LONE WORKING POLICY

Issued: June 2022

Review date: June 2023

Lone Working Policy

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1. **Policy Statement**

   Where associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies.

2. **Purpose.**

   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 potentially risky situations.

3. **Scope**

   This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below. Volunteers would not normally be expected to work alone and so should be outside the scope of this policy

4. **Context**

   Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role (i.e. tutors, maintenance). Oxford Sixth Form College principles for supporting lone workers include:

   - A commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
   - Recognising and reducing risk
   - A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
   - A clear understanding of responsibilities
   - The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property
   - A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
   - Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate.

5. **Definition**

   Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

6. Mandatory Building Procedures

6.1. Security of buildings

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
- External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone

6.2. Working alone at another building/location

All staff must exit the College teaching buildings by 18:00hrs, unless there is agreement with your manager, in advance, for exceptional circumstances.

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible
- They are familiar with the fire and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area
- Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed

7. Personal safety

- Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together
- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- 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
- Outside of teaching days and times, staff must ensure that they sign in and out of College buildings
- 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 includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base.

- Staff who work an authorised pre-planned pattern of work whereby they are a lone worker must inform their Line Manager if they deviate from the programme.
- Authorisation for any pre-planned pattern of work leading to an employee being in a lone worker situation must take into account:
  - Staffing levels and availability
  - The identified risks
  - Measures in place to reduce those risks

- Where 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.
- If a member of staff does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary.
- Staff working away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff may use their own mobile phone or a College phone.
- Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order.

8. Assessment of risk

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations
- Any other special circumstances

All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

9. Planning

- Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc.
- Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself
- Communication, checking-in and fall back arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time

- The Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the staff member.

10. 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.
- Staff working from home should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods.
- Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for staff that live alone.
- Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

11. Monitoring and Review

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager or with the whole team, as appropriate.