

# **St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School**

**St. Theresa's**  
Catholic Primary School



## **LONE WORKING POLICY**

“We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God”

St. Theresa's  
Catholic Primary School



## Validation Grid

<b>Title</b>	Lone Working Policy
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<b>Associate Author</b>	N/A
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Headteacher

*Barbara Costa*

Barbara Costa

Chair of Governors

*Seamus McKenna*

Seamus McKenna

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### 1. Statement of Intent

St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School (St. Theresa's / we / school) recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves, without close or direct supervision and sometimes in isolated work areas or outside of office hours.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the governing body as the employer, has a duty of care to advise and assess risks for lone workers. Lone workers also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff. The policy outlines lone working procedures and what is expected of employees who undertake lone working.

### 2. Legal Framework:

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

### 3. Definitions:

Workers as defined by the Health and Safety Executive are, "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision" sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours; it is possible for a staff member to be "lone working" with other staff members in the building. As part of the Management structure at the school, it is the duty of care for all Managers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their staff, as it is also the employee's responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by their work activity.

People working alone or in isolation from others may be at particular risk either because of circumstances of their day to day working or because an emergency may occur. They are at extra risk if they are not in regular contact with others and are not kept informed of any changes that may affect them.

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

1. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
2. Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
3. Can all the equipment involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
4. Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.
5. Is there a risk of violence?
6. Does the person have any medical condition that may affect their suitability to work alone?
7. What happens if the person either becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?

There are various work activities that 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, set the alarm and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home.

Many lone workers could come into more than one of the categories below. These categories can be split into levels of risk as follows:

- *Category One:* Staff working in offices or other secure locations outside of normal working hours or who routinely work in these locations on their own.
- *Category Two:* The site manager and cleaning staff that have to work out of hours.
- *Category Three:* Key holders on a call out.

#### **4. Aims of the Policy:**

To ensure adequate control measures are put into place to safeguard all employees who work alone at any point during their contractual duties. All hazards should be identified and all significant risks should be recorded on a risk assessment. These risks should be reviewed on a regular basis especially if there is a change in the situation; a near miss has occurred or an accident or incident has taken place.

To encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

1. Providing safe systems of work for all staff.
2. Authorising lone working requests.
3. Ensuring that there are appropriate security systems in place to secure the building.
4. Setting up an adequate system for recording home and out of office visits (employees signing in and out).
5. Ensuring this policy is given to all persons who may work alone on the premises.
6. Ensuring that during induction all procedures are discussed, a copy of relevant

information is obtained, and a training plan is agreed by both the staff member and the manager.

7. Ensuring that the staff members are suitable to be left working alone.
8. Ensuring that procedures allow for lone workers to request additional support when they feel vulnerable.
9. Reviewing this policy every two years or sooner if an incident has occurred.
10. Providing practical support when needed.
11. Reporting any incidents to the Chair of Governors.
12. Recording and monitoring all accidents and incidents.

The staff are responsible for:

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:

1. Are aware of and follow all policies or procedures.
2. Always plan ahead.
3. Are fully aware of the risks when working alone.
4. Do not put themselves in potential danger.
5. Have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.
6. Are aware of the on-site security procedures.
7. Do not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working (meetings must be arranged during school occupancy times, or when there are other members of staff on site).
8. Ensure that access is available to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.
9. Do not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.
10. Establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends or work colleagues. Lone workers must inform a relative/friend/work colleague that they will be working, with an approximate time of departure.
11. Request authorisation from the Headteacher to work alone.

## **6. Authorisation**

The Headteacher, in conjunction with relevant staff members, will develop an approved list of lone working activities, outlining situations where lone working may be authorised and the necessary precautions and work methods to be followed.

Staff members will request authorisation from the Headteacher to undertake lone working.

Subject to the completion of a risk assessment, the lone working will be authorised if it is on the approved list. If the lone working is not on the approved list, it can only be undertaken following explicit authorisation from the Headteacher.

