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| **ST ANDREW’S COLLEGE POLICY DOCUMENT** |
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 **STAFF GUIDE TO LONE WORKING**

**Hazards of working alone**

Staff 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 are:**

**Fire** – it may be difficult for an isolated worker to evacuate a building when the fire alarm activates.

**Violence and personal safety** – the nature of the some work in the school often involves staff visiting families in their home which can lead to an increased risk to personal safety.

**Lifting and handling** – moving and handling tasks may pose more risk to an individual member of staff.

**Advice to lone workers:**

* Make sure your mobile is sufficiently charged and on your person at all times when working alone.
* If you are a member of staff who works alone on a regular basis, ask your line manager for an emergency alarm.
* If you know that you will be working alone outside of normal working hours, notify your line manager and agree a procedure for managing your safety at this time.
* Try to reduce the time you spend working alone as much as is reasonably practicable.
* Ensure that a friend or colleague is aware that you are working alone and who to contact in the event of an overdue contact.
* When working alone ensure that all doors and windows are secured to prevent unauthorised access.
* If you are working alone with chemicals, ensure that COSHH regulations are adhered to.
* Advise your line manager of any medical conditions that might be relevant and affect your ability to work safely alone.
* If you are in doubt about working alone, discuss taking a colleague with you or other options with your line manager.
* Before entering a private property, consider whether it appears safe and if not, don’t enter.
* If your job involves international travel, check FCO advice before travelling and follow the advice provided. Continue to check FCO advice whilst travelling and if it is altered, follow it. Maintain regular contact with your line manager while you are away.
* Avoid moving equipment until another person is present.
* Carry laptops discreetly

**Staff working alone within an office during working hours:**

* Make sure your working areas are safe; be particularly careful in layout of furniture and equipment; ensure no potential weapons are lying around.
* Ensure your manager/colleagues know you are working alone and know where you are working alone.
* Secure valuables in an appropriate place.
* Ensure that keys are secured and not accessible to visitors.
* If you become anxious regarding your safety, call security or emergency services for help.
* Avoid meeting people if they are alone in the workplace.
* If you are meeting someone, let other people know who you are meeting, when, where and telephoning them to let them know that Mr X has arrived and that you will get back to them at a certain time.
* Not let visitors place themselves in front of the exit point.
* Not tell any potential visitors/external persons that you are alone in the workplace.
* Report any incidents or near-misses to the relevant manager as soon as practical after any events.
* Ensure that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorized access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible.
* Never give security codes or keys to any stranger.
* Make sure fire escape routes are available and not locked (as may happen outside working hours).
* If the fire alarm activates whilst inside the office alone, leave the building immediately by the nearest fire exit; go to the front of the building, call the Fire & rescue service a safe distance away and wait for the emergency services to arrive.
* Not attempt to repair or tamper with the controls if any problems with equipment are discovered whilst alone in the office; if it is not serious, report it to the manager the following working day.
* On leaving a department, ensure that all windows are closed and doors locked
* Ensure access to a phone in case of need to call the emergency services.
* Park as close to the building as possible, in a well-lit area; close to the building if necessary, to minimise the risks if leaving the building alone.
* If an incident or near-miss occurs, follow the Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures.
* Never assume it won’t happen to you – plan to stay safe.

**Staff working alone within a department outside office hours:**

From time to time, employees may need to carry out their office-based work outside of normal office hours, such as weekends and evenings. The following precautions, aside from those described above for those working alone in an office within office hours, must be taken to ensure that health and safety of staff continues to be protected outside office hours:

* If you are working at weekends or very late at night/early in the morning let a friend or relative know your whereabouts and the time that you are expected back. Contact them at regular intervals to verify that you are okay. If your plans change, let your contact know immediately.
* Never assume it won’t happen to you – plan to stay safe.

**Lone working in the community:**

When making lone worker visits it is important to communicate with others about your intentions during the delivery of your services. You must inform a colleague of:

* The location of the visit/meeting
* A contact telephone number, if possible
* The time of the appointment
* The likely or estimated length of the meeting/visit
* The time when you are expected to return to the office/base or call in
* If not returning to the office, the time and location of your next visit or the time when you are due to arrive home
* If driving, car make, registration and model.

**Before a visit, consider the following questions:**

* Do you need physical support from another colleague during the visit?
* Is it necessary to carry a personal attack alarm with you?
* Is your mobile phone fully charged and does it have satellite coverage and signal reception?
* Do you have any credits on your phone or spare change or a phone card in case of emergency?
* Can you park your car (if using one) close to the visit address without putting yourself at risk, i.e., in a darkened road or cul-de-sac?
* Is it necessary to have an exit strategy in the event of an emergency arising?
* Do you require directions/a map of the area? Know your route and avoid the need to ask strangers for directions
* Accessibility of the off-site place of work and whether there is public transport within easy walking distance
* Take additional precautions in inclement weather – ensure warm, waterproof clothing is in the car plus a snack and a drink and consider whether your journey can be re-scheduled.

**When making the visit:**

* You should follow the occupants in when entering and not take the lead;
* Make sure you see how the door, through which you entered, is closed or locked and where the keys are. If the door is locked you have the option of asking for it to be left unlocked.
* Remain alert while in the house – look for anything that may present a problem
* When taking a seat within the property, ensure you are near an exit route and be aware of entrance/exit points;
* Be aware of any obstacles that may prevent you from exiting the premises quickly;
* Be aware of any potential weapons lying around and ensure that your own equipment is not within any potential aggressors’ reach, if it has the potential to be used as a weapon, eg. Scissors.

**If you are concerned:**

* Consider phoning your base on a pretext, explaining your whereabouts, so the person recognises that you are in contact and your whereabouts are known.
* Have a recognised departmental password to inform colleagues covertly if you are in danger.
* If an animal is causing concern, speak to the owner to enlist their cooperation; if co-operation is not forthcoming, consider terminating the visit and leaving.

**If in doubt:**

* Do not enter premises
* Plan your action
* IF VIOLENCE IS THREATENED - LEAVE IMMEDIATELY

**Personal safety**

* Park in well-lit areas
* Do not take short cuts off main, well-lit pavements
* Walk facing oncoming traffic
* Avoid rowdy groups of people
* Carry a torch in the dark
* Have a personal attack alarm readily at hand.

**On return to the car**

* Have your keys ready
* Check the exterior/interior before getting in
* Lock the doors as soon as you get in
* Check back with the team or a family member following a home visit
* If for whatever reason you find you will not be back at the expected time you must ring and let colleagues know of any alterations.

**Whatsapp group**

A Whatsapp group operates to support staff who are working alone. When a member of staff is expecting to work alone, he/she should ask to be added to the group. At the beginning of the employee’s shift he/she should announce his/her work location on the Whatsapp group and how long he/she intends to be there. On leaving the building/ finishing his/her shift, the employee should once again advise the Whatsapp group.

Next review: August 2021

I confirm that I have read and understood this lone working guidance and the accompanying risk assessment.

Signed:

Name:

Date: