Lone Working Policy for the Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service

UNCLASSIFIED

Document Control Information

Title: Lone Working Policy for the Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service

Date: February 2021

Review date: February 2023

Version: 2

Classification: Unclassified

Owner: Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director, Children's Services (Learning, Achievement and Partnerships)

Version	Date	Description
Version 1	December 2018	Policy originally produced in December 2018.
Version 2	February 2021	Policy amended from being specific to the Education Welfare Service to apply to the entirety of the Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Wokingham Borough Council's Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service is committed to working with staff who work alone, to ensure their safety and understanding of their responsibilities.

This policy sets out the procedures that Wokingham Borough Council's LAP Service has in place to ensure that staff are as safe as possible when working alone.

All Wokingham Borough Council LAP staff must work in accordance with this policy. It is applicable in all situations where staff are working alone, including: home visits; transporting pupils to and from school; meetings in schools and other settings with parents and/or young people; and working alone in the workplace, either outside normal working hours or in settings where members of the public may have easy access.

*Any questions or concerns about the contents of this policy should be raised with the Quality Assurance and Policy Team via email at: **ImpactAndInspectionTeam@wokingham.gov.uk**.*

Lone Working Policy for the Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service

Policy Context

This policy is underpinned by national legislation and guidance:

- *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*
- *The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*

It should be read in conjunction with other local procedures:

- *Wokingham Borough Council Lone Working Policy and Guidance* **(May 2020)**
- *Personal Safety Training* **(My Learning)**

This policy applies to all staff within Wokingham Borough Council's Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service. It is applicable in all situations where staff are working alone, including: home visits; transporting pupils to and from school; meetings in schools with parents and/or young people; working alone in the workplace, either outside normal working hours or in settings where members of the public may have easy access.

1. Introduction

Employers have a statutory responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees at work, so far is as reasonably practicable. This includes giving due consideration to the health and safety risks to employees and ensuring risk assessments are undertaken to protect them from reasonably foreseeable risks, regardless of where they are working.

Equally, employees have a statutory duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions, including when working alone.

Wokingham Borough Council's Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service is committed to working with staff who work alone, to ensure their safety and understanding of their responsibilities.

This policy aims to:

- Set out the procedures that Wokingham Borough Council's Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service has in place to ensure that staff are as safe as possible when working alone.
- Outline individual responsibilities in relation to safety when working alone.

The expectation is that:

- All staff working in Wokingham Borough Council's Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service ensure their awareness and understanding or this policy.
- All staff working in Wokingham Borough Council's LAP Service ensure they work in accordance with this policy.

2. Risk Assessments

Every visit outside of the office carries an element of risk. To help manage risk, workers must ensure they are familiar with any case record (including MOSAIC) that could inform a risk assessment. Workers should also acknowledge that the degree of risk can change from one visit to the next, therefore an updated risk assessment should be undertaken for each visit. ***Risk assessments may be completed formally or informally, dependent on service area within the Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service. Workers should check the requirements for performing a risk assessment with their Line Manager before undertaking a visit.***

Where it appears that there is a risk prior to a visit, steps should be taken to reduce that risk to an acceptable level by taking measures such as more than one member of staff being present at the visit (this could include school staff, or a Manager); or arranging the visit to take place at the workplace during normal working hours.

Where a visit is scheduled to take place within the workplace and there is a level of risk which means the meeting may be difficult, workers should ensure that a colleague in the building is aware of that fact. Workers must also be aware of how to summon help in an emergency (e.g. 'buddying up' or 'microcom' device).

At all times, staff must give due regard to health and safety – reporting incidents not only when they occur, but any near misses. This will help to avoid a more serious incident occurring. Incidents and near misses will be reported by the Line Manager using Business World On (BWO).

Should a reportable event or incident occur during the visit, the relevant Line Manager will undertake a review, identify any learning points and update the relevant documents in the case file, as required.

3. Visits During the Working Day

Where workers are attending a lone visit to a pupil and/or family (*regardless of where the visit is taking place*) which is expected to finish before 5pm, staff should ensure that the meeting is up to date in their individual diary on Outlook and that colleagues within their team have the relevant permissions to view the entry.

All meetings on Outlook should be updated with the initials of the pupil; school; house number; postcode; and start and finish times.

Workers should also 'buddy up', which means ensuring that a colleague is aware of where/when an appointment is and checking-in with them upon return, so that they can raise an alert if a check-in is not received.

Where a worker is unlikely to return to the office following a visit, they must inform their Manager of this.

If a meeting is cancelled directly with a worker, it is their responsibility to ensure that their Outlook diary is updated to reflect this.

The relevant Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that action is taken whenever a member of staff is more than one hour late returning from a visit. In cases where the visit is due to end after 4pm, the Line Manager will decide whether to take action sooner.

If the Line Manager is unavailable, they will ensure that this responsibility is delegated to another member of staff.

3.1. Procedure Following Non-Return

In the event of a worker failing to check-in after a visit, the following process should be followed by the person who first becomes aware of the worker's non-return (in this order):

- Attempt to contact the worker on the contact number(s) available.
- Attempt to contact the worker by telephone at the locations listed in their Outlook diary for that day.
- Consult colleagues to find out whether they are aware of any change of plans.
- Attempt to contact the worker by their emergency contact numbers.
- Alert the worker's Line Manager.
- After reasonable time (*no longer than one hour*), contact the Police and give the full details of the circumstances.

In the event of an emergency visit being required, the worker attending the visit must ensure that their Line Manager is made aware, or a message is left with a colleague who must inform the relevant Line Manager at the earliest opportunity. The Line Manager will then take action, as appropriate.

4. Visits Outside Normal Working Hours

Visits outside normal working hours refers to visits taking place before 9am or after 5pm. Workers must ensure that any visit taking place outside normal working hours has been agreed in advance with their Line Manager.

Visits outside normal working hours will be risk assessed by the worker on an individual case-by-case basis and approved by the worker's Line Manager. Visits outside normal working hours will be kept to a minimum. ***Where the visit takes place, workers must ensure they have use of a mobile phone.***

Workers should ensure that the relevant details of the visit are up to date in their individual diary on Outlook, as with visits that take place during the working day. They should also 'buddy up', usually with their Line Manager, so that any failure to check-in after the visit can be followed up.

4.1. Procedure Following Non-Return

In the event of a worker failing to check-in after a visit outside normal working hours, the relevant Line Manager will take action, as appropriate.

5. Transporting Pupils

On rare occasions, it may be necessary for workers to transport a pupil by car. Where this is required, a thorough risk assessment must be undertaken prior to transporting the pupil. Where possible, workers should make arrangements to transport the pupil with a colleague.

Instances where a worker is required to transport a pupil must be discussed in advance with their Line Manager and be kept to a minimum.

6. Tracking Staff on Visits

When lone working, it is important that ALL staff keep their mobile phone switched on and with them at all times.

In addition to phones, staff may be issued with a 'microcom' device, where deemed appropriate, which uses GPS to locate them at any time. ***There are emergency procedures in place through this device.***

It is the responsibility of individual workers to ensure their device is charged and follow the instructions provided to register when they are going to an appointment/leaving. In the event of any difficulty at the appointment, the device can be activated and a response will be automatically deployed.

7. Personal Responsibility

Staff have a duty to take reasonable care for their health and safety, therefore they should ensure that they adhere to the following:

- Ensure personal records are kept up to date on Business World On (BWO) – particularly personal and emergency contact details.
- Notify Manager of any concerns relating to actual or potential health and safety risks.
- Report incidents, including near misses.
- Undertake thorough risk assessments for individual cases ahead of visits, including repeat risk assessments for additional visits to reflect the potential for changing risk.
- 'Buddy up' with a colleague, so they can raise the alarm following a failure to check-in.

In particular, when lone working staff should follow the procedures set out in this policy.

Staff must make their Line Manager aware of any changes to their own needs which may increase risk (e.g. health problems). These needs will be taken into account when planning any work which that staff member undertakes.

Staff should always give consideration to other factors which may influence the risk assessment, including:

- Always ask if dogs and other animals can be kept in a separate room for the duration of the visit.
- Sit by the door and ensure access to the exit is clear.
- Park wisely (i.e. in an appropriate place where the car cannot be blocked in and access is not blocked).
- Set up code words with colleagues.
- Don't be left alone with young people, where possible.

8. Training and Additional Safety Measures

All workers who may be required to undertake lone working are required to complete lone working training every 3 years. Subject to service requirements and demand, breakaway training may also be periodically commissioned for staff to ensure adequate knowledge of the correct procedures for managing potential and actual dangerous situations.

The Learning, Achievement and Partnerships (LAP) Service is committed to mirroring other Wokingham Borough Council services that undertake lone working, therefore uses **Peoplesafe** technology to help ensure the safety and security of lone workers, where appropriate.

Workers are required to purchase individual vehicle insurance for business purpose, where they use their personal vehicle to travel to visits. Evidence of this should be uploaded to BWO.

Where there are child protection concerns, staff must follow the usual child protection procedures