## **7. Risk Assessment**

- Prior to a member of staff undertaking lone working, a risk assessment will be conducted by the Headteacher.
- The risk assessment will cover all work proposed to be undertaken alone and where risk may be increased by the work activity itself or by the lack of available assistance should something go wrong.

- Depending on the tasks the lone worker is proposing to undertake, the risk assessment will cover the following as appropriate:
  - The staff member's medical fitness and suitability to work alone
  - Channels of communication
  - Any specific risks related to the lone working activity
  - The risk of violence
  - Access and egress
  - Reporting and recording arrangements
  - The ability to trace the staff member's whereabouts
  - Situational hazards
- A log of known risks, including locations, individuals and tasks, will be kept, updated and regularly reviewed. This log will be kept securely in the Headteacher's office and lone workers can request to see parts of the log relevant to their lone working.
- It is the responsibility of the lone worker to ensure all necessary precautions and procedures are adhered to at all times.
- Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where the existing control measures may not be fully effective, will inform the Headteacher as soon as possible.

#### **8. Procedures for lone workers**

- ✓ A record will be kept in the school office containing details of all staff members that undertake lone working, including the tasks they undertake, where they undertake them and when.
- ✓ All lone workers will ensure they have a mobile phone or other personal safety equipment where necessary.
- ✓ Lone workers will ensure they have any of their provided personal safety equipment with them prior to lone working and that the equipment is working.
- ✓ Lone workers will avoid organising meetings where they will be alone with an individual or group. Where this is unavoidable, the lone worker will obtain prior approval from their line manager who will make any arrangements to ensure the staff member's safety. Any appointments of this nature will be recorded.
- ✓ In general, staff should never work alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- ✓ Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone.
- ✓ Lone workers will have access to adequate first aid facilities.
- ✓ Under no circumstances should a lone worker compromise their personal safety. If a lone worker feels in danger, they will remove themselves from the situation immediately.
- ✓ The school operates a 'buddy' system, whereby lone workers have a designated member of staff that will:
  - Be aware of the schedule and movements of the lone worker.
  - Have all necessary contact details of the lone worker.
  - Attempt to contact the lone worker if contact is not made as agreed.
  - Follow agreed escalation procedures and notify the Headteacher of any incidents.
  - Contingency arrangements will be in place for a member of staff to take over the 'buddy' role in case the nominated person becomes unavailable.

- ✓ Where there is a genuine concern about the whereabouts or safety of a lone worker, the Headteacher will use the information held on record to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the worker. If contact cannot be made, the Headteacher will decide on the best course of action depending on the circumstances, which could include contacting the emergency services.

## **9. Fire**

In the event of a fire, the lone worker should follow the school fire emergency procedures.

## **10. Safeguarding**

If a lone worker is required to conduct one-to-one sessions with pupils, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- ✓ Full and ongoing training regarding child protection, physical restraint and the use of reasonable force will be provided to the worker.
- ✓ Meetings or sessions will never be held in remote or secluded areas.
- ✓ At least one other member of staff will be informed of when and where a one-to-one session is taking place.
- ✓ The lone worker will not use 'engaged' or equivalent signs on rooms used for one-to-one sessions.
- ✓ Doors will be kept open during sessions – where this is not possible, the worker will ensure both parties are visible through a window.
- ✓ When holding the session, the worker will talk to the pupil with a desk between them, or otherwise arrange the room or environment to avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- ✓ If a pupil becomes emotionally distressed or angry, the worker will seek assistance and a record will be kept of the incident.

## **11. Key Holders:**

Key holders may need to attend premises outside of normal business hours. This may be to carry out normal work activities or following the activation of an intruder alarm or because of some other emergency that might have occurred.

Key holders are registered with the LA and Police in case there is an out of hours' emergency. This is essential when the building is protected with an intruder alarm system. Good practice dictates that at least three key holders should be appointed in order to cover holidays and sickness etc.

