LONE WORKING POLICY

September 2017

Lone Working Policy

INTRODUCTION

Radius Trust is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. This policy applies to all Radius Trust employees.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define lone working;
- make sure that the risk of working alone is assessed;
- take action to reduce the risk to lone workers;
- ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibility to use the Radius Trust systems introduced to assist lone workers;
- make sure that training, support and advice is available to staff;
- encourage full reporting of incidents and near misses relating to lone working.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Within each Radius Trust setting, Heads/Principals and their Senior Leadership Teams should:
- ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and any related documentation
- ensure induction and training is comprehensive and up to date
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out and support is offered to lone workers
- put in place arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working

It is incumbent upon all Radius Trust staff (including temporary/casual/agency workers) to:
- ensure they are aware of this policy and any related documentation
- seek advice from their line manager and act upon guidance, procedures and instructions, to avoid putting themselves or their colleagues at risk
- report and record any incidents or accidents promptly and thoroughly
- follow risk assessments and report any revisions needed
- plan prior to a lone visit and undertake dynamic risk assessments during a visit
- use equipment and technology which has been provided for their personal safety, in the way in which it was intended and attend training in its use
- report all incidents and near-misses to their line manager and via relevant Trust systems

Other responsibilities:
- Annual safety audits are carried out by the Facilities Team, assisted by the Head/Principal of each Radius Trust school. Reports are sent to the

Head/Principal, the Facilities Manager and the Executive Head. Following the report, the Facilities Manager compiles an action plan containing action points allocated to named members of staff and timeframes for completion.

- Incident & Accident Reports are monitored by the Head/Principal of each school and submitted to the LA Health and Safety department for auditing purposes, as well as internally to the Executive Head. A summary of all Incident & Accident Reports is reviewed by the Safeguarding Team and reported on a monthly basis to the Executive Team. A termly summary is also submitted to governors and Trustees.
- Risk assessments will be carried out by all relevant staff and monitored by the Head/Principal of each school and by the Executive Head.

DEFINITION

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those **"who work by themselves without close or direct supervision"**. They may include:
- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues e.g. visiting people in their homes or supporting pupils/students in the community
- People who work at home
- People travelling between places of work

The definition can cover staff in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures. This policy refers to high risk and low risk activities.

Some employees may spend most of their working lives working with others but find themselves working alone occasionally e.g. when working late. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy refers to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF LONE WORKING

People who work alone will face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks, however the following events may have a higher risk if they are alone:
- Accidents or sudden illnesses (of the staff member or any pupil/student they are supporting)
- Challenging behaviour
- Violence/threat of violence
- Allegations of abuse/theft etc.
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone e.g. heavy lifting, use of certain equipment
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in

Steps can be taken to reduce the risks of all of these events.

RISK ASSESSMENT

No lone activity should be carried out with pupils/students, or a venue visited, without an appropriate risk assessment being carried out. This should be taken by the lone worker and regularly reviewed.

All staff should familiarise themselves with the Risk Assessment Policy and adhere to their responsibilities.

Managers should take into account the actual risk to staff, and the individual's perception of risk, when making a Risk Assessment. Steps should be taken to minimise the risk, taking into account the following:
- Does the workplace present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there any risk of violence or the threat of violence? Is the nature of a visit of the person being visited likely to increase the risk? Will the person be alone in a dark or remote location?
- Is there a risk of unsubstantiated allegations being made?

MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF LONE WORKING

Supervision

By definition, lone workers are not under constant supervision. However, supervisors can ensure that staff understand the risks associated with their work and the relevant safety precautions. They can put into place arrangements for the individual to contact a supervisor if they need additional guidance e.g. small cards printed with emergency contact numbers could be issued to staff. Occasional site visits may be appropriate, particularly if there are high risk activities. Staff new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially. Regular contact by phone may be appropriate.

Line managers should assess what level of supervision is required; it may be appropriate to ask parents/carers to sign a disclaimer to say they will supervise staff working in their home, in case of breakages etc. Where possible, joint visits by different disciplines should be coordinated to avoid the need for lone visits.

Where there is a formal documented history of a pupil or student making allegations, lone working should be avoided in Radius Trust schools, in the community and at home.

Reporting back

A system should be in place to ensure that a lone worker returns to their base or home at the completion of a task away from their normal workplace, if the task is considered

to have a higher risk than normal. For high risk or frequent lone workers this may involve ringing their manager/colleague to confirm their safety. It may be appropriate to issue mobile phones for this purpose, which must be kept charged. All staff involved share a responsibility to make contact.

Consideration should also be given to staff who support or meet pupils/students, parents/carers and the public on a one to one basis on Radius Trust premises. They may be alone in a place where colleagues cannot see them. Systems should be considered for ensuring they have emerged safely from these meetings and for raising an alarm if necessary e.g. panic alarms. Notices on doors should read 'Session/meeting in progress' rather than 'Do not disturb' so that colleagues feel able to check if they have concerns.

Accidents and emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies, including being made aware of special arrangements for out of hours incidents. First aid is normally available in Radius Trust settings, or it may be considered appropriate for staff working outside the Trust to carry a basic first aid kit and to be trained in first aid if there is a foreseeable risk of injury.

It is necessary for staff to sign in and out of buildings and let caretaking staff know they are there if they are working unusual hours, in case of fire and to avoid staff being accidentally locked in.

Tasks not suitable for lone working

Risk assessment will identify the hazards of work. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another worker, or done in hours when the worker is not alone e.g. a member of staff who arrives before other colleagues may be instructed not to attempt heavy manual handling until other colleagues arrive to assist.

Violence/threat of violence at work

Staff must ensure that violent incidents are reported, both to ensure they are supported and to ensure that the risk is communicated to other staff who may be affected e.g. if the incident occurred in a student's home, where other staff may visit.

The risk of violence may be associated with environmental issues like working alone outside after dark, or unexpected incidents may occur where there has been no previous history of incidents. Lone workers should be trained in dealing with difficult people, to recognise risk and to use behaviour to minimise risk.

CONCLUSION

Establishing safe working for lone workers is not different from organising the safety of other staff, but risk assessments must take account of any extra risk factors. Managers must ensure that they have not only introduced measures to reduce any risk but that they communicate their expectations to lone workers and train and support them appropriately.

All staff, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and can take simple steps to minimise the risks associated with their normal working life.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Fire Safety Procedure
Health & Safety Policy
Incidents & Accidents Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Risk Assessment Policy