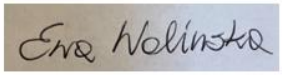
Lone Worker Policy

Approved by: **B.Suddhi**		**Date:**	September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
Next review due by:	September 2027		

Signed by:



Headteacher Date: September 2026



Chair of governors Date: September 2026

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Statement of Intent

Pear Tree Infant and Nursery School recognises that some employees and other people working on behalf of the school may, at times, be required to work alone or in circumstances where they are physically isolated from colleagues and may not have immediate access to assistance.

Lone working can take place on the school premises, in isolated areas of the building, outside normal working hours, while travelling or carrying out work away from school, and in other circumstances connected with school duties.

The school recognises that lone working is not, in itself, unsafe. However, the school has a responsibility to identify and manage the additional risks that may arise when a person is working without immediate support.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- increase staff awareness of the risks associated with lone working;
- identify situations in which lone working takes place;
- ensure that appropriate risk assessments and safe systems of work are in place;
- eliminate lone working where reasonably practicable where the risks cannot be adequately controlled;
- ensure that staff know how to summon help in an emergency;
- establish appropriate communication and check-in arrangements;
- provide staff with appropriate information, instruction and training;
- ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective when staff are working alone;
- encourage the reporting and investigation of accidents, near misses, threatening behaviour and other concerns; and
- support the health, safety and wellbeing of staff undertaking lone working.

The school will take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that lone workers are not exposed to significantly greater risks than other employees undertaking comparable work.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all school employees and, where relevant, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and other people undertaking work on behalf of the school.

It applies to lone working:

- on school premises;
- in isolated areas of the school building;
- outside normal school hours;
- during school holidays;
- while carrying out work away from the school;
- during authorised home visits;
- when travelling on school business;
- when attending meetings or appointments on behalf of the school; and
- in any other situation where an individual may be working without immediate access to assistance.

Lone working arrangements must always be considered alongside the nature of the particular activity being undertaken. Some activities will not be suitable for lone working because the risks cannot be adequately controlled.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation, guidance and statutory requirements, including:

- 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), where applicable
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- applicable employment and safeguarding legislation

The school will also have regard to current Health and Safety Executive guidance on protecting lone workers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Manual Handling Policy

- Risk Assessment arrangements
- Home Visit Risk Assessment
- Emergency and Lockdown Procedures
- Staff Wellbeing and Occupational Health arrangements, where applicable.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, lone working means working by oneself without close or direct supervision, or without another worker immediately available to provide assistance.

A person may therefore be considered a lone worker even when other people are present elsewhere in the school building.

Examples include:

- an employee working alone in the school office;
- a member of the premises or cleaning team working in an isolated part of the building;
- an employee working in the building before or after normal school hours;
- an employee working during a school holiday when the site is otherwise unoccupied;
- an employee attending an authorised off-site appointment;
- an employee undertaking an authorised home visit;
- an employee working alone in a room or area where other staff are not immediately available; or
- an employee travelling alone on school business.

The level of risk will depend on the activity, environment, individual circumstances and availability of assistance.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for managing health and safety;
- ensure that the school has an appropriate lone working policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of health and safety arrangements; and
- review this policy periodically.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- have overall responsibility for implementing this policy;
- ensure that lone working arrangements are appropriately managed;
- ensure that significant risks associated with lone working are assessed;
- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for communication and emergency response;
- authorise lone working where required;
- ensure that incidents and concerns are appropriately investigated;
- ensure that staff receive appropriate information, instruction and training; and

- review the effectiveness of lone working arrangements.

4.3 School Business Manager / Health and Safety Lead

The School Business Manager, or other person designated by the Headteacher, will:

- identify situations in which members of their team may work alone;
- consider whether lone working can reasonably be avoided;
- ensure appropriate risk assessments are completed;
- ensure staff understand the safe system of work;
- establish appropriate check-in arrangements;
- ensure staff have appropriate equipment and means of communication;
- respond appropriately to concerns raised by lone workers; and
- review arrangements following incidents, changes in circumstances or concerns.
- coordinate relevant lone working risk assessments;
- maintain appropriate records of lone working arrangements where required;
- ensure risk assessments are reviewed;
- support managers in identifying appropriate control measures;
- monitor reported incidents and near misses;
- ensure that relevant equipment and communication arrangements are considered; and
- advise the Headteacher where additional controls may be necessary.

4.5 Lone Workers

Lone workers must:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others;
- follow this policy and all relevant risk assessments and procedures;
- use any equipment or communication arrangements provided by the school;
- keep agreed contact arrangements up to date;
- tell their line manager about any concerns that may affect their ability to work safely alone;
- report accidents, incidents, near misses and threatening behaviour;
- avoid unnecessary risks;
- leave or withdraw from a situation if they reasonably believe that their safety is at risk; and
- cooperate with reasonable requests relating to lone working risk assessments and safety arrangements.

Staff must not undertake lone working where they have been specifically instructed that it is not authorised or where the activity has not been appropriately risk assessed.

5. Authorisation of Lone Working

The school will identify activities where lone working may routinely occur and establish appropriate arrangements for managing the associated risks.

Examples may include:

- administrative work outside normal school hours;
- preparation or planning activities;

- routine premises checks;
- cleaning or maintenance activities;
- accessing or working in parts of the building where other staff are not present;
- authorised off-site work; and
- other activities identified through risk assessment.

Routine lone working may be permitted where an appropriate risk assessment and safe system of work are in place.

Lone working must not be undertaken where:

- the risk assessment identifies that the activity is unsuitable for lone working;
- the necessary safety controls are not available;
- the person has not received appropriate instruction or training;
- communication or emergency arrangements are unavailable where required; or
- the Headteacher has specifically prohibited the activity.
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Where an employee wishes to undertake non-routine lone working, they must obtain prior approval from the Headteacher.

6. Lone Working Risk Assessment

The school will undertake appropriate risk assessments for activities involving lone working.

Risk assessments will consider, as appropriate:

- the nature of the work;
- the location and physical environment;
- access and escape routes;
- working hours;
- whether the building or area is occupied by others;
- potential for violence, aggression or threatening behaviour;
- manual handling or other physical activities;
- work involving machinery, equipment or hazardous substances;
- work at height;
- electrical or other significant hazards;
- access to first aid;
- communication arrangements;
- availability of assistance;
- arrangements for checking the worker's whereabouts;
- the worker's level of experience, competence and training;
- any relevant individual circumstances requiring reasonable adjustments or additional controls;
- previous incidents or known risks associated with the location or activity; and
- arrangements for responding to an emergency.

The school will not routinely require staff to disclose unnecessary medical information. Where an individual's health, disability or other personal circumstance may affect the safety of lone working, appropriate adjustments and/or advice from Occupational Health or another

competent professional may be sought with the individual's knowledge and in accordance with applicable confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Risk assessments will be reviewed:

- annually where appropriate;
- following an accident, incident or near miss;
- following a significant change to the building, activity or working arrangements;
- where new hazards are identified; or
- where an employee raises a legitimate safety concern.
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The opening and occupation of the school's new building will be treated as a significant change and relevant lone working arrangements and risk assessments will be reviewed accordingly.

7. Procedures for Lone Workers

The school will establish proportionate arrangements for maintaining contact with lone workers.

Depending on the circumstances, these may include:

- signing in and out;
- notifying the school office of movements;
- a designated buddy or nominated contact;
- telephone or mobile phone contact;
- agreed check-in times;
- electronic calendar information;
- recording an expected return time;
- emergency contact arrangements; or
- other appropriate monitoring systems.

The arrangements used will depend on the level of risk. Low-risk routine activities will not necessarily require the same level of monitoring as higher-risk activities.

7.1 Leaving the School Site

Where a lone worker leaves the school site during working time on school business, they should ensure that an appropriate member of staff knows:

- where they are going;
- the purpose of the visit, where appropriate;
- their expected arrival/return time; and
- how they can be contacted.

Where arrangements change significantly, the worker should update the relevant contact.

