

Houghton Primary School

The Governing Body of Houghton Primary School 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, caretaking or 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 workers

Within Houghton 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
- Those responding to an alarm call out after normal school hours
- Those who come into school to work during school holidays and weekends (on their own).

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. This includes staff attending the site out of hours e.g. when called out during an emergency.

It also includes staff working alone with children in a situation which could place them and/or the child at risk.

Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that Risk Assessment is undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this as well as the risks of Lone Working. Hazards identified will be evaluated by the 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.

Lone Working Policy

Contractors will be given the opportunity by the School Business Manager or Caretaker to complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment as necessary and receive the appropriate Health and Safety information.

Controls

Only teaching staff, school caretaker, Phoenix Club senior staff and the Pre-School Leader have keys to access the grounds and buildings outside of normal school hours. They do so after being briefed by the headteacher and at their own risk.

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 Headteacher. 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 and lock the front entrance and all external doors 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 family, friends or work colleagues.

It is not normally practicable for the Headteacher or other line managers 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.

Houghton Primary School

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.

Whilst the school telephone hand sets are wireless, the telephone reception is not guaranteed throughout the building or in the school grounds. The only guaranteed area the wireless hand sets work is in the immediate vicinity of the school offices and the school kitchen. 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 Houghton Primary School Working at Height Procedures (see risk assessment).

All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance and the school does not advocate working in the building in the evening or at weekends.

There are safeguarding risks associated with some forms of lone working. All adults must comply with the school's Code of Conduct for All Adult, particularly with regard to transportation of pupils, working in one-to-one situations and when meeting pupils. This includes meetings off-site and transportation of pupils. They must also abide by the school's Protocol for Children Not Collected from School.

Reporting

Lone Working Policy

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 the school Business Manager.

It is the responsibility of all adults to apply the Whistle-blowing Policy in situations where safeguarding is in question.

If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety or the safety of others, including children, this could result in a disciplinary matter. This will also be taken into consideration for members of staff in the case of injury as a failure to follow procedures could be regarded as having 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 Coordinator any aspect of work related risks.

The Headteacher and/or Health and Safety Governors 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.

This policy was reviewed and adopted November 2016.

It is reviewed every 3 years by the Finance, Personnel, Premises and Safety Committee of Governors.

Next review: Autumn 2019