



Lone Working Policy

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Approved by:	 Victoria Haydon, Director.
 Caroline Baughan, Director.	

Introduction:

Quercus Alternative Provision is committed to ensuring that staff who work with us enjoy a safe working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when staff may be required to work alone or in isolated situations. This, however, will introduce risks for a normally non-hazardous work activity.

Lone working

For the purposes of this policy, lone working will be defined as a situation 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.

At Quercus, there are various work activities that may result in staff members working alone; for example:

1. Staff that are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as cleaning staff working at night or early morning.
2. Staff staying on to finish urgent work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building.
3. Staff who are key-holders or who are left to turn out the lights, shut the windows and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home.
4. Staff on home visits alone. (with parent/guardian present)

Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Directors of Quercus AP to ensure that an annual Health and Safety and Risk Assessments are undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this, as well as the risks of Lone Working.

The risk assessment will take into account the type of tasks undertaken, the environment, health and safety instruction and training received in addition to the individual's medical history.

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Directors of Quercus AP for 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 school.

Protocol

Staff should seek the permission of the Directors of Quercus AP to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours. The experience and training of staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working.

Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague and ensure that they are aware if they are to be in a lone working situation, for example if a colleague had previously been on site but had subsequently left. Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness. If working alone in the setting, the back door is to be locked and so entry can only be via the front door.

Staff Responsibilities:

Staff members have a duty of care for themselves and anyone else who could be affected by their actions. Therefore, they have a responsibility to ensure that they:

- Are aware and follow all policies or procedures.
- Always plan ahead.
- Are fully aware of the risks when working alone.
- Do not put themselves in potential danger.
- Ensure that they have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.
- Be aware of the on-site security procedures.

- Ensure that access is available to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.
- All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with family, friends or work colleagues.
- It is advised that lone workers keep a mobile phone with them in case of an emergency.

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve working at height or any task that has been identified as medium risk (such as moving heavy or unstable objects).

Lone workers should not undertake any activities that are identified as high risk (such as entering the home where suspected or known violence, drug or alcohol misuse has taken place) or which is potentially hazardous, given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and contractors to be aware of and to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the Directors of Quercus AP.

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.

Home Visits:

Staff completing home visits as a Lone Worker should ensure that:

- Other options to avoid lone working have been explored/exhausted.
- The Directors of Quercus AP are aware of the address/family to be visited.
- The Directors of Quercus AP know the date and time of the visit
- The Directors of Quercus AP are made aware at the end of the visit
- An agreed emergency plan is in place should the Directors of Quercus AP not be contacted at the end of the home visit (time elapsed before action is taken, persons to be contacted e.g. police, next of kin)

Site security

Site security must be maintained at all times, however staff should not enter the premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police.

Staff must not put themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals.

All staff receive 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, must follow the setting fire and evacuation procedures in case of an emergency. Staff are responsible for making themselves familiar with and following the setting's safety procedures and knowing the location of safety equipment.

Handling Money

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money (such as being handed dinner/trip money in the family home).

Quercus AP respects the right of the employee, under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the company Directors any aspect of work-related risks.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and amended as necessary. Following any incident a thorough investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.