7.2 Buddy System

Where a buddy system is required, the nominated buddy will:

- be aware of the lone worker's expected movements;
- know how to contact them;

- monitor agreed check-in arrangements;
- attempt to contact the lone worker if an expected check-in is missed;
- escalate concerns in accordance with the agreed procedure; and
- contact the Headteacher or emergency services where appropriate.

A suitable alternative contact should be identified where the nominated buddy is unavailable.

7.3 Missed Check-In

A missed check-in does not automatically mean that an emergency has occurred.

The response should be proportionate to the circumstances and may include:

1. attempting to contact the worker by telephone;
2. checking whether their plans have changed;
3. contacting another relevant person who may know their whereabouts;
4. informing the Headteacher or appropriate senior member of staff;
5. checking the expected location where this can be done safely; and
6. contacting emergency services where there is a genuine concern for the person's immediate safety.

Staff must not place themselves at risk in an attempt to locate another person.

8. Working Alone on School Premises

Staff working alone on the school premises must follow any site-specific arrangements established through the relevant risk assessment.

Where working outside normal hours, staff should:

- ensure doors and gates are appropriately secured;
- carry a charged mobile phone or have access to an appropriate means of communication;
- avoid undertaking activities that have not been authorised or risk assessed;
- ensure that they know how to summon assistance;
- ensure that emergency exits remain accessible;
- report any security concerns immediately;
- avoid allowing unauthorised persons into the building;
- follow the school's fire, emergency evacuation and security procedures; and
- notify the appropriate person when they leave the premises, where a check-in arrangement is in place.
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Staff should not assume that because another person is somewhere else in the building they will be available to provide immediate assistance.

Where practicable, staff working alone should remain in areas where they can readily summon assistance and should avoid unnecessary work in isolated areas.

9. Working Outside Normal School Hours

Working outside normal school hours should be authorised in advance where practicable. The school will consider whether lone working is necessary or whether the task can reasonably be completed during normal working hours.

Where lone working outside normal hours is authorised, arrangements will consider:

- the length of time the employee will be alone;
- access to the building;
- lighting and external security;
- communication;
- emergency arrangements;
- the activity being undertaken;
- the employee's familiarity with the site; and
- arrangements for confirming that the employee has left the site safely.

Where staff are working in the building during periods when the school is otherwise closed, an appropriate person should know that they are on site and their expected departure time where this is proportionate to the risk.

10. Home Visits and Off-Site Working

Home visits should not normally be undertaken alone by school staff.

Where a home visit is necessary, the school will determine whether two members of staff are required based on the circumstances and the relevant risk assessment.

A home visit must not proceed where the risk assessment indicates that it cannot be undertaken safely.

Where an authorised home visit takes place, the school will maintain appropriate information about:

- the address;
- the person or family being visited;
- the purpose of the visit;
- expected time of arrival and departure;
- staff attending;
- appropriate contact information; and
- any known risks relevant to the visit.
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Information about home visits will be handled securely and only shared with staff who need it for legitimate safeguarding or safety purposes.

10.1 Before the Visit

Staff should:

- ensure the visit has been authorised;
- review relevant information and risk assessments;
- ensure they have a charged mobile phone;
- ensure the school knows where they are going and when they are expected to return;

- take appropriate identification;
- consider the safest method of travel; and
- report any concerns before proceeding.

10.2 On Arrival

Staff should undertake a brief dynamic risk assessment before entering the property.

They should consider:

- the behaviour of people present;
- signs of aggression or conflict;
- animals;
- the physical environment;
- whether they can leave easily;
- whether the circumstances remain consistent with the risk assessment; and
- any new or unexpected risks.

If the staff member does not feel safe, they should not enter the property. They should withdraw to a safe location and contact the school.

Staff should not feel pressured to enter a property because an appointment has been arranged.

10.3 During the Visit

Staff should:

- maintain awareness of their surroundings;
- position themselves so that they can leave safely;
- keep personal belongings and communication equipment accessible;
- avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- follow safeguarding and professional boundaries at all times;
- report any concerning behaviour or incidents; and
- leave immediately if the situation becomes unsafe.
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Where appropriate, a second member of staff should attend or the meeting should be rearranged or held at school.

