



LONE WORKER POLICY

REFERENCE:	V01 – 09/2025
OWNERSHIP:	AP Lead
AUTHORISED BY:	Emma Draper (Director)
REVIEW:	Annually – September 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Churchwood Forest School AP's response to staff working alone with young people. The policy is designed to maximise the personal safety of staff, which in the course of their work may have to meet up with a young person on a one to one basis. It is also designed to ensure the safety of the young person. Controls include pre-visit risk assessment, communication/check-in, competency-based training, and clear emergency escalation for both staff and young people.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Churchwood Forest School AP), this includes all employees who work within Churchwood Forest School AP as well as contractors, volunteers and visitors. Visitors follow site safety instructions but are not permitted to lone work.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

As an organisation that prioritises the safeguarding of children and all vulnerable people, Churchwood Forest School AP is committed to providing a safe environment across all we do by actively adopting strategies that embed a culture of zero tolerance for abuse of any kind.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Within our Alternative Provision, ensuring the safety of lone workers is a shared responsibility.

Management holds the primary duty to establish and regularly review this policy, conduct thorough risk assessments for lone working activities, and provide the necessary resources, training, and equipment (such as communication devices or personal alarms).

Line Managers are responsible for implementing these procedures, ensuring staff understand the risks specific to their lone working duties in the AP setting, and maintaining effective communication systems. Managers ensure task-specific risk assessments (MHSWR) cover location, individuals, time of day, travel, and personal factors (e.g., pregnancy, disability, medical



conditions).

Lone workers have a responsibility to adhere to all established procedures, actively participate in risk assessments, report any concerns or incidents promptly, and utilise the safety equipment provided, ensuring they do not put themselves or others at undue risk while fulfilling their roles. Lone workers must use the check-in system and stop/withdraw if unsafe. Training/competence and equipment (e.g., personal alarms) are documented and reviewed.

DEFINITIONS

For this Lone Workers Policy, a **Lone Worker** is defined as any member of staff carrying out work activities without direct or immediate supervision, or where help is not readily available. This includes, but is not limited to, staff working outside of core hours, undertaking off-site visits, or supervising students in isolated areas within the facilities. A **Risk Assessment** in this context involves systematically identifying potential hazards specific to lone working within an AP, evaluating the likelihood and severity of harm, and implementing **Control Measures** – the practical steps and procedures designed to mitigate those risks and ensure the safety of our lone working staff.

POLICY

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Commenting on Lone Working, the National charity for Personal Safety, the Suzy Lamplugh Trust states:

“The most important aspect of safety for people working on any project, is to ensure that they let other people know who they are meeting, when and where, so that someone is looking after their welfare”

Diana Lamplugh, Director, The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

It should be noted that this policy is relevant in the following situations:

- One-to-one mentoring sessions (on-site/off-site)
- Home/family visits (pre-visit risk assessed)
- Transporting young people (commissioner consent, ratio, insurance, dynamic risk assessment)



Churchwood Forest School AP recognises that during the course of their work, it may be essential for employees to work alone. This may occur as a regular part of an employee's working practice or may occur on an occasional basis. In either situation it will arise from the understanding that this is the most appropriate and effective way of working with a particular young person.

The safety of both young people and workers is paramount and Churchwood Forest School AP is committed to minimising the risk of lone working for its employees.

There are some important aspects to this policy:

- Operations will implement and maintain safe systems of work for lone working (including check-in/out and emergency procedures)
- Provide role-specific training and keep competency logs for those expected to lone work
- Only trained and competent workers undertake lone working, with periodic refreshers.

Systems and Procedures

All relevant information about a young person, including information from referral agencies and information gained within Churchwood Forest School AP should be obtained and made available to the worker.

The initial engagement should not be a lone meeting; it should involve two staff or be held with stakeholders present (e.g., referral meeting). The initial referral meeting with stakeholders would be an example of this.

Before lone work, complete and record a task-specific risk assessment with the worker (location/people/time/means of escape).

Clear records should be kept of all lone working being undertaken within the organisation. Workers should give a name, address or place and concise relevant information relating to circumstances of the lone working intervention. The start and finish time of the engagement should be recorded on the relevant report sheet, along with details of the activities undertaken.