The key holders at St. Theresa's School are;

Barbara Costa (Executive Headteacher)

James Troy (Head of School)

Martin Kryst (Site Manager)

Key holders that are attending the premises in the event of intruder alarm activation should use the following procedure:

- On receiving a telephone call notifying of intruder alarm activation, confirm the identity of the person making the call, i.e. Police Officer's name and number or Alarm Company operative's name.
- Key Holder to phone another named key holder to inform them.
- On arrival at the premises:

- a. If the Police are in attendance make sure they have checked all sides of the building.
  - b. Then enter with the Police and check all areas.
  - c. If the Police are not yet in attendance drive slowly round as much of the premises as possible (using public roads if necessary) checking for signs of entry including the roof and walls. If in any doubt leave the site and from the first available telephone, call the Police by dialling 999. Do not enter the building alone.
  - d. If there are signs of a break-in call the Police as above.
- On entering the premises with the police:
    - Carefully note all information displayed on the alarm controls. Take no action at the control panel beyond un-setting the protected areas.
    - Check that the telephones are in working order. If the telephones do not work, it is likely that the lines have been cut by intruders who have, or who may try again, to attack the school. If the Police are in attendance they should be made aware of the telephones not working.
    - Please note that a crime reference number will be required for insurance purposes.
  - After checking the premises:
    - If there is no apparent break-in and the alarm is suspected to be faulty, the alarm company should be called to arrange for an engineer to attend.
    - Notify the previously alerted key holder, to let them know that all is in order. Consider arranging to make further calls if appropriate.
    - Never leave the premises unprotected. If necessary, arrange for other staff to join you or relieve you as appropriate.
    - If you are not responsible for opening the premises at the start of the next day, leave a note for the person who will be undertaking this responsibility; advising them of the problem and instructing them to liaise with the alarm company for further engineer attendance, if this is necessary.
    - Ensure that all written logs detailing what has occurred are correctly completed by both the key-holder attending and the alarm engineer.
    - Advise the Headteacher and other members of staff as necessary.
    - Arrange for any emergency repairs to be made so the premises can be secured.
    - Secure the premises and set the alarm system.
    - On your next return to the premises advise the relevant members of staff about the situation.

## **12. Site Manager:**

The site manager is more likely to be lone working and is a key holder, responsible for opening and locking up the premises. They are also the person who would attend the premises when there has been a suspected break-in; if this is the case then they should follow the guidance given in this document.

### *Hazards*

Activities which may place the site manager at risk whilst working alone could include:

- Checking security

- Laying grit and clearing paths in icy and snowy weather
- Locking up after events
- Patrolling or visiting the site after the hours of darkness
- Opening the building first thing in the morning
- Changing light bulbs
- Using hazardous chemicals
- Manual Handling

### *Control Measures*

As well as considering the guidance contained in this document there are some activities which should be avoided when lone working. These include:

- Working at height
- Working in confined spaces

When considering what control measures can be put in place to keep the lone worker safe, the school will also take into account any medical conditions the employee may have, which could put them at more risk. To reduce the risk, any hazardous activities will be carried out during normal working hours (where possible) and lower risk activities when lone working.

Some other examples of control measures that can be adopted to reduce the risks identified above may include:

- ✓ Only use equipment provided by the employer
- ✓ Ensure employee is adequately trained for the required task
- ✓ Check weather forecasts and put grit on hazardous pathways before ice or snow forms
- ✓ Ensure access and egress from site are free from defects and well lit
- ✓ Carry a fully charged torch when attending site after dark
- ✓ Carry out Manual Handling risk assessments to ensure that loads are not too heavy for one individual.
- ✓ Ensure that the employee has had Manual Handling training

At St. Theresa's, the site manager will also carry a Personal Safety Device for periods of lone working.

### **13. Contractors**

It is acknowledged that there will be times when contractors are working on site out of office hours.

Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Contractors must be given a nominated key holder's mobile number to ensure the school is locked up as soon as is practical once the contractor has left the site.