



## Lone Working Policy

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Rainbow Multi Academy Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees whilst working alone. This policy sets out our approach to both identifying these risks and managing them adequately. Any questions regarding its operation should be addressed to the COO, Health & Safety Lead or Headteacher.

Lone working is not covered by any specific legislation, but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply. This legislation states that “It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all of his employees” and “It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work; and as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his/her employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him/her so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with”.

Employers and employees therefore have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety and there is an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when they work remotely from other colleagues or other persons and/or outside ‘normal’ working hours.

Lone working differs from situations where people work unaccompanied but with a means of communication available. However, in certain situations where individuals work unaccompanied, it may be necessary to adopt a similar approach to lone working in order to control the risks to the unaccompanied worker. Examples of factors that may need to be taken into account are given below.

## **DEFINITION:**

For the purposes of this policy, a lone worker is an individual who spends some or all of their working hours working alone without direct supervision. This may occur:

- (1) During normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace;
- (2) When working outside normal business hours. These are deemed to be between 07:00 and 18.30, Monday to Friday during term time;
- (3) Working during the holiday period.

If an individual is working alone in an Academy during evenings, weekends or holidays, they must conform to the requirements of the Academy’s Lone Working Policy. Individuals in these circumstances, must ensure that they have informed a responsible adult that they are working alone. The name of this person must be recorded alongside the name of the person who is working alone. At an Academy, people at risk may include anyone who comes into the Academy alone during closure times and particularly, the premises staff as well as members of staff from either the central team or facilities team. Finance officers may also be at risk when taking cash to be banked but this should not be done alone

## **PROCEDURES:**

Within their area of responsibility, the Headteacher and COO are responsible for ensuring suitable procedures are in place for undertaking risk assessments for all situations requiring lone or unaccompanied working, and, that any remedial action identified, is implemented. Such procedures must also ensure that all necessary personnel are fully aware of any precautions or specific methods of work to be followed, including action to be taken in the event of an emergency.

Lone working may be carried out only following authorisation from the Headteacher or COO. Where appropriate, an 'approved list' of lone working activities will be drawn up within the Academy, outlining situations where lone working may be authorised and the necessary precautions or work methods to be followed. Provided such requirements can be met, lone working may be deemed to have been authorised and it is the responsibility of the individuals concerned to ensure all necessary precautions or work methods are adhered to at all times.

Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where existing control measures may not be fully effective, must inform the Headteacher or COO as soon as possible.

Risk assessments will cover all work currently undertaken alone (or proposed to be undertaken), 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 any 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** - 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 will 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.

**Access and egress** - Some lone working may require access to locations that are difficult to access or exit. Assessments will consider whether these tasks are suitable to be carried out by one person.

## **EXAMPLES:**

Examples of factors that will be taken into account when authorising lone or unaccompanied working include:

- The nature of the tasks involved;
- The nature of any substances involved;
- The nature of any tools or equipment involved;
- Means available for raising an alarm in the event of an emergency;

- Any known medical conditions of persons involved;
- The level of knowledge, qualifications and experience of any persons involved;
- The vicinity involved;
- The time of day involved;
- The means available for periodically checking the well-being of any persons involved.

**The lone worker should also:**

- Advise someone that they are in the Academy (i.e. Headteacher or COO)
- Lock the doors at night. This is not an exhaustive list and individuals will be expected to report all situations to the Headteacher or COO, which leave them open to any health and safety issues, so that the risk can be assessed and control measures applied where necessary.

Through the risk assessment process, existing control measures will be assessed for their effectiveness.

- 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.

## **CONTROL MEASURES:**

In order to manage the risks identified, the following control measures must be implemented and the lone worker must:

- Not undertake work for which they are not trained/qualified;
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- Not do anything to put them in danger;
- Know, and follow, relevant safe working procedures and guidelines including operating machinery and using hazardous substances;
- Never cut corners or rush work;
- Always follow reasonable targets;
- Stop for regular breaks and, if possible, change activity;
- Inform the Headteacher or COO of any relevant medical conditions;
- Inform the Headteacher or COO of any hazards or accidents encountered. All accidents should be reported using the Trust's agreed procedures.

## **RISK OF VIOLENCE:**

Staff may be required to lock themselves in the buildings when lone working. Staff must not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. All meetings must be arranged during Academy occupancy times or when there is more than one informed member of staff on site for the duration of the meeting. Late meetings must finish promptly and not leave one member of staff alone on site. Staff must not approach, or let into the buildings, unauthorised persons when lone working. Alarm activations out of hours must not be attended by only one member of staff.

## **BANKING:**

When processing academy funds, staff members must ensure:

- Another employee is present when counting is taking place.
- Counting is carried out in a secure location within school i.e. not in view of other staff, the general public, visitors or children.

When depositing academy funds, staff members must ensure:

- The academy is aware that depositing is taking place. This must be communicated discreetly.
- Another employee accompanies them throughout the depositing stage.
- A line of communication is maintained e.g. mobile telephone.
- Money is carried in a sturdy non-identifiable bag.

- They park as close to the bank as possible.
- They do not visit another destination prior to the bank.

### **COMMUNICATION:**

Staff members are advised to:

- Avoid lone working wherever possible by arranging to work in pairs or as a group.
- Carry a mobile phone at all times when lone working. There may be the need to consider a radio or other hand held communications system. This could be utilised at external events.
- Let someone know they are coming into work, how long they expect to be there and when they are leaving. This is particularly relevant to those staff who attend, or are required to work, during any closed days or holidays.
- Comply with fire evacuation procedures and attend fire assembly points, ensuring that they are cleared to leave the site in the event of an incident.

### **FIRST AID:**

For those working on the premises, first aid kits can be found in various areas, these **MUST** be available and their locations must be communicated to the Lone Worker.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

In the event that a lone worker falls ill, or into difficulties, they are to use their mobile phone to contact the staff member's nominated responsible person as identified, or the emergency services.

**ACCESS AND EGRES:** Staff members are required to consider weather conditions before coming into and while at work.

**TRAINING:** Lone workers will be trained in safe working practices.

**LONE WORKING DUTIES:** All lone workers are expected to cooperate fully with instructions given by the Headteacher or COO. They are also expected to follow the Trust's safe systems of work and any associated procedures. Failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence.

**PROTOCOL FOR WORKERS THAT ARE OVERDUE:** (60 minutes after the agreed contact time)  
Where there is genuine concern as a result of a lone worker failing to make contact as agreed, the escalation process must be activated to prevent delay in seeking help.

- The named person must first attempt to contact the lone worker.
- Depending on the circumstances and whether contact through normal means (mobile phone) can be made, the named person, if necessary must contact the COO or CEO and may also need to involve the police.

- If it is thought that the lone worker may be at risk, it is important that matters are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- If police involvement is needed, they should be given full access to information held and personnel who may hold it, especially if that information might help trace the lone worker and provide a fuller assessment of any risks they may be facing.
- It is essential that contact and escalation arrangements, once in place, are adhered to. Many such procedures fail simply because staff members forget to make the necessary call when they finish their shift. The result is unnecessary escalation and expense, which undermines the integrity of the process.

### **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 AssessNet. 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
<b>Low</b>	“White board” or electronic/diary scheduling logging in/out system (often office-based during normal working hours), WhatsApp, buddy systems
<b>Medium</b>	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
<b>High</b> (Likely or Highly Likely – Residual Risk still high)	STOP! Review risk assessment & contact the COO for further advice and support. Lone working will need to be prohibited.