Use the two-way check-in system: call/text on arrival (passcode), time-boxed duration, and check-out on leaving. Escalation triggers (missed check-out) are actioned immediately.

Procedure 1 (Lone Workers Check)

- Background information on young person /family they are working alongside
- First engagement must not be a lone visit; hold it with two staff or in a multi-stakeholder



setting.

- Workers should be street wise and have some knowledge of the working area and associated risks – e.g. false allegations, drugs, gangs, criminal activity etc.
- Verify address/identity before travel; share route/ETA
- Plan parking and exit; avoid confined spaces; carry ID and approved personal alarm.

Procedure 2 (Lone Working Engagement)

Before undertaking an engagement call or speak to a Contact Person who could be your line manager or a team member stating:

- Where you will be meeting and any risk factors
- Approximately how long the meeting will last
- If the meeting overruns, send a pre-agreed code or re-set a new check-out time with your contact.

When you have finished the engagement call the same person and let them know.

Procedure 3 (Self Check)

- Complete the task-specific risk assessment and review control measures (withdraw if risk cannot be controlled)
- Use a charged phone with signal checked; keep it accessible and on
- Carry an approved personal alarm if issued
- Make sure you have a reliable contact in case of emergency
- Always keep your timetabled records up to date, leaving one copy in the office and keeping one yourself
- Wear appropriate clothing – i.e. flat shoes / and clothing that will not restrict you in case of a need for a quick departure
- Use centre-issued first-aid supplies where provided; do not transport sharps/medicines unless authorised
- Do not accept food/drink if you feel unsafe; position yourself with clear egress
- For visits involving medication/medical needs, cross-refer to First Aid & Medications Policy procedures.

Emergency Procedure (Lone Worker)

The Emergency Procedure is designed that if your first action is ineffective then you escalate to the next action



If an incident occurs or you feel your safety is compromised:

- Try to bring calm to the situation
- Ring your designated contact person
- Ring your Line Manager

If you feel in immediate danger

1. Finish the meeting and make a quick exit
2. If you can't exit, then do ring the Police immediately and follow instructions
3. Follow your instinct on approach - If it doesn't feel right, don't enter the building
4. Where a child welfare concern arises, contact the DSL the same day (immediately if at risk of significant harm)
5. After any emergency, complete an incident report within 12 hours and notify the Provision Lead. Consider RIDDOR reporting if criteria are met.

Emergency Procedure (Contact Person)

- If you do not hear back from the Lone Worker try texting or calling them to ask if the meeting has finished. If you cannot get hold of them:
 - Call Line Manager
 - Call a Senior Manager / Director
 - Notify the Police
- If escalation is triggered (missed check-out), follow the escalation tree immediately and log times/actions.

If an Emergency has taken place then the Lone worker should write a report detailing what happened and what action was taken, and give it to their Line Manager within 12 hours of the incident taking place.

CORPORATE ADVICE

Definition of violence

The definition of violence and intimidation to staff will include the commission of any deliberate or reckless act by any person towards an employee which arises out of the employee's work whether on duty or not and could include the following which may or may not leave the employee emotionally or psychologically distressed:

- Personal physical attacks upon the person whether or not causing injury including threatening behaviour



- Verbal threats with or without a weapon
- Threats in writing addressed to or about a named employee
- Gestures and/or foul and abusive language whether by personal confrontation or over the phone
- Harassment which makes a person feel threatened, humiliated or distressed on account of their race, culture, racial origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or former convictions.
- Damage to personal and/or corporate property, equipment etc.
- Online threats/harassment (e.g., via messaging/social media) linked to work activities.

Use of violence to defend yourself

Churchwood Forest School AP recommend that you attempt to retreat from violent situations if at all possible. If this is not possible (e.g. if you are locked in an aggressor's home, surrounded by a group of people etc.) you are, of course, entitled to use reasonable force to defend yourself.

Any self-defence must use no more force than necessary, for the shortest time, and stop once the risk reduces. Do not use techniques that restrict breathing or pain-compliance. Cross-refer to the Physical Intervention Policy.

