



Bowden House School

Lone Worker Policy

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Agreed by the schools governing body and minuted at their meeting.

Agreed: Spring Term 2026

Review date: Autumn Term 2027

Statement of Intent

Bowden House School recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves, without close or direct supervision and sometimes in isolated work areas or outside of office hours.

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff. The policy outlines lone working procedures and what is expected of employees who undertake lone working.

This policy aims to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic way and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce that risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on staying safe when working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Worker Risk Assessment
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Handling Policy/ Behaviour policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Home Visit Risk Assessment

This policy also operates in conjunction with the Bowden House School Risk Assessment Policy and must be read alongside it. All lone working activities are subject to both the Lone Worker Policy and the school's overarching Risk Assessment Policy.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, '**lone working**' refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone either on or off the school premises and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance.

Due to the possibility of buildings creating isolated areas, it is possible for a staff member to be 'lone working' with other staff members in the building.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating and managing the risks associated with lone working.
- Implementing this policy.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy.
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees.
- Identifying situations where staff work alone and deciding whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own.
- Ensuring that the relevant risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with lone working.
- Ensuring that staff identified as lone workers are given appropriate information, instruction and training that is updated as necessary.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through a robust system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.
- Providing lone workers with personal safety equipment, e.g. a mobile phone, where necessary.

Lone workers are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their working.
- Following the school's policies and procedures for safe working.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for advice as appropriate.
- Taking part in training related to lone working as required.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.
- Seeking the permission of the headteacher before working alone.
- Ensuring they have the necessary equipment with them while lone working.
- Adhering to all necessary policies and procedures at all times while lone working.

4. Authorisation

The headteacher, and head of residential, in conjunction with relevant staff members, will develop an approved list of lone working activities, outlining situations where lone working

may be authorised and the necessary precautions and work methods to be followed.

Staff members will request authorisation from the headteacher and/or the head of residential to undertake lone working.

Subject to the completion of a risk assessment, lone working will be authorised if it is on the approved list. If the lone working is not on the approved list, it can only be undertaken following explicit authorisation from the headteacher.

5. Risk assessment

Prior to a member of staff undertaking lone working, a risk assessment will be conducted by the relevant member of staff (see appendix 1 for BH risk assessment document)

The risk assessment will cover all work proposed to be undertaken alone and where risk may be increased by the work activity itself or by the lack of available assistance should something go wrong.

Depending on the tasks the lone worker is proposing to undertake, the risk assessment will cover the following as appropriate:

1. **Objectives**
2. **Lone Working Activities**
3. **Risk Assessment**
4. **Control Measures**
5. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where the existing control measures may not be fully effective, will inform the headteacher or head of residential, as soon as possible.

Relationship Between Lone Working and Whole-School Risk Assessment

All lone working activities at Bowden House School are classified as **higher-risk activities** and therefore:

Must be assessed using both:

- **The Lone Working Risk Assessment, and**
- **The Bowden House School Risk Assessment Policy**

Must take into account:

- Individual pupil behaviour risk assessments
- Medical risk assessments
- Safeguarding risk factors
- Environmental and situational hazards

Must be **reviewed immediately** following:

- Any safeguarding incident
- Any near miss
- Any behaviour incident involving physical intervention
- Any change in pupil presentation or risk profile

Where lone working involves **one-to-one pupil support, off-site activity, residential supervision or de-escalation**, the **higher level of identified risk must always take precedence** when determining staffing levels.

6. Procedures for lone workers

A record will be kept in the school office containing details of all staff members that undertake lone working, including the tasks they undertake, where they undertake them and when.

During working hours, all lone workers leaving their workplace will provide details to the school office of where they are going, who they are going with and their estimated time of arrival back at the school.

If, during a trip away from the school, a lone worker's plans change significantly, they will contact the school office or senior residential worker if outside normal office hours, to inform the school of changes to their schedule.

All lone workers will be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where necessary. Lone workers will ensure they have all of their provided personal safety equipment with them prior to lone working and that the equipment is working.

Lone workers will avoid organising meetings where they will be alone with an individual or group. Where this is unavoidable, the lone worker will obtain prior approval from their line managers who will make any arrangements to ensure the staff member's safety. Any

appointments of this nature will be recorded.

If a staff member is required to work alone with a child or vulnerable adult, they will follow the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Lone workers will have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers will carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. These need to be signed out at the front office.

Under no circumstances should a lone worker compromise their personal safety. If a lone worker feels in danger, they will remove themselves from the situation immediately.

The school office, Hi Vis, deputy head teacher or head of residential will:

- Be aware of the schedule and movements of the lone worker.
- Have all necessary contact details of the lone worker.
- Attempt to contact the lone worker if contact is not made as agreed.
- Follow agreed escalation procedures and notify the headteacher of any incidents.

Where there is a genuine concern about the whereabouts or safety of a lone worker, the headteacher will use the information held on record to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the worker. If contact cannot be made, the headteacher will decide on the best course of action depending on the circumstances, which could include contacting the emergency services.

7. Home visits

A list of home visits is kept securely in the school office. This record includes details of the following:

- The address the lone worker is visiting
- Details of the persons whom they are visiting
- A known contact number for the lone worker and the persons they are visiting
- How long the lone worker expects to be at the location

Once in place, appointment arrangements should be adhered to. The lone worker will notify the school of any changes to their schedule.

Visits deemed high risk, e.g. where there is a history of violence or the location is high risk,

will only be undertaken if absolutely necessary. In these cases, the lone worker may request a meeting in a more suitable location or to be accompanied by another member of staff. A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be undertaken where necessary.

During a home visit, the lone worker will:

- Carry an ID badge and be prepared to identify themselves.
- Carry out a 'dynamic risk assessment' when they first arrive at the location. If they feel in danger, they should have an appropriate reason to not enter the house and arrange an alternative appointment.
- Be aware of any animals in the house and ask for them to be secured in a separate room.
- Ensure that they shut the door behind them and make themselves familiar with the door lock, in case an emergency exit is required.
- Not position themselves in the corner of a room or in a situation where it is difficult to escape.
- Remain calm and focussed at all times, and keep their possessions close to them.

8. Safeguarding

Where a lone worker is required to work with pupils, physical intervention will only ever be used as a last resort and will be conducted in line with the Positive Handling Policy.

If a lone worker is required to conduct one-to-one sessions with pupils, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- A full and appropriate risk assessment will be undertaken prior to any sessions taking place
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to at all times
- Full and ongoing training regarding child protection, positive handling and the use of reasonable force will be provided to the worker
- Meetings or sessions will never be held in remote or secluded areas
- At least one other member of staff will be informed of when and where a one-to-one session is taking place
- The lone worker will not use 'engaged' or equivalent signs on rooms used for one-to-one session

- Doors will be kept open during sessions – where this is not possible, the worker will ensure both parties are visible through a window
- When holding the session, the worker will talk to the pupil with a desk between them, or otherwise arrange the room or environment to avoid unnecessary physical contact
- Both parties will sit near to the door during sessions
- If a pupil becomes emotionally distressed or angry, the worker will seek assistance and a record will be kept of the incident

Any allegations against a lone worker will be dealt with in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Safeguarding and Individual Pupil Risk Assessments

Where lone working involves a pupil with:

- Emotional dysregulation
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour
- Self-harm risk
- Suicidal ideation
- Absconding behaviours
- Trauma-related triggers

A current **Individual Pupil Behaviour Risk Assessment (IPBRA)** must be in place and shared with the lone worker **prior to the session taking place**.

Lone working **must be avoided** where a pupil's risk assessment identifies a **high or unpredictable risk of harm** and staffing must be increased accordingly.

9. Training

All lone workers will be fully trained in safe working practices.

Lone workers will undertake additional training that is relevant to their lone working, e.g. first aid, team teach, etc

10. Safety issues

Lone workers will report incidents such as accidents, near misses and threatening situations to the school who will make a record on BehaviourWatch.

Lone workers should raise any safety concerns with their line manager, who will arrange for additional precautionary measures to be put in place.

Whole-School Risk Monitoring

All lone working incidents, near-misses and safety concerns are reviewed as part of:

- Whole-school safeguarding monitoring
- Health & Safety review meetings
- Risk Assessment Policy monitoring cycle

Patterns of lone working risk will be escalated to **Senior Leadership and the Governing Board** where required.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board and Headteacher and **in line with the Bowden House School Risk Assessment Policy review cycle.**

This policy will also be reviewed immediately following:

- Any serious lone working incident
- Any safeguarding concern linked to lone working
- Any failure of lone working control measures
- Any significant change to pupil risk profiles

Appendix 1 - Lone Working Risk Assessment

Section 1: Introduction

This risk assessment has been developed to ensure the safety and well-being of all staff working alone at Bowden House School. It covers activities where lone working is likely, particularly during one-to-one support with students, and provides a framework to manage associated risks. This document is designed in compliance with health and safety regulations and safeguarding practices.

Section 2: Objectives

- To identify activities where lone working may occur.
- To assess the risks associated with lone working.
- To establish measures to mitigate these risks.
- To outline responsibilities and provide clear guidance for staff working alone.

Section 3: Lone Working Activities

The following situations are considered likely to involve lone working in this school environment:

One-to-One Support with Students

- Individual learning support (academic, behavioural, or therapeutic).
- De-escalation or calming a distressed student in a secluded area.

Night-Time Supervision and Routines

- Monitoring students during the night and responding to those needing support after bedtime.

Morning and Evening Routines

- Assisting students with getting up, dressing (all students can dress independently), and preparing for the school day.
- Supervising evening recreational activities in the residential area.

Supervision in Secluded Areas

- Use of sensory rooms, calm-down areas, or quiet rooms.

- Playground or outdoor area supervision, especially in less populated spaces.

Off-Site Activities and Transport

- Accompanying students to medical appointments, therapy sessions, or community trips.
- Transporting students to or from school using school transport or public transport.

Independent Living Skills Development

- One-on-one sessions teaching life skills (e.g., cooking, laundry, public transport, budgeting).
- Assistance in kitchens for meal preparation.

Emergency Response

- Responding to urgent medical or behavioural crises when no immediate backup is available.

Section 4: Risk Assessment

Activity	Hazards Identified	Persons at risk	Existing controls	Further controls needed
One-to-One Support (Learning, behaviour)	Aggression from student, emotional strain, communication barriers	Staff / Student	Behaviour management training, use of radios/mobile phones (school issued), trained in positive handling, 24/7 telephone support from school	Regular review of student behaviour plans, staff paired when necessary
Night-Time Supervision	Difficulty accessing help in case of emergency, risk of challenging behaviour during bedtime	Staff/ Students	Multiple staff on shift, all staff have radios on throughout the night, telephones in all staff bedrooms, ability to alarm individual bedroom doors if required	Increase supervision during evening transitions
Morning/Evening Routines	Fatigue, managing multiple students at once, behaviour escalation	Staff, Students	Support plans for each student, morning check-ins with staff	Consider additional staff during peak hours; greater input from senior staff on duty

Recreational or Outdoor Supervision	Isolation from main staff areas, injury risk (sports, accidents)	Staff, Students	First aid kits available, regular radio check-ins	Increased visibility for lone workers outdoors
Off-site Activities and Transport	Travel accidents, Behavioural incidents during transit	Staff, Students	Transport policy, seat belts/child locks, seating plans	Implement buddy system with positive role models, where feasible
Independent Living Skills	Risk of burns/ cuts during meal prep, conflict due to task frustration	Staff, Students	Safe kitchen equipment, behaviour management strategies	One on one training on safe kitchen equipment use
Off Site Activities	Getting lost, difficulty managing behaviour away from school	Staff, Students	Risk assessments for trips, travel first aid kits	GPS tracking for off-site excursions "What Three Words"
Emergency Response (Medical/ Behavioural)	Delayed response, risk to other students	Staff, Students	Clear emergency protocols, alert strategies and radios	Increased training for managing crisis alone (covered in Team Teach training)

Section 5: Control Measures

Training and Competency:

All lone-working staff must be trained in de-escalation techniques, positive handling, behaviour management, first aid, and emergency response.

Communication Systems:

Staff should carry communication devices such as radios and school-issued mobile phones when working alone. A check-in/check-out system should be implemented, ensuring staff communicate with the senior staff member at regular intervals.

Risk Assessments for Specific Students:

Individual risk assessments must be conducted for students exhibiting high-risk behaviours, including aggression, self-harm, or severe emotional distress. Behavioural plans must be followed, and lone working should be avoided where necessary.

Incident Reporting:

A robust incident reporting system should be in place, requiring staff to report any incident or near-miss immediately. This helps identify patterns or areas of risk that require further management.

Buddy System:

Where feasible, implement a buddy system for high-risk lone working situations, particularly for off-site trips and night-time duties.

First Aid and Medical Support:

Ensure that lone workers are equipped with basic first aid knowledge and have access to first aid kits in all areas of the school, including classrooms, outdoor areas, and residential buildings. A clear protocol for accessing emergency medical help should be established.

Mental Health and Well-Being Support:

Regular mental health and well-being check-ins for staff involved in lone working, especially those working night shifts or in high-stress situations. Staff should have access to debriefing sessions following critical incidents.

Section 6: Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT): Responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to, conducting regular risk assessments, and reviewing the effectiveness of control measures.

Lone Workers: Responsible for following all outlined safety measures, reporting incidents, and using communication systems appropriately.

All Staff: Expected to support colleagues who are lone working by ensuring they are regularly checked on and are not left isolated in high-risk situations.

Section 7: Review and Monitoring

This risk assessment will be reviewed annually or after any significant incident involving lone working. Feedback from staff will be incorporated to continually improve safety measures and minimise the risks associated with lone working.

This Lone Working Risk Assessment ensures a comprehensive and proactive approach to the safety and well-being of both staff and students at Bowden House School. All staff must

be familiar with its contents and adhere strictly to its procedures, while working in line with all policies and risk management systems, to maintain a safe working environment.