INVICTUS
Education Trust

LONE WORKING POLICY

Approved by Board of Trustees

25 May 2021

To be reviewed by Board of Trustees

April 2024

Document Provenance

Lone Working Policy	
Committee Approval Level	Board of Trustees
Policy Author/Responsibility	Chief Operating Officer – Julie Duern
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1. Policy Statement

Invictus Education Trust is committed to ensuring, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the personal safety of those undertaking activities on behalf of the organisation. This policy sets out the Trust's approach to managing lone worker safety; ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard the health and safety of all workers and visitors.

This policy covers all workers including contractors, agency staff, trainees and volunteers undertaking activities on behalf of Invictus Education Trust.

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing situations where the conditions of service delivery and its associated tasks require staff to work alone.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Invictus Education Trust Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

Line managers have responsibility for the day-to-day operating of this policy and have a specific responsibility to ensure its application is fair.

Whilst Invictus Education Trust accepts its duty of care to those undertaking activities on its behalf, it also expects that they will demonstrate personal responsibility for their own health and safety by undertaking appropriate risk assessments of the activities they are undertaking and raising any concerns with their line manager or other appropriate person.

3. Definition of Lone Working

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in or around the school or headquarters premises, in the homes of individuals (ie. HR, Attendance Officers) or in their own home. 'Lone workers' are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, for example:

- a worker who goes alone to a service user's house where several members of the service user's family are present is classed as lone working. If s/he is accompanied by a colleague then s/he is not.
- a worker who drives alone to a location, at the request of the Trust, which is not their normal place of work, is lone working while they drive.
- a worker who meets a service user in a public place with no colleague present e.g. a one to one session using the resources in a library
- a worker who is working out of normal office hours in an office with no-one else present in the building
- a worker who is working where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create a work area isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance.

4. Risk

4.1 Identifying Risk

The following points must be considered when assessing the risk: -
- risk of verbal and physical violence (e.g. consider location, nature of work etc)
- vulnerability of task (e.g. carrying cash, equipment, materials etc)
- particular risks to young workers and any other vulnerable groups of workers
- medical suitability of employee to work alone
- dangers of only one person being in control of a particular task or activity (e.g. employee becomes ill; attacked; accused of improper conduct; or requires assistance)
- arrangements for Lone Worker in case of injury or illness
- checking and control arrangements supporting the Lone Worker
- use of a vehicle
- use of portable equipment including mobile phone coverage
- time and conditions under which work is carried out

4.2 Managing Risk

Arrangements for lone working must be agreed in advance with line managers.

Line managers must ensure that all activities which potentially involve lone working are adequately risk assessed, prior to allowing those activities to take place. All of these activities must be covered by a written risk assessment that sets out the methods in place to control those risks. All available information should be considered and checked or updated as necessary.

Any service user who is assessed as 'high risk' must not be seen alone.

Service managers must ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place including staffing levels and emergency notification procedures.

Individual workers must also be aware of their own responsibility for their personal safety and that of others. It is important that workers always have personal safety foremost in their own minds when engaged in lone working.

Invictus Education Trust must ensure that only suitably experienced workers are put into lone working situations and that any equipment provided is in safe working order.

5. Mandatory Procedures

5.1 Security of Building
The Site Team are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible. Due to the individual needs of the sites, each School will have its own locking and unlocking procedures.

Alarm systems must be tested regularly.

Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with the exits and alarms.

There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone.

If there is any indication that a building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter alone, but must wait for assistance.

In buildings, where staff may be working with people in relative isolation, there must be an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency.

5.2 Personal Safety
Staff should be familiar with and adhere to the terms of the Invictus Education Trust Health & Safety Policy.

Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager

Staff must not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. All meetings should be arranged during normal school operating times, when there is more than one member of staff on site for the duration of the meeting.

Staff must know, and follow, relevant safe working procedures and guidelines, including operating machinery and using hazardous substances.

Staff must inform their line manager of any relevant medical conditions.

Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed (this should be the case even if the member of staff is working out of hours). This also includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following a task rather then returning to their normal place of work.

Schools and Headquarters must ensure that there is a robust system in place for signing in and out, and that staff use it.

Staff such as cleaners, who work to a pre-planned programme of visits, must inform their line manager if they deviate from the programme.

If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation by an agreed person, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate. Arrangement for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the department.

Issues to consider include:
- staffing levels and availability
- the identified risks
- measures in place to reduce those risks

When staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

Staff should take 'reasonable precautions' which might include:
- checking directions for the destination
- checking whether a person is known to present a risk and the agreed plan for working with them
- ensuring your mobile phone is fully charged
- ensuring your car, if used, is roadworthy and has breakdown cover
- avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas (or take a partner with you if necessary)
- taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
- ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phone are carried discreetly

Staff should report any concerns out of office hours to the designated person.

The agreed plan for contact or emergency response should be recorded and readily accessible by the identified person, and updated as necessary. It may be appropriate to agree a code word or phrase to indicate that assistance is required.

Staff should be particularly aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display, and can be retrieved on 1471. If necessary, to prevent the person you call accessing your number, dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

When visiting an area where a risk has been identified, staff should check that their clothing (tie, scarf, earrings etc) will not offer an assailant an advantage. Similarly, they should be aware that pens, pencils, keys or heavy bags may also be used to cause injury.

5.3 Planning
Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.

Plans for responding to individual service areas that present a known risk should be regularly reviewed and discussed with the staff team.

Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place.

Line managers are responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the team.

5.4 Reporting
Accidents, incidents and near-misses should be reported as per the arrangements detailed in the Invictus Education Trust Health and Safety Policy.

5.5 Staff Working at Home
Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

There should be regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods, and an appropriate reporting in system should be used.

5.6 Unacceptable Lone Working

The following activities are not to be carried out by lone workers under any circumstances:

- working at height
- manual handling of heavy or bulky items
- undertaking work for which they are not trained