THE THOMAS AVELING SCHOOL

An Academy for Success

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

SECTION 3

SPECIAL AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

ARRANGEMENTS

LONE WORKING (out of hours) POLICY

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Signed (on behalf of the Governing Body) ..……………………………………
Mr T Brown (Chair of Governors)

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to promote an active safety culture and adoption of good practice in the context of lone working.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1   The Rochester Learning Partnership ("RLP") takes extremely seriously the health, safety and welfare of all staff. It recognises that violence towards staff is unacceptable and that staff have the right to be able to perform their duties without fear of abuse or violent acts. No member of staff should consider violence or abuse to be an acceptable part of their job and managers need to address the risks of violence as part of the risk assessment process.

2.2   Working alone or in isolation from others can increase the level of risk associated with workplace tasks. It also recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and often out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks of lone working.

2.3   There is no defined timescale for lone working; risks may be increased in situations where a worker is alone for only a few minutes as well as those where individuals habitually spend their entire working day away from others.

2.4   With few exceptions, the law does not prohibit people from working alone or in isolation from others: however the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require the school managers in each area to identify hazards in the workplace, assess the risks involved and put measures in place to avoid or control those risks. RLP will comply with these legal duties for its lone workers.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to all RLP employed staff and also includes temporary and agency staff, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience. The Policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of our staff, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience.

4. DEFINITION OF LONE WORKERS

4.1 A "Lone Worker" means: Any person who is working for the time being in a location where there are no other workers present and without close or direct supervision. NOTE the term should not be interpreted as meaning that a worker is entirely alone, other people such as service users or members of the public may also be present in "lone working " situations. Some examples of lone workers within the Partnership schools are:

- School employees on home visits
- Site staff working in buildings on their own or patrolling on their own including Cleaners and Ground staff
- All contractors
- Agency staff
- Volunteers.
- Employees who work from home
- Employees working out of hours or returning to a School owned site when on-call
- Employees working separately from others
- Drivers

"Worker" means: Any person for the time being working in a team or establishment whether employed directly by The Rochester Learning Partnership or through an agency. It additionally includes volunteers, trainees, work experience trainees

"Manager" means: The person for the time being in charge of a team or establishment, whether or not that person bears the title or style of "manager" in his or her job description. There are some circumstances where staff are required by law not to work alone. These situations are:

- Young persons under that age of eighteen years who must be working under direct supervision of a competent person;
- People who work in confined spaces;
- Persons who work at or near electrical conductors

5.   POLICY AIMS

5.1   This policy aims to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working where lone working is deemed to be appropriate the RLP will seek to ensure that workers are not exposed to any extra risk compared to people who work in a multi staffed environment.
- Ensure that the risks of working alone are assessed in line with the corporate risk assessment policy, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to eliminate risks to employees working alone or to reduce those risks to the lowest practicable level;
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to staff in all areas, that equips them to recognise risk and provide practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all accidents/incidents including any where lone working may be a contributory factor;
- Ensure that the RLP takes action against those people who harass, abuse or assault our staff:
- Ensure that the RLP complies with relevant health and safety legislation, and best practice.
- To carry out these aims it is necessary to adopt a systematic approach beginning with the identification of those who work alone through to the elimination or control of risks. This will allow managers to plan, introduce and monitor those measures required to implement best practice.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head teacher is responsible for:
- Promoting and supporting the aims and objectives of this policy
- Making sure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice and
- Making sure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Governors review the effectiveness of the policy

Guidance on the Management of Lone Working

RESPONSIBILITIES

Lone working environments present unique health and safety challenges. Although there is no specific legal guidance on working alone, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, the RLP must organise and control the health and safety of lone workers.

THE HAZARDS OF WORKING ALONE

Employees who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, for lone workers, the risk of harm is often greater. Hazards facing lone workers include:

- Fire – it may be difficult for an isolated worker to evacuate a building when the fire alarm activates
- Medical conditions and injuries – may cause hazards if lone working.
- Violence and personal safety - The nature of the work of the RLP may involve staff visiting parents and carers in their home which can lead to an increase risk to personal safety
- Lifting and handling – moving and handling tasks may pose more risk to an individual member of staff

In practice this policy will apply to a small number of staff, especially when they are working in isolated locations and/or when carrying out known high-risk activities. High risk activities may include:

- Undertaking work within isolated areas;
- Undertaking work within known high risk areas:
- Working/visiting parents or carers in their own home;
- Working alone at base;
- Working with people who have known risks e.g. violence and/or aggression;
- Times when employees are carrying equipment or valuables;
- Times when employees are travelling between site/homes/offices;
- Times when employees are handling cash and/or banking

Managers are responsible for:

- The operational management of health and safety in their services/localities
- Promoting and supporting the aims and objectives of this policy;
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of the policy;
- Identify employees in their services who are lone workers regardless of the duration of that work.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly;
- Assessing the need for working alone;
- Ensuring that employees are aware of the risks of lone working, and the arrangements/protocols in place locally to reduce risks to lone workers; Providing an effective means of communication.
- Arrangements for regular and routine contacts.
- Signing in and out procedures.
- Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, accident, vehicle breakdown etc.
- Arrangements for first aid provision
- Putting procedures, devices and/or safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- Ensuring that employee groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updates and refresher training as necessary;
- Ensuring that all information about clients referred from other departments or agencies is passed on. Particularly if there is a known risk or previous history of violence or aggression;
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to employees involved in any incident;
- Recording, reporting, and investigating any incidents involving a lone worker and making recommendations to prevent recurrence; and

- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to account for, and trace, the whereabouts of lone working employees and that these systems are regularly checked.

