



Lone Working Policy



The Stour Federation

1. INTRODUCTION

The way in which education staff work often means that individual colleagues may be working on their own and without the normal support and reassurance of having other people close in case of emergency. Unfortunately, we are living in a more violent society which means that these people are vulnerable. It is important that we do not get the situation out of perspective. There is no need for a climate of fear but staff need to be prepared, procedures in place and reasonable precautions taken to ensure their safety. policy concentrates specifically on the vulnerability of staff to violence in the context of lone working.

The employer has a legal duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. In addition the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) require written risk assessments for the workplace, including hazard identification, assessment of risk and implementation of control measures.

The Trust Board, as responsible employers, does not expect any employee to enter a dangerous situation for which he/she was not prepared. No one should expose themselves to risk by entering a building or site they think is dangerous, but should seek guidance from the CEO, Headteacher/Head of School or their line manager.

2. AIMS

The Trust Board of The Stour Federation and the Local Academy Councils of each school are responsible for the employment of many people in very different situations. Therefore, this policy is designed to:

- Draw the attention of Leaders, governors and all possible lone workers to potential risks.
- Provide guidelines incorporating good practice.
- Help each school comply with legislation.

3. KEYHOLDERS RESPONDING TO AN ALARM CALL

Police policy on response to an alarm call

Police forces adopt a policy on response to alarms based on the advice of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The level of response depends on whether an alarm comes through an approved monitoring station (type A) or not (type B). The police will endeavour to respond to a type A alarm promptly. They will not normally attend in response to a type B alarm unless there is some other indication that an offence is being committed. If there are five false alarms within twelve months, they will not respond to type A alarms, unless there are other indications that an offence is being committed.

Intruder alarm activations can occur at any time of the day or night and sending staff key holders to respond out of hours to establish if a break-in has occurred or if a fire has started and therefore carries a significant risk. Schools should consider employing a key holding company as a first line of response to eliminate any risks to school staff attending intruder alarm activations.

Where schools decide not to employ a key holding company, specific procedures / risk

assessments should be in place. Staff should be given relevant information, instruction and training relevant to what they are expected to do and this should be recorded.

General advance control measures:

- Try to establish contact with a neighbour so you know where you may be able to use a telephone or seek help in an emergency.
- Consider a means of communication, e.g. mobile phone.

Take the following control measures each time you respond to an alarm call:

- Always assume an alarm is genuine.
- If possible speak to anyone who has drawn your attention to the alarm or incident to find out if they have any information about what may be happening on the site.
- If you receive a telephone call from the Police asking for attendance make sure the call is genuine by phoning the Police back.
- If you respond to a request to attend the site from anyone but the Police, then make the Police aware that you are going to attend.
- Ensure that someone is aware you are attending alarm call-out.
- Consideration should be given to having “buddy procedures” to maintain contact during time on site out of hours.
- Take a powerful torch.
- Wear a high-viz jacket/tabard.

Leaving home

- Take a torch and personal attack alarm with you.
- Take a mobile phone. Programme the phone with instant dial emergency numbers.
- Look outside your own home before going out in case anyone is lurking expecting your leaving.
- Tell someone where you are going and how long you are likely to be.
- Have your personal attack alarm readily available.

NB: Some staff take a partner, friend or relative with them when they attend incidents out of hours. Please note that these people may not be covered by RPA insurance if injured.

At site

- Never confront an intruder or approach or enter a building if you think an intruder may be in there. Call the Police and wait outside in a safe place.
- Do not enter or approach a building on your own if you are concerned for your own safety.
- Check from outside the building while at a safe distance, where possible, for signs of intrusion, which may include:
 - Activated alarm.
 - Open gates.
 - Broken fencing.
 - Activated external lighting.
 - Internal lights on.
 - Broken or forced doors.
 - Broken windows.
 - Something out of place.
 - Unexpected vehicles in the area.
 - Unknown in the car park.
- Phone the Police stating that there is evidence of break-in or suspect someone is in the buildings, giving school details and what seen or heard.
- Move away from the premises to a well-lit area to await attendance of Police and do not

enter premises.

