

Staff Lone Working Policy

Approval Arrangements

All statutory policies in the Trust are ultimately the responsibility of the Trust Board. To enable it to discharge this responsibility appropriately and in collaboration with the constituent schools, the Trust Board will

1. set a full Trust wide policy which applies in the same way to all schools,
2. require individual schools to set a policy (in most cases with Trust-provided guidance) appropriate to the needs and circumstances of an individual school

This is a level 1 policy against the Trust Governance Plan and supersedes any previous version.

Approval Body:	CEO
Date Approved:	25/11/24
Author:	HR Director and H&S Lead
Next review:	Autumn 2027
Review period:	3 years
Version:	2.3

1. Aims

The vision of the Tenax Schools Trust is to achieve excellence by working together so that all may feel loved and empowered to serve a thriving society. We are committed to education providing life changing transformative opportunities.

The Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working alone. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

2. Legislation and Guidance

The Trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

This policy is based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) advice for lone working.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies including our school Health and Safety policy and procedures, and our policy for remote and atypical working arrangements.

3. Definition

Within this policy, 'lone working' refers to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of lone working: "Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision".

This includes situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone in the school and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance. It is possible for a staff member to be 'lone working' with other staff members in the building due to the nature of the building creating isolated areas.

Where associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and the Trust have a duty of care to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. While many hazards at work are relatively easy to identify and control, other health and safety aspects are less easy to define.

4. Scope: Identifying Lone Workers

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. They also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them.

These responsibilities cannot be transferred to any other person, including those people who work alone.

Workers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work activities and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, either employees who work separately from others in an establishment, or mobile workers who work away from a fixed base are classed as lone workers. Examples of employees who may be classed as lone workers include:

- Staff with responsibility for opening up and closing buildings;
- Staff working outside normal working hours, i.e. — 16.00 — 08.00;
- Staff working during holiday periods;
- Staff working in an isolated part of the building;
- Staff working in an environment away from the school.

(This list is by no means exhaustive)

Consideration therefore needs to be given to the potential risks faced by lone workers, as follows:

- Commitment to supporting staff both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- Recognising and reducing risk by adopting a systematic approach to undertaking regular risk assessments
- A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
- A clear understanding of responsibilities
- The priority placed on the safety of the individual
- A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
- Equipment such as mobile phones, personal alarms, etc. made available.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

As the employer, the Trust has ultimate responsibility for the Health and Safety of all employees and anyone contracted to work for the Trust. The CEO of the Trust may delegate Health and Safety responsibility to individual school Headteachers or, where appropriate, line managers.

Headteachers will ensure there are effective arrangements, planning, organisation, control and monitoring for safety within their school and that preventative measures are maintained.

The Headteacher has primary responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the objectives set out in this policy.

Before allowing people to work alone, line managers need to satisfy themselves that the employee understands what is expected of them, the standards they have to work to and in particular, the procedures to be followed (including who to contact) in the event of an emergency.

All employees have a duty to co-operate with the employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and all other related regulations.

In line with our Corporate Health & Safety Policy, each member of staff is responsible for their personal safety and that of other persons in the school by the proper observation of school policy and procedures.

6. Risk Assessments

The Trust/employer has a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary.

Risk assessments should be completed and the resultant controls implemented, which should then be reviewed and updated.

This should include:

- Involving workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them
- Taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or putting in place control measures, e.g. carefully selecting work equipment to ensure the worker is able to perform the required tasks in safety
- Instruction, training and supervision
- Reviewing risk assessments periodically (at least annually) or when there has been a significant change in working practice.

There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present. Examples include:

- Working at height
- Excessive manual handling
- Working with substances that are hazardous to health including flammables
- Working in a confined space, where a supervisor may need to be present, along with someone dedicated to the rescue role
- Working with electricity including near exposed live electricity conductors and undertaking Portable Appliance Testing
- Dealing with unpredictable partners and stakeholders.

Personal safety is very important, points to consider in a risk assessment are:

- Who knows where employees are and whom they are with? Identify a designated member of staff to inform i.e. line manager

- Are there suitable lines of communication between the lone worker and a designated person? Ensure regular contact/communication throughout the day
- Are there procedures in place if contact with the lone worker cannot be established, as required. Regular communication network should ensure appropriate contact and wellbeing of lone worker
- Can employees in isolated areas summon help or raise an alarm? Ensure employee has direct access to either a departmental phone or mobile phone
- Have there previously been any problems arising from employees working in isolation? By ensuring the caretaker/site manager is informed when staff leave the premises, this should avoid the situation of staff being locked in school at the end of the day. Working staff should be aware of any fixed closure times
- Staff should inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and follow an agreed plan to inform that person and the caretaker/site manager when leaving the premises
- Lone working can only be undertaken following authorisation from an employee's line manager
- It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure all necessary precautions and methods are adhered to at all times and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure their own safety
- A robust system is in place for signing in and out within the main office, and staff should follow these procedures
- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, procedures should be in place for regular contact between staff, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation
- Where staff are issued with mobile phones; they are responsible for ensuring that the phone is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining. Personal alarms may also be considered
- Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where the existing control measures may not be fully effective, must inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible.

7. Control Measures

In order to manage the risks identified, the following control measures should be applied:

- Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness
- Staff are required not to arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. Consider use of online meetings as an alternative
- All meetings must be arranged during main school occupancy times or when there is more than one member of staff on site for the duration of that meeting
- Staff are required not to handle cash when lone working
- Late meetings must be arranged so as to finish promptly and so as not to leave one member of staff alone on site

- Staff are required not to approach or let into the buildings unauthorised persons when lone working
- The site team must be informed of staff working patterns and when a member of staff breaks this pattern and will be lone working
- Staff must always sign in and out
- The site team must check that all staff are signed out before they lock up for the day to ensure someone isn't left in the building
- The site team must periodically walk the corridors in order to monitor lone workers
- Two-way radios should be used for site staff who regularly work in isolation.

8. Incidents

Should an incident occur the lone worker must report this to their line manager and a de-briefing should follow any incident.

Any incidents or concerns in relation to lone working should be reported to the health and safety co-ordinator/headteacher and escalated to the Trust health and safety lead as appropriate.

9. Working Away from Trust Premises

Staff should sign out or in at the designated place of work when possible and staff whereabouts should be indicated in the signing in/out register.

Another member of staff should be informed of an expected time of return and know what to do in the event of overdue contact.

A communication network should be in place throughout the working day by the staff member having a mobile phone with them or a number at which they can be contacted.

A designated member of staff should be informed of the proposed visit, proposed time and return.

If possible and appropriate, meetings should be attended with a colleague.

10. Monitoring and Review

Having undertaken appropriate risk assessments and implemented all necessary controls it is important that all lone working situations are monitored and continually reviewed.

The health and safety co-ordinator/headteacher is responsible for monitoring the risk assessments and following up any incidents or concerns.

Staff with a concern should ensure the issue is discussed with their line manager and should not lone work until the concern is resolved.

11. Communication

All new staff should be made aware of the lone working policy during their induction period. This policy will remain available to all staff on the Tenax website. Lone workers should be reminded of the provisions of this policy as part of regular line management meetings.