So, if a person attacks you, you can take whatever action is necessary in self defence to stop them punching you e.g. grapple with them, punch them back, block their punch with a piece of furniture etc.

What you cannot do is something completely unreasonable, such as to use force which is unrelated to the force used against you e.g. to hit someone with a heavy object who simply pushes at you with no intention of doing more than that. The force must be related to the threat, and the aim of the force must be self- defence, not, for example, revenge.

So, if a person assaults you and then backs off and you continue to attack them after they have ceased to present a threat, this will not necessarily be self defence and you may be charged with assault.

The basic point is to try and do no more than is necessary to stop the attack and to retreat at the earliest opportunity.

In plain terms, use your common sense and DEFEND – DON'T ATTACK!

Visiting clients in their homes



The purpose of this section is to:

- Make employees aware of the hazards (the potential to cause harm) when visiting people in their own homes
- Identify the control measures to reduce the risks (the likelihood of potential harm from the hazard being realised) to the lowest levels that are reasonably practicable

Under health and safety legislation, employers have a duty:

- To assess risks to their employees whilst at work
- To ensure the health and safety of their employees at work, so far as is reasonably practicable
- To provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision

Employees also have duties under health and safety legislation to:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety at work
- Co-operate with the employer and others so far as is necessary to enable their employer to comply with statutory duties for health and safety
- Take reasonable care of the safety of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work, and should:
- Notify the employer of any shortcomings in the arrangements for health and safety hazards
- Personal physical attacks upon the person whether or not causing injury including threatening behaviour
- Verbal threats with or without a weapon
- Harassment which makes a person feel threatened, humiliated or distressed on account of their race, culture, racial origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or former convictions.

CONTROL MEASURES

Training

- Suitable training should be provided 'in house' (e.g. carrying out home visits with an experienced employee) before employees are expected to carry out home visits for the first time on their own.

Planning and preparation

- Employees should obtain all relevant information about the person to be visited prior to the visit as far as is practicable



- Employees should be aware of the person's history and the trigger points for violent behaviour – e.g. family stress, substance abuse etc. The more that is known about the person the better equipped the employee will be able to deal with any situation which may arise. Consideration should be given to visiting in pairs or carrying out the interview at the office e.g. if there the customer has a history of violent behaviour (consult Line Manager)
- Leave details (preferably in an easily seen place such as an in/out board) at the base office during normal working hours, if working outside normal working hours. Details should include the address of the visit/s, the expected time of return, the registration number of the employee's vehicle (where applicable), the employee's contact number (e.g. mobile phone number) N.B. A responsible person should be appointed to monitor the board and take appropriate action should the estimated return time be exceeded
- Employees should carry their identity cards at all times when making home visits
- Employees should not give their home address or telephone number to clients.
- Avoid visits during hours of darkness unless absolutely necessary
- The Line Manager's approval should be sought for visits outside normal working hours
- Wear sensible clothing and where feasible, avoid carrying handbags, large sums of money or other valuable items to avoid theft.
- Employees must follow the guidance as regards drugs and alcohol

What to take with you

- the address of the customer and phone number (if available)
- Identity card
- A-Z map
- Mobile phone and use discretely to avoid attempted theft
- Contact phone numbers
- Necessary paperwork (but keep this to a minimum)
- Torch
- Personal attack alarm (N.B. this will need testing on a regular basis)

Driver

- Employees should have a current, valid driving licence

Vehicle

Employees should ensure:



- The vehicle is roadworthy and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- The vehicle is taxed and insured for business use
- There is sufficient fuel for the journey
- Nothing of value is on view in the vehicle – such items should be locked away in the boot

Getting there

- Avoid being late for appointments – phone ahead if you are delayed and likely to be late
- Take care when parking
- Park facing the direction in which you will drive away, particularly in cul-de-sacs
- Park in well-lit areas, as close as possible to the building, and away from potential hiding places
- When walking, choose the safest route, which may not always be the shortest route
- Avoid poorly lit areas or little used underpasses, where possible
- Ensure your vehicle is locked and windows closed

