LONE WORKING POLICY/PROCEDURES

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, grounds, cleaning staff may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This however may introduce risks for a normally non-hazardous work activity.

Categories of lone worker

Within Meole Brace CE Primary School a lone worker will most probably fall within one of the following categories:

Those who work in an otherwise unoccupied part of the building
Those who work in an isolated part of school grounds

Definition of Lone Working
Where staff are engaged in work (either outdoors or indoors) where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to come to their immediate aid in the event of an incident or emergency.

Risk Assessment
It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Co-ordinator/Headteacher to ensure that an annual Health and Safety and Risk Assessment is undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this as well as the risks of Lone Working. The risk assessment will take into account the type of tasks undertaken, the environment, health and safety instruction and training received and the individual's medical history.
Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator/Headteacher for the likelihood of the hazard causing harm. Measures will be introduced if the assessment shows that existing precautions are inadequate to eliminate or adequately control the hazard. The risk assessment will be subject to review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the school.
Contractors will be given the opportunity by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator to complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment as necessary and receive the appropriate Health and Safety information.

Staff should seek the permission of the Headteacher to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours.

The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working. Lone workers must be considered capable of responding correctly in an emergency situation by the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-ordinator. Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague.

Staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police.

Staff should activate the door security system when lone working and ensure that areas of the school not in use are kept secure. Staff must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance.

Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (Headteacher's or Health and Safety Co-ordinator's mobile phone numbers) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

It is not normally practicable for the Headteacher to periodically visit and visually monitor people working alone.

Staff will receive information and/or training to help ensure they understand the risks associated with lone working and to minimise these risks. All lone workers, in an otherwise unoccupied building, should follow the school's 'Fire and Emergency Procedures for Users other than School Personnel'. Staff have a responsibility for making themselves familiar with and following the school's safety procedures and location of safety equipment.

Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

If staff rely on mobile phones they must ensure that their network has good reception within school. Although phones can give extra reassurance, they do not provide complete protection and staff should still be alert for their own personal safety at all times.

In the situation where two or more people are working in isolated areas of an otherwise unoccupied building, personnel should keep each other informed about their movements.

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height, any task that has been identified as medium or high risk or which are potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task. Staff working at height in an isolated building must follow 'Working at Height Procedures.'

All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

It is the responsibility of all school personnel and contractors to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-ordinator. If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury and any compensation claims for damages or unfair dismissal may be reduced accordingly.

The School respects the right of the employee, under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. They also can advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Co-ordinator any aspect of work related risks.

The Health and Safety Co-ordinator and/or Health and Safety Governor will regularly monitor the implementation of these procedures. Following any incident an investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.

LONE WORKING POLICY
General Policy Statement:
Lone Workers as defined by the Health and Safety Executive are, "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision." As part of the Management structure 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.

Aim:
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.

Lone Workers:
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 plant, substances and goods 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.

4. Peripatetic workers whose work involves travelling or home visits to service users.

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 caretaker and cleaning staff that have to work out of hours; (refer to caretakers and site manager section, under activities to be avoided).

· Category Three: Key holders on a call out.

Manager Duties:

1. Provide safe systems of work for all staff.

2. Ensure that there are appropriate security systems in place to secure the building.

3. Provide security devices for members of staff when they are working in the office or out in the community, if assessed as appropriate.

4. Carry out personal risk assessments for all staff working alone.

5. During one-to-one sessions discuss the control measures that are in place to ensure they are still adequate or discuss amendments.

6. Identify any training needs and ensure these are met.

7. Set up an adequate system for recording home and out of office visits. Ensure this is kept up to date on a daily basis, for example: staff reporting to the office; their location and general movements for the day, where this is required as part of the risk assessment.

8. Ensure systems are agreed, on how to raise the alarm and copies of the procedures are given to all relevant staff.

9. Ensure that anyone who is not able to raise the alarm is not left alone.

10. Ensure 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.

11. Ensure that the staff members are suitable to be left working alone.

12. Ensure that your procedures allow for lone workers to request additional support when they feel vulnerable.

13. Discuss this policy on a regular basis during team meetings, and especially if an incident has occurred.

14. Provide practical support when needed.

15. Report any incidents to the Headteacher.

16. Record and monitor all accidents and incidents and report findings to the Headteacher.

Staff Responsibilities:

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:

· Are aware and follow all policies or procedures.

· Always plan ahead.

· Are fully aware of the risks when working alone.

· Do not put themselves in potential danger.

· Ensure that they have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.

· Be aware of the on-site security procedures.

· Ensure that access is available to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.

Risks Associated with Violence

Below are some indicators that may make violence more likely, and should be taken into account in your risk assessment. You may need to consider if the people you are providing a service to could:

· Threaten violence

· Be a menace with weapons

· Bear grudges

· Feel victimised

· Harbour a grievance

· Suffer from mental health issues

· Have a dependency on drugs or alcohol

· Associate with violent people

Control Measures

Listed in the sections below are various control measures that can be put into place to reduce the risk to staff when working alone. Not all measures will be applicable as circumstances vary in different situations; therefore the controls need to be re-evaluated for each individual occasion to ensure that the correct measures are in place to reduce the risk to its lowest level. You need to consider the person that you may be visiting or attending to alone, and the risks involved in each situation.

Threats to Staff:

Very occasionally staff may find themselves, through the job they carry out alone, the subject of threats from children, parents, carers and other family members and very occasionally, members of the public. The following actions and options should be considered where staff members are the subject of threats or acts of violence when working alone:

· Report the threat to the police and seek their advice;

· Vary personal routines and travel routes;

· Use an alternative entrance and /or exit to and from the place of work;

· Carrying a personal attack alarm; (ensure this is charged; carry spare set of batteries).

