



# **Lone Working Policy**

August 2015

*To be reviewed: August 2016*

## **Introduction**

Savvy Education endeavours to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees/consultants while they are at work. At any given time there are numbers of employees/consultants who are working alone, whether as a substantial part of their working life or on an occasional basis. Savvy Education assesses the risks to lone workers and takes steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary; and the employees/consultants have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe and proper precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone.

## **Purpose**

The aim of this policy is to outline Savvy Education's responsibilities towards staff/consultants working alone by:

- Defining what 'lone working' is
- Taking action to reduce risk to lone workers
- Ensuring that all employees/consultants are aware of their responsibility to use necessary guidance to assist lone workers

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Savvy Education Ltd employees/consultants, including temporary workers and those employed on a casual basis.

## **Definition**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those 'who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. They may include:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues, e.g. visiting people in their homes
- People who work at home

The definition can cover employees/consultants in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures. This policy will refer to high risk and low risk activities.

Some employees/consultants may spend most of their working lives with others but find themselves working alone occasionally, for example, when working late. Others will work

alone on a daily basis. This policy will refer to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers.

## Potential hazards of lone working

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)
- Steps can be taken to reduce the risks of these events

The perception of these hazards or the actual risks may be different for different people. For example inexperience in your work may underestimate the risks of an activity; some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace or after dark; or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone.

The service must consider these factors when doing risk assessments. If there are lone workers within an area the manager must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk, particularly for frequent lone workers or lone workers engaged in high-risk activities. They should consider:

- Does the workplace present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used on the premises be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence? Is the nature of a visit or the person being visited likely to increase the risk? Will the employee be alone in a dark or remote location?

## Measures to reduce the risk of lone working

### ***Supervision***

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. However, line-managers can ensure that the employees/consultants understand the risks associated with their work and the relevant safety precautions. They can put into place arrangements for the individual to contact a line-manager if they need additional guidance. Occasional site visits may be appropriate, particularly if there are high-risk activities. Employees/consultants new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially. Regular contact by phone or radio may be appropriate. The manager should assess what level of supervision is required.

### **Reporting back**

A system should be in place to ensure that a lone worker returns to their base or their home at the completion of a task away from the normal workplace. For high risk or frequent lone workers it may be stipulated that the employee must inform him/her of their whereabouts and the expected duration of the visit so that if the employee has not reported in or cancelled the call by the expected hour, a call will automatically be triggered to check the employee/consultant is safe.

For occasional lone workers or low risk lone workers, they should inform a colleague where they are going and when they are expected back; arranging to ring the office at the conclusion of the visit or call; issuing a mobile phone number to allow a contact call to be made if the employees/consultants return if overdue. Use of diary systems or notice boards to indicate whereabouts can form part of this system. All employees/consultants involved share a responsibility to maintain such informal systems for safe lone working.

The service should also consider the members of staff who meet with students on a one to one basis on school premises. Whilst they are not alone in the building, they may be alone with the student in a place where other colleagues cannot see them. The service should consider systems for ensuring that they have emerged safely from such a meeting and systems for raising an alarm if necessary.

#### **Accidents and Emergencies**

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. This should include being made aware of special arrangements for out of hours incidents. First aid may be available from staff, or it may be prudent for an individual frequently working away from the base to carry a basic first aid kit if there is a foreseeable risk of injury. It is also necessary for employees/consultants working alone in a building or part of a building to sign in/let the school contact know they are there, so they can be accounted for in case of fire.

### **Task not suitable for lone working**

Risk assessment will identify the hazards of work. When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another worker or done in hours when the worker is not alone. For example a worker who arrives before other colleagues may be instructed not to visit a family/student before others are there to accompany them.

### **Violence at work**

Employees/consultants who undertake home visits must use a system to reduce the risk of violence by not visiting alone or meeting in another location. The risk of violence may not be directly related to a particular property. It may be associated with the environmental issues like working alone outside after dark, or a situation may arise where there was no previous history of incidents. Employees/consultants likely to be lone workers in such situations should be trained in dealing with difficult people, in ways to recognise a risk and in behaviour which may reduce the risk (up to and including terminating the session). All incidents of violence must be reported.

## **Conclusion**

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no difference from organising the safety of other employees/consultants, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors. Savvy Education will ensure that they have not only introduced measures to reduce any risk but also ensure that they have communicated their expectations to lone workers and trained them appropriately. All employees/consultants, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and all employees/consultants can take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal working life.