

Lone Working at School Policy 2021

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director.

This Policy applies to all staff within the Link Academy Trust.

Lone working can be defined as a wide variety of situations including:

- Travelling alone - on foot, by car or public transport
- Peripatetic (mobile) working - visiting people in their homes, visiting business premises, attending meetings.
- Use of interview rooms - effectively, working alone
- Arriving at or leaving premises - the first person in/last out is in effect working alone
- Out of hours activities - cleaning, maintenance, etc.

Lone working is undesirable but in some circumstances it cannot reasonably be avoided.

A suitable risk assessment, RAA22, of working practices is carried out to determine the level of risk for each member of staff lone working.

Definition of Lone Working

Where staff are engaged in work (either outdoors or indoors) 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.

It is the responsibility of the line manager or Executive/Academy Head to ensure members of staff are aware of the risks of Lone Working.

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the line manager or Executive/ Academy Head to assess 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. The risk assessment will be subject to review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the academy.

Controls

Staff should seek the permission of their line manager or Executive/Academy Head to work alone in the building outside of normal hours. If the member of staff is the Executive/Academy Head, then permission should be sought from the CEO.

The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working. Lone workers must be considered capable of responding correctly in an emergency situation. Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague.

A staff member must seek permission in advance to work alone and contact the line manager or Executive/Academy Head by e.g. text message / e-mail / in person, and the staff member must receive a response before lone working.

If a reply is not received from the line manager or Executive/Academy Head the member of staff must ideally contact another member of staff or a family member as the default position.

Good practice would be to liaise with other staff during school holidays, but in the absence of doing so, the member of staff should ensure a family member is aware that s/he will be working alone on the Trust/academy premises. At weekends and during school holidays, it is the staff member's personal responsibility to ensure someone is aware. If exceptions to this are identified then the policy will be reviewed.

Staff should not enter the Trust/academy premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police.

Staff should lock the outer doors when lone working and ensure that areas of the Trust/academy premises not in use are kept secure. Staff must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance.

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

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (line manager or Executive/Academy Head's mobile phone numbers) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

It is not normally practicable for the Executive/Academy Head to periodically visit and visually monitor people working alone.

Staff will receive information and/or 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, should follow the Trust/academy's 'Fire and Emergency Procedures). Staff have a responsibility for making themselves familiar with and following the Trust/academy's safety procedures and location of safety equipment.

Contractors should have access to a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

If staff rely on mobile phones they must ensure that their network has good reception within Trust/academy premises. 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.

In the situation where two or more people are working in isolated areas of an otherwise unoccupied building, personnel should keep each other informed about their movements.

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height, any task that has been identified as medium or high risk or which are potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

All Trust personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

It is the responsibility of all Trust 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 line manager or Executive/Academy Head. If 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.

The Trust respects the right of the employee, under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. They also can advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the Deputy CEO/Trust Business Manager any aspect of work-related risks.

The Deputy CEO/Trust Business Manager or Executive/Academy Head will regularly monitor the implementation of these procedures. Following any incident an investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.

This Policy is reviewed by the Executive/Academy Heads and Remuneration Committee on an annual cycle.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 6 December 2021