· Registering with 'Lone Safe' through KCC contact centre;

· Accessing personal safety training;

· Reporting whereabouts to office at all times, when changing venues or set up buddy system.

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 should be registered with the 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 use of a commercial key-holding service should be considered as an alternative to using your own employees. Any key holder service should be a member of the British Security Industries Association (BSIA). (http://www.bsia.co.uk).

Key holders that are just carrying out normal work activities should be following the general lone working guidance in this policy.

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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 Officers name and number or Alarm Company operative's name.

· Use telephone numbers previously obtained, call back and verify the detail.

· Arrange with either a member of their family or other responsible person to call the Police to the premises if they have not heard to say that all is well. This call should be made

between 30 to 45 minutes after the estimated time of arrival.

- On arrival at the premises:

o If the Police are in attendance make sure they have checked all sides of the building. Then enter with the Police and check all areas.

o If the Police are not 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.

o If all appears to be quiet, enter and check premises. If there are signs of a break-in leave at once and call the Police as above.

o If in doubt leave the site immediately, even if you have the use of a mobile phone. Arrange to meet the Police nearby. This is for own safety.

- On entering the premises:

o Carefully note all information displayed on the alarm controls. Take no action at the control panel beyond un-setting the protected areas.

o 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 telephone not working.

o If alone and, at any point, it is suspected there has been a break-in, then leave the premises and call the Police.

o If there has been a break-in, re-enter the premises and check carefully with the police and following their instructions. Please note that a crime reference number will be required for insurance purposes.

- After checking the premises:

o If there is no apparent break-in, the alarm company should be called to arrange for an engineer to attend. Obtain his name and estimated time of arrival.

o Notify the member of family or other responsible person, who is expecting to be contacted, to let them know that all is in order. Consider arranging to make further calls if appropriate.

o Check identification of alarm engineer on arrival; call the alarm company to verify details if necessary.

o Insist on a complete repair of alarm system if reasonably practicable. Only agree to part of the system being disconnected if a fault is identified and it cannot be corrected within a reasonable time (key-holder must understand insurance requirements that apply).

o Never leave the premises unprotected. If necessary, arrange for other staff to join you or relieve you as appropriate.

o 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 29 January 2013 5

problem and instructing them to liaise with the alarm company for further engineer attendance, if this is necessary.

o Ensure that all written logs detailing what has occurred are correctly completed by both the key-holder attending and the alarm engineer.

o Advise the Headteacher and other members of staff as necessary.

o Arrange for any emergency repairs to be made so the premises can be secured.

o Secure the premises and set the alarm system.

o On your next return to the premises advise the relevant members of staff about the situation.

Caretaker:

The caretaker 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 for 'Key Holders'.

Hazards

You need to think about if there are any risky activities which your Caretaker may be undertaking whilst working alone. Areas you should think about may include:

- Checking security

- Turning the heating back on after a break

- 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

- Work in confined spaces

When considering what control measures can be put in place to keep the lone worker safe you should also take into account any medical conditions the employee may have, which could put them at more risk. The easiest way to reduce the risk is to carry out any hazardous activities during normal working hours 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:

- Follow general guidance for Managers and Employees on pages 6 & 7 of this document

- Only use equipment provided by the employer

- Follow 'key holder' guidance in this document when checking security of building or site

- Ensure any procedures are known and followed for re-lighting boiler after period of shut
down

- 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

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- Carry out Manual Handling risk assessments to ensure that loads are not too heavy for one
individual. Also ensure that the employee has had Manual Handling training

Training:
Depending on the staff member's job role, a training plan should be considered and introduced through induction. This is to cover all aspects of lone working and to ensure that the staff member is able to protect themselves in vulnerable situations.

First Aid Requirements:
First aid for travelling, remote and lone workers: employers are responsible for meeting the firstaid needs of their employees working away from the main site. The assessment of first-aid needs should determine whether those who travel long distances or are continuously mobile should carry a personal first-aid box; and whether employees should be issued with personal communicators/mobile phones.

Risk Assessments:
Specific risk assessments should be completed for individual cases or situations. To find the five step generic risk assessment (as in the Safety Policy) use the following link:
http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/policy/hsi_risk_assess.cfm

Guidance for Flagging Potential Violent Service Users:

- The Swift database keeps a record of the adults under social care assistance

- The ICS database holds all details on minors that require social care

- When a minor reaches adulthood the records are linked from the ICS to the Swift system.

- Both systems have the functionality to raise the hazard relating to violence by using the hazard
tab system. This is so that if a service user has a history of violent tendencies or has caused

problems that need to be highlighted; or has been convicted of a violent crime, either actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm, then the system can have a flag put on it which will reflect that there is an issue with that particular service user, or if their family or friends could be a threat to the employee.

· Additional information may be obtained from the Careworks database, which holds details on service users known to the Communities directorate, and potentially violent service users are flagged accordingly.

· You have a legal duty to safeguard, so far as reasonably practicable, staff that may come into contact with a potentially violent service user. Reception staff; social workers; school staff and other agencies are just a few that could be affected.

Reporting of Accidents and Incidents:

· Any accidents, incidents or near misses must be recorded in the accident book.

· If an accident happens and causes either a major injury or the loss of over 3-days work or unable to carry out normal duties for over 3-days then a F2508 form must be completed and send it to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995.

· The Headteacher is to be informed of any incident involving violence, which includes verbal abuse, physical assault and property damage.

Monitoring and Reviewing:

All accidents, incidents or near misses should be logged and monitored; you should be looking for trends and seeing if a review should be carried out on any of your risk assessments due to the outcomes. These should also be reported back to the Headteacher, so that they are aware of any situations that may have arisen and reported to Governors as appropriate.