If entering the building as there are no signs of intruders

- Check the intruder alarm panel for location of alarm activation.
- Investigate the source and/or cause of activation if it is safe to do so.
- If the alarm is a false activation try and ascertain cause and eliminate if possible (e.g. moving displays). If a fault on the alarm has occurred, notify the alarm maintenance company as soon as possible and follow school defect reporting procedure.
- Check the intruder alarm can be reset and lock and vacate the building as usual. Maintain contact with a “buddy” to notify the building is being secured and return home.
- If the cause is not obvious and the alarm can be reset, carry out further investigation during normal working hours.
- If the alarm cannot be reset, report fault immediately using emergency contact list or other procedure. Await contractor in a well-lit secure area but close to an easily opened exit.

Be on the phone to a “buddy” as you enter (and exit) the building as an additional precaution.

4. STAFF WORKING ALONE IN A BUILDING

Please be aware that working alone can contain certain risks including:

- Potential violence.
- Obstructed escape routes.
- Manual handling.
- Trips/falls etc.

Try to avoid working alone in a building, but if it is essential and unavoidable comply with local procedures and risk assessments and consider the following control measures:

- Inform the CEO/Headteacher/Head of School of your proposed visit.
- If possible, tell somebody at home where you are and about what time you will return. If you are delayed beyond this time let them know.
- Lock yourself in so nobody can easily enter the building without your knowledge but make sure you know how to get out quickly in the event of fire without using a key. Do not leave the coded door open.
- If you are working in an area which has no alarm, use the zoning facility to keep the alarm system active in the rest of the building.
- See the last person off the premises, where possible, and lock the door behind them.
- Lock the building and reset all alarms before leaving.
- If anyone tries to enter the building or you see or hear anything suspicious, call the Police.
- Always be alert when leaving the building in case someone is waiting for you to do so. Be on the phone when leaving the building.
- Consider means of communications (e.g. mobile phone).

5. KEYHOLDERS MANAGING LETTINGS

As far as possible only open the part of the building which is being hired (always ensuring that an exit is available without having to use a key in case of fire) and use the zonal alarm settings to secure the remainder of the building.

For locking up, the following control measures should be applied:

- Return to the building in good time before the hirers leave.
- Check the areas for any hidden intruders before the hirers leave.
- Lock the building and if possible leave with the hirers.

6. LEAVING AN EMPTY BUILDING

Carry out locking up and security checks from the inside of the building wherever possible.

Start the locking up process while there are still people inside the building, incorporating fire safety procedures.

Set all alarms. Always be alert when leaving an empty building in case someone is waiting for you to do so. Be on the phone if possible.

7. DEALING WITH TRESPASSERS

Section 547 of the 1996 Education Act says that anyone on school premises without lawful authority who causes or permits nuisance or disturbance to the users of the premises, is committing an offence.

If you feel in any way threatened by the age, number or behaviour of trespassers, do not approach but find a safe place and call the police.

Do not try to physically remove trespassers from the site or engage in arguments with them. Make your point, withdraw and call the police.

8. VISITING PEOPLE'S HOMES

Staff undertaking visits should be familiar with the Home Visits Policy and never attend alone.

9. REPORTING INCIDENTS

Use the Security Incident Report/Record to report all incidents, however minor, including all alarm responses and trespass incidents and retain via the Headteacher/Head of School.

As well as reporting via the attached incident form, the Headteacher/Head of School must report to the Police and the LA any event where individuals are injured, verbally abused, or feel they are threatened as it is a serious matter. Use the Accident Incident Report form..

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Trust Board, Local Academy Councils and the Leadership Team should formally monitor and review lone working and personal safety procedures and risk assessments, to ensure as far as possible that they do not expose staff to undue risk.