When you arrive

- Say who you are, state the reason for the visit and show your identity card
- Do not enter if the person you wish to see is not there, unless it is a responsible adult acting on their behalf
- You may decide not to enter e.g. if the person is drunk, aggressive or in a state of undress
- Ask for any dogs or other animals to be put into another room
- Let the customer lead the way and check as you go in how the door is locked behind you. If the
- customer locks the door and removes the key, you may wish to ask for it to be unlocked, saying that it makes you feel threatened. You may wish to leave in a hurry!
- Do not conduct interviews in bedrooms, on balconies or stairways, or in kitchens
- Try to sit nearest the door to enable a rapid escape if necessary without being hampered
- Do not spread your belongings/paperwork etc around. You may wish to leave in a hurry!
- Avoid sitting back in easy chairs/settees.
- If sat at a table, sit sideways so you can leave easily in an emergency.

If faced with violent behaviour

- Be aware of the early warning signs by reading body language. e.g. irrational behaviour, hostility and aggression

- Try to diffuse the situation
- Be assertive and dispel any confusion (not aggressive)
- Avoid an aggressive stance e.g. crossed arms, hands on hips, wagging/pointing fingers, raised arm etc.
- Keep your distance – do not invade their personal space (N.B. a greater amount of personal space is required as tension rises)
- React in a professional manner
- Keep calm, relaxed and polite
- Speak gently, slowly and clearly
- Engage interpersonal/counselling skills to identify tension and its root cause
- Avoid confrontation – avoid an aggressive stance such as crossed arms, hands on hips and pointing or wagging a finger or raising an arm
- Avoid challenging the person
- Avoid being enticed into an argument
- Do not put a hand on someone who is angry
- Give customers a chance to explain or express themselves providing this does not place you at unnecessary risk

Know when to close the interview and leave

- Follow your instincts. If tension grows and calming measures have no effect, be courteous, make an excuse to leave and then leave – fast!
- Use your mobile phone (dial 999) in cases of potential violence and other emergency situations
- After the last visit, do not go straight home without reporting in to the base office.
- Leaving a potential violent situation is not a reflection on abilities or skills
- The Line Manager should be informed of any interview which is ended prematurely

In the event of physical attack

- Keep away from the assailant
- If violence is imminent, dangerous places should be avoided such as stairs or restricted spaces e.g. lifts
- Look out for potential escape routes and keep between the assailant and the door to avoid being trapped
- Summon help, where practicable e.g. by shouting *Call the Police!*



- Use the personal attack alarm

At the end of the visit

- If delayed, contact the base office (if out of normal office hours)
- If there is cause for concern, the Line Manager/or deputy will take appropriate action, which could involve calling the police.

Reporting

Report all incidents/accidents to your Line Manager. Complete the appropriate form i.e. the Personal Accident Report form for accidents or Violent Incident Report form for incidents of *violence (see definition). Do not go straight home after the last visit without checking-out to the base contact.

Debriefing

Your Line Manager is available to provide further support and to discuss any situation giving you cause for concern. The Provision Lead arranges post-incident debrief and offers welfare/EAP support after violent/traumatic events.

Feedback

In cases of violent incidents, Line Managers should ensure the victim is kept informed of action taken. Line Managers should consider consulting the victim prior to action being taken.



POLICY CONTEXT

AP context (non-school AP): Churchwood Forest School AP operates as a non-school Alternative Provision (AP). Staff sometimes work alone on-site (isolated areas/out of hours) and off-site (home visits, meetings, transport). This policy sets controls, training and supervision to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (risk assessment, safe systems of work, emergency arrangements). Same-day safeguarding notifications are made to the DSL where a child's welfare is implicated.

Legislation & Standards	• The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA): • The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR): • The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
Related Forms & Documents	• Health and Safety Policy • Physical Intervention Policy • First Aid & Medications Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Absconders Policy • Trips & Visits Planner.

This policy relates to the following legislative requirements, standards and internal documents:

VERSION CONTROL

We will review our documentation regularly and we reserve the right to amend our policies and procedures at any time.

Version	Date	Change Summary	Author/ Reviewer	Approved by:
1	28/9/2025	Initial Version	Mark Wrangles	
2				
3				