11. Safeguarding and One-to-One Working with Pupils

Lone working with pupils must always be considered in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and relevant risk assessments

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The fact that a member of staff is working alone does not remove the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Where a member of staff is required to work individually with a pupil:

- the arrangement should be known to another member of staff;
- the location should be appropriate and visible wherever reasonably practicable;

- secluded or inappropriate locations should not be used;
- doors should remain open where appropriate, or suitable visibility should be maintained through a window or other agreed arrangement;
- staff should maintain professional boundaries at all times;
- unnecessary physical contact should be avoided;
- records of significant one-to-one interventions or concerns should be maintained where required;
- the pupil's individual needs and any relevant risk assessment should be considered; and
- staff should seek assistance if a pupil becomes distressed, aggressive or presents an immediate risk to themselves or others.

Where reasonable force or physical intervention is required, it must only be used in accordance with the law, the school's Behaviour Policy, safeguarding procedures and any relevant staff training. It must never be used as a routine method of managing behaviour.

Any safeguarding concern, allegation or low-level concern relating to a member of staff must be reported and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant allegations/low-level concerns procedures.

Current KCSIE guidance requires staff to act promptly on safeguarding concerns and provides specific arrangements for concerns or allegations involving staff.

12. Emergency Procedures and Personal Safety

Lone workers must never compromise their personal safety to complete a task.

If a worker believes that they are at immediate risk, they should:

1. remove themselves from danger where possible;
2. move to a safe location;
3. contact the school or appropriate emergency service;
4. call 999 where there is an immediate threat to life or safety; and
5. report the incident to the school as soon as it is safe to do so.

Lone workers should not attempt to physically intervene in situations involving violence unless this is lawful, necessary and within their training and the school's procedures.

Where an incident involves violence, aggression, threatening behaviour or a safeguarding concern, the school will consider whether additional risk controls are required before the employee undertakes similar lone working again.

13. First Aid and Accidents

Lone workers must have appropriate access to first aid arrangements proportionate to the nature of their work.

Where a task presents a foreseeable risk of injury, the risk assessment will determine whether:

- the task should not be undertaken alone;

- a second person is required;
- additional first aid provision is necessary; or
- additional communication or emergency arrangements are required.

All accidents, injuries, near misses and significant incidents must be reported in accordance with the school's Health and Safety procedures.

Where an incident is reportable under RIDDOR, the school will follow the appropriate reporting requirements.

14. Reporting Incidents and Concerns

All staff are encouraged to report:

- accidents and injuries;
- near misses;
- threatening or aggressive behaviour;
- security concerns;
- unsafe working conditions;
- failures in communication or check-in arrangements;
- concerns arising from home visits;
- safeguarding concerns;
- incidents involving members of the public; and
- any situation in which they felt unsafe while working alone.

Reports will be considered by the Headteacher or appropriate manager and used to determine whether further action is required.

Following an incident, the school may:

- review the relevant risk assessment;
- change the safe system of work;
- provide additional training;
- introduce additional supervision;
- require two-person working;
- change the location or timing of the activity; or
- prohibit further lone working for that activity.

Staff involved in a significant or distressing incident will be offered appropriate support.

15. Training and Information

Staff who undertake lone working will receive appropriate information and instruction relating to the risks associated with their work.

Training may include:

- lone working procedures;
- personal safety;
- dynamic risk assessment;
- emergency procedures;

- communication and check-in arrangements;
- safeguarding;
- dealing with challenging behaviour;
- conflict management;
- first aid, where relevant; and
- any task-specific health and safety training.

The level of training will be proportionate to the duties undertaken.

Staff must inform their line manager if they believe they require additional training or support to undertake lone working safely.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will monitor the effectiveness of the school's lone working arrangements.

This will include consideration of:

- reported accidents and incidents;
- near misses;
- safeguarding concerns;
- staff feedback;
- risk assessments;
- home visit incidents;
- missed check-ins;
- changes to the school building or working arrangements; and
- any changes in legislation or official guidance.
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This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, school arrangements, building use or identified risk.

Next scheduled review: September 2027.