Managers must undertake a risk assessment of all work activities undertaken by such lone workers in line with the RLP Risk Assessment Policy. In order to be "suitable and sufficient" the assessment should take into account not merely risks arising from physical hazards but also issues such as the likely psychological and emotional effects of isolation on workers.

Wherever a risk assessment identifies that one person cannot carry out the work activity safely, alternative arrangements must be devised.

All of these must be recorded in writing, consulted with the staff group or individuals concerned and circulated to all workers affected by them. All such instructions / procedures need to form part of the induction and on going training for workers. All training needs to be included in employee training plans and copies of certificates kept on individual staff training files.

Mangers must at all times have access to details of the names, locations and working hours of all lone workers,

All employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions;
- Familiarising themselves with relevant health and safety policies and procedures;
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;
- Considering and assessing potential risks to their health and safety;
- Reporting all incidents, difficulties or risks, raised from lone working, however minor, to their manager even if they do not wish any further action to be taken; Failure to report an incident may put others at risk;
- Ensuring that all information about customers/clients referred from other departments or agencies is passed on. Particularly if there is a known risk or previous history of violence or aggression;
- Attending all training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- Reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone or the safe working arrangements;
- Maintaining an up to date diary/log of their appointments, in accordance with their Service procedures that is accessible to others whilst they are out working alone;
- Not interfering or misusing anything provided for their, or others, safety.
- Being certain of **three important things:**

  i. **That they have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which they are exposed;**
  ii. **That they know what to do if something goes wrong; and**
  iii. **That someone knows their whereabouts, what they are doing and when they are due back and due to finish work.**

The RLP Health and Safety committee are responsible for

- Ensuring relevant policies are in place to protect the health and safety of staff;

- Monitoring the number of incidents relating to lone workers;
- Ensuring that lessons learned from incidents are communicated throughout the organisation;
- Considering sickness statistics and recommending action in relation to health and safety;
- Monitoring training statistics and feedback.

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that accurate records of training undertaken are maintained;
- Running annual essential training updates, evaluating uptake and targeting those who have not attended annual updates;
- Running the RLP's corporate induction programme which will include Health and Safety training;
- Evaluating training programmes to ensure they are of the highest standards and well represented;
- Undertaking training needs analysis to ensure the RLP's training programme meets the needs of its staff;
- Producing statistics on attendance and feedback on health and safety training.

ASSESSING RISK

The assessment of risk is simply a careful examination of anything that may cause harm to staff or others during the course of their work.

A risk assessment is the first step in deciding what prevention or safe working arrangements (control measures) need to be taken to protect staff from harm. All staff whose work contains an element of lone working should carry out a risk assessment of the work, for example, at the time of the first contact with a new parent/carer. Lone workers should not face any more risks than other staff within the organisation. They may, however, need extra measures put in place to control specific risk.

The risk assessment will provide an indication as to whether the work can or cannot be done safely alone. If the risk assessment indicates intolerable or a substantial risk then the work should not be undertaken unless further safe

working arrangements are implemented, e.g. two people visiting together.

Risk assessment should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies including fire, potential risks such as violence, aggression and containment as well as illness and accidents. The format of the assessment will become a written record and will show any significant findings of any

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person who may be particularly at risk. The checklist below can be used to aid the risk assessment process as it highlights some of the points that need to be considered when assessing the risks of lone working.

Managers Lone Working Risk Assessment Checklist

Points to consider	Yes / No	Action
Is there a history of verbal or physical abuse at the location to be visited?		
Is there a history of violence at the location to be visited?		
Does the task being undertaken with the client have the potential to cause them to become angry?		
Is the area being visited a known trouble spot?		
Is there a safe way in and out for one person?		
Are there known drug or alcohol or metal health issues which need to be considered.		
Is the person medically fit &suitable to work alone?		
Can one person safely handle the equipment, substances and goods involved in the work?		
What training is needed to make sure the staff member is competent in safety matters?		
Are people of a particular gender especially at risk if they work alone?		
How will the person be supervised?		
Are new or inexperienced staff especially at risk if they work alone?		
Are younger workers especially at risk if they work alone?		
What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident,		

or if there's an emergency?		

Are there systems in place for contacting and tracing those who work alone?		
Has consideration been given to using the out of hours team, mobile phone system or radios for contact with staff?		
Will the visit/meeting be taking place out of hours?		
Do you have an up to date picture, car details & next of kin contact numbers for the member of staff?		
Is a monitoring system in place so that you know where the staff member is visiting?		
Do staff go straight to site or leave site to go home rather than coming back to the office?		
Has staff been informed of contact details for management monitoring?		

This checklist will help you to identify hazards before lone working is agreed and assist you in the risk assessment process, it is not a risk assessment form.