



New Direction School



Lone Working

Policy and Guidance

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1. Aims

New Direction School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of staff, students, visitors, contractors and others affected by the school's activities. This policy sets out how lone working is identified, risk assessed, authorised, monitored and reviewed.

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure lone working is only undertaken where risks have been assessed and can be appropriately controlled;
- protect staff from foreseeable risks associated with working without close or direct supervision;
- ensure there are clear arrangements for communication, check-in, emergency response and escalation;
- ensure safeguarding, pupil supervision and staff conduct expectations are maintained at all times;
- make clear which tasks must not be undertaken alone;
- support compliance with health and safety legislation, DfE expectations, safeguarding duties and the Independent School Standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, agency staff, volunteers, contractors and any other adults working on behalf of New Direction School. It applies to lone working on the school site, in the equine provision/yard, during travel, during home or community visits, during off-site activities, and when working outside normal operating hours.

This policy should be read alongside the Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessment Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, First Aid arrangements, Fire Safety procedures and site security procedures.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been written with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR);
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992;
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992;
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005;
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998;
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Equality Act 2010;
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly standards relating to welfare, health and safety, supervision, fire safety, first aid and risk assessment;
- DfE Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools;
- HSE guidance: Lone working - protect those working alone;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

4. Definition of lone working

For the purposes of this policy, lone working means any situation where a member of staff works by themselves without close or direct supervision, or where they cannot be seen or heard by another competent adult who could provide prompt support in an emergency.

Lone working may occur for a short period or for a longer planned period. It may occur on site, off site, during travel, in the yard, in an office, in a classroom, during site opening or closure, or in a community setting. Staff may also be considered lone workers where others are nearby but unable to provide immediate help due to distance, barriers, lack of awareness or the nature of the work being undertaken.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Proprietor

The Proprietor, Yvonne Evans, has overall responsibility for ensuring that New Direction School has effective arrangements in place to manage health, safety and welfare risks, including risks arising from lone working.

5.2 Directors and senior leaders

Luke Collins and Hannah Oliver are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy. Luke Collins is the Head of Education and DSL. Hannah Oliver is a Director, Deputy DSL and Head of Equine Provision. Their responsibilities include:

- ensuring lone working arrangements are risk assessed and proportionate;
- deciding which lone working activities are authorised and which are prohibited;
- ensuring staff are competent, trained and appropriately supported;
- ensuring emergency contact and escalation arrangements are in place;
- reviewing incidents, near misses or concerns linked to lone working;
- ensuring safeguarding concerns linked to lone working are recorded and escalated appropriately.

5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs

The DSL is Luke Collins. Deputy DSLs are Hannah Oliver, Emily Smith and Nikki Morris. Any lone working concern that involves a student, a safeguarding concern, an allegation, a staff conduct issue, unsafe supervision, unexplained injury, welfare concern or unsafe home/community situation must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and recorded on CPOMS in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5.4 Line managers

Line managers must ensure that staff do not undertake lone working unless it has been considered and authorised through appropriate risk assessment and communication arrangements. They must monitor compliance with this policy and ensure concerns are addressed promptly.

5.5 Staff

All staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions. Staff must:

- follow this policy and any relevant risk assessment or safe system of work;
- not undertake prohibited lone working activities;
- use agreed check-in and communication procedures;
- stop, withdraw or seek advice if circumstances change or risks increase;
- report incidents, near misses, safeguarding concerns, defects or unsafe arrangements immediately;
- ensure they are medically fit and appropriately equipped to work alone where this is authorised.

6. Principles for managing lone working

New Direction School will apply the following principles when considering lone working:

- lone working must be avoided where it is not necessary or where the risk cannot be adequately controlled;
- no member of staff should be placed at unnecessary risk for operational convenience;
- higher-risk tasks must be planned, supervised and undertaken by competent staff;
- safeguarding, professional boundaries and safer working practice must not be compromised;
- staff must have a reliable means of communication and a clear emergency escalation route;
- risk assessments must consider the task, location, timing, people involved, history of risk, medical factors, travel, environment and emergency arrangements;
- staff must be empowered to cancel, delay, adapt or withdraw from work if they feel unsafe.

7. Activities where lone working may occur

Lone working may occur in the following circumstances, provided the activity has been authorised and suitable controls are in place:

- early morning or late afternoon site opening, closure or checks;
- administrative work in a single occupancy office;
- working during school closure periods or holidays;
- site security checks or responding to alarms;
- cleaning, maintenance or contractor supervision arrangements;
- home visits or community visits where risk assessed and authorised;
- transport-related work or travelling between sites or activities;
- yard checks or equine care tasks where assessed as low risk and within staff competence;
- remote working or working from home where relevant.

8. Activities where lone working is not permitted

The following activities must not normally be undertaken by a lone worker unless there has been specific senior approval, a written risk assessment and additional controls that reduce the risk to an acceptable level:

- working alone with a student in a way that breaches safeguarding, supervision or safer working expectations;
- working at height, including use of ladders, access to roofs or fragile surfaces;
- manual handling tasks involving heavy, awkward or unpredictable loads;
- using high-risk machinery or equipment without another competent adult available;
- tasks involving hazardous substances where emergency assistance may be required;
- entering confined spaces or poorly ventilated areas;
- handling or leading horses where the individual is not competent, the horse is unsettled, the task is high risk or emergency support would not be available;
- responding to violence, aggression, intruders or suspected criminal activity alone;
- home or community visits where there is known or suspected risk of violence, substance misuse, unsafe adults, unsafe animals, environmental hazards or safeguarding escalation;

- transporting a student alone unless this is explicitly risk assessed, authorised and consistent with safeguarding and transport procedures;
- administering emergency medical interventions where a second adult is required by the care plan or risk assessment.

9. Risk assessment before lone working

Before lone working is authorised, leaders must consider whether the work needs to be done alone, whether it can be rearranged, and whether risks can be adequately controlled. A formal lone working risk assessment should be completed for routine or foreseeable lone working arrangements and reviewed when circumstances change.

The risk assessment should consider:

- the nature of the task and whether it is suitable for one person;
- the location, access, lighting, security, exits and emergency arrangements;
- the time of day, duration and whether the person may become isolated;
- the staff member's competence, training, experience, medical needs and confidence;
- known history of behaviour, violence, aggression, safeguarding concerns or environmental risks;
- availability of first aid, fire evacuation arrangements and emergency support;
- communication arrangements, including signal, battery level and check-in points;
- transport arrangements and journey risks;
- whether reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act 2010;
- whether additional supervision, pairing, postponement or alternative arrangements are required.

10. Safeguarding and pupil supervision

Lone working must never compromise safeguarding arrangements, staff conduct expectations or the supervision of students. Staff must follow the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and any individual student risk assessment or behaviour support plan.

Staff should avoid situations where they are unnecessarily isolated with a student. Where one-to-one work is educationally, pastorally or operationally necessary, it must be transparent, planned, risk assessed where appropriate and in line with safer working practice. Doors should generally remain open or have vision panels unless there is a justified reason and the arrangement is known to senior staff.

Where a health and safety concern also raises a safeguarding issue, staff must report this immediately to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and record it on CPOMS. Examples include unsafe supervision, concerns about a student's presentation, unsafe home circumstances, unexplained injuries, harmful behaviour, disclosures, allegations, or concerns about adult conduct.

11. Site-based lone working

Where staff are authorised to work alone on the school site, they must:

- inform an agreed contact of their arrival, expected location, expected finish time and departure;
- ensure they have a charged mobile phone or other reliable communication device;
- know how to raise the alarm in an emergency;
- have access to keys, alarms and emergency contact information appropriate to their role;
- keep external doors secure and avoid admitting unknown visitors when alone;
- avoid high-risk areas or tasks unless specifically authorised;
- follow fire evacuation procedures and leave the building immediately if the alarm sounds;
- report defects, incidents or concerns as soon as possible.

12. Equine provision and yard-based lone working

The equine provision creates specific risks because horses are live animals and can behave unpredictably. The Head of Equine Provision, Hannah Oliver, is responsible for ensuring that yard-based lone working arrangements are appropriately risk assessed and communicated.

Yard-based lone working must consider the weather, ground conditions, lighting, horse behaviour, task complexity, staff competence, equipment, manual handling, biosecurity, emergency access and communication arrangements.

Staff must not work alone with horses where the task is beyond their competence, the horse is known to be unsettled, the work involves increased risk, or prompt assistance would not be available. Students must not be left unsupervised on the yard or with horses.

13. Home visits, community visits and off-site working

Home visits, community visits and off-site working must be planned and authorised. A risk assessment must be completed where there are known or foreseeable risks. Staff must consider safeguarding information, previous incidents, parental/carer engagement, environmental risks, animals, other adults present, travel arrangements and communication coverage.

Where there is an increased risk of violence, aggression, unsafe adults, substance misuse, domestic abuse, criminal activity, unsafe animals or other environmental concerns, visits must not be undertaken alone unless senior leaders have specifically approved the arrangement and robust controls are in place. In higher-risk circumstances, two staff members should attend or an alternative arrangement should be made.

Staff must not enter or remain in a property or community location if they feel unsafe. They should leave promptly, move to a place of safety and contact the agreed senior leader or emergency services as appropriate.

14. Transport and travel

Travel may create lone working risks, particularly where staff travel between sites, transport students, attend visits or work outside normal hours. Staff must ensure they are fit to drive, have appropriate business insurance where using their own vehicle for work purposes, and follow the school's transport and safeguarding procedures.

Transporting a student alone should be avoided wherever possible. Where it is necessary, it must be risk assessed, authorised, transparent and consistent with safeguarding procedures, parental/carer arrangements and any individual student risk assessment.

15. Communication and check-in arrangements

Effective communication is a key control for lone working. The level of contact should reflect the level of risk. The agreed arrangements must be clear before lone working begins.

Check-in arrangements may include:

- confirming start time, location, intended task and expected finish time;
- scheduled phone calls or messages at agreed intervals;
- a named contact who will monitor the arrangement;
- a clear action plan if the lone worker misses a check-in;
- confirmation that the lone worker has left safely;

- use of the main school telephone number, 01246 810456, during normal operating hours where appropriate.

If a lone worker fails to make contact at the agreed time, the named contact must attempt to contact them immediately. If there is no response, the emergency escalation procedure in Appendix 4 must be followed.

16. Emergency procedures

Lone workers must know what to do in an emergency, including how to contact senior leaders, emergency services and site keyholders where relevant. In an emergency, staff should prioritise their own safety and the safety of students or others present.

Staff should call 999 where there is immediate danger, serious injury, fire, violence, intruder risk, serious medical emergency or any situation requiring urgent emergency service attendance. The school must be informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

Accidents, incidents and near misses must be reported in line with the Health and Safety Policy and accident reporting procedures. Safeguarding concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

17. Personal safety and violence at work

New Direction School will not tolerate violence, threats, harassment or intimidation towards staff. Staff must not place themselves at risk by attempting to manage violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour alone.

Where a staff member feels threatened, they should withdraw if it is safe to do so, move to a place of safety, contact support or emergency services, and report the incident to a senior leader. Any incident involving a student must also be considered in relation to individual risk assessments, behaviour support arrangements and safeguarding procedures.

18. Medical, wellbeing and occupational stress considerations

Lone working risk assessments should consider whether a member of staff has any medical condition, disability, pregnancy-related need, stress-related concern or other factor that may affect their ability to work safely alone. Reasonable adjustments will be considered where required.

Staff should inform a senior leader if they believe a health, wellbeing or personal safety factor may affect their ability to work alone safely. This information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to manage risk.

19. Training and staff competence

Staff will be made aware of this policy through induction and ongoing training where relevant to their role. Additional training or briefing may be required for staff undertaking higher-risk lone working, including yard duties, home visits, off-site visits, transport, site security, first aid, emergency procedures or behaviour-related work.

Staff must not undertake lone working activities for which they are not competent, trained or authorised.

20. Recording, monitoring and review

Routine lone working arrangements should be recorded through the relevant risk assessment, authorisation form, rota, visit plan, off-site visit record or other agreed school system. Incidents, near misses and concerns must be reviewed by senior leaders to identify whether risk assessments or working arrangements require amendment.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Proprietor and senior leaders, or sooner if there is a significant incident, change in legislation/guidance, change in site arrangements, change in provision, or evidence that the policy is not operating effectively.

21. Related policies and procedures

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Risk Assessment Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- First Aid Policy / First Aid arrangements;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Administration of Medication Policy;
- Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Procedures;
- Lockdown / Emergency Plan;
- Site Security procedures;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Data Protection Policy.

Appendix 1. Lone working authorisation/check-in form

Check	Details
Name of lone worker	
Date	
Start time	
Expected finish/departure time	
Location/task	
Named contact monitoring the arrangement	
Mobile number / communication method	
Agreed check-in times	
Action if check-in is missed	
Confirmed safe departure time	

Appendix 2. Dynamic lone working prompt sheet

Staff should use the following prompt questions before and during lone working:

- Do I need to complete this task alone, or can it wait until support is available?
- Has this task/location/person/activity changed since it was planned?
- Can I contact someone immediately if I need help?
- Does someone know where I am and when I should finish?
- Is my phone charged and do I have signal?
- Do I know how to leave quickly and safely if needed?
- Is there any safeguarding concern that needs to be reported?
- Could the task involve violence, aggression, unsafe animals, manual handling, working at height, machinery, hazardous substances or medical risk?
- Do I feel safe and competent to continue?
- Do I need to stop, delay, adapt, request support or escalate the concern?

Appendix 3. Emergency escalation procedure

- If there is immediate danger, serious injury, fire, violence, intruder risk or a serious medical emergency, call 999.
- Move to a place of safety if it is safe to do so.
- Contact the agreed senior leader or named contact as soon as possible.
- If a lone worker misses an agreed check-in, the named contact must attempt to contact them immediately by phone and message.

- If there is no response, the named contact must escalate to Luke Collins, Hannah Oliver or another nominated senior leader/keyholder.
- If the lone worker may be at risk and contact cannot be established, senior leaders should consider attending the location, contacting known emergency contacts, contacting the site/keyholder arrangement or contacting emergency services as appropriate.
- Any accident, incident, near miss or safeguarding concern must be recorded and reviewed. Safeguarding concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

Useful contacts

Role/contact	Details
Main school telephone	01246 810456
Proprietor	Yvonne Evans
Head of Education / DSL	Luke Collins - luke@new-direction.org.uk
Director / Head of Equine Provision / Deputy DSL	Hannah Oliver - hannah@new-direction.org.uk
Deputy DSL	Emily Smith - emily@new-direction.org.uk
Deputy DSL / Head of Student Welfare and Communication	Nikki Morris - nikki@new-direction.org.uk