



Policy for Working Alone

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This document provides advice for all GROW staff who regularly, or on an occasional basis work alone with a child. It is recognised that it can present particular difficulties and concerns.

The purpose of this advice is to alert all staff to the issues involved and to assist them in dealing with situations in ways that minimise any potential risks. It identifies good practice and working arrangements when working alone with children, which aim to ensure an appropriate professional environment and the application of necessary safeguards through risk assessment.

Definition

Working alone relates to situations where a member of staff is on their own and is working with or supervising one or a small number of children.

It is the responsibility of the GROW Head of Provision to determine appropriate and reasonable working arrangements, including those for working alone and to provide guidance and support to staff. It is important that Heads and Deputy Heads of Provisions are clear as to when such situations will or may arise and what practice and working arrangements will be appropriate having regard to the nature of the event and the particular circumstances.

Working alone will often form part of the normal working pattern within a particular task within GROW and as such may not be regarded as particularly significant or even distinct. Through management support and guidance and through personal awareness, it is important that staff appreciate and understand the nature of the activity, the potential risks and what is required to minimise them.

A risk assessment should be undertaken. This process needs to be undertaken in conjunction with and discussed fully with the members of staff concerned to ensure that there is a clear understanding of what is required. Planning should be undertaken involving management and staff, to prepare for known events and to consider arrangements and good practice.

There needs to be mechanisms to ensure that staff new to situations are properly briefed (e.g. new staff). There will be a need to review agreed arrangements to take account of operational experience, or to consider any new or changed situations. It is known that the highest risks often occur in emotionally charged situations involving for example, upset, anger, or stress.

There is also a need to identify what procedures can be put in place to assist staff if problems arise. During the actual event an individual member of staff is ultimately reliant on his/her professