your pocket.
- Carry your mobile' phone where it is easily accessible. Consider pre-setting your emergency number and don't use it in the street.
- Carry a personal attack alarm and check it regularly.

Safety in the reception area

- Do not let anyone in that you have doubts about.
- If you are concerned say that you need to check with someone first and get help. Two people are better than one.

To reduce the risk of provocation

- Introduce yourself politely.
- Express clearly any action that you are taking.
- Avoid criticism of the person you are talking to.
- Avoid unfriendly gestures.

- Leave yourself an alternative course of action.
- Show no fear or apprehension.
- Stay calm.
- Show sympathy even if you don't feel it.
- Keep talking and actively listening. Use the "broken record" technique for key points.

What to do if a difficult situation occurs

- Try to defuse the situation. Listen and acknowledge that the person is distressed and perhaps something can be done to help.
- Help the person to feel in control of themselves. Remain calm and don't take any abuse personally.
- If you feel at risk of violence leave immediately.
- If you are unable to leave protect yourself by placing a barrier between you and your assailant. Use reasonable force but only as a very last resort.
- Be aware of the body language
 - Facial expression
 - Eye contact
 - Tone of voice
 - Physical touch
 - Appearance
 - Posture
 - Proximity
 - Hand and foot movement

Appendix 4



Off Site & Home Visit Plan:

Staff:	Date:
Mobile Number:	

From:	To:	Location:	Reason:	Risk:

Concerns / Issues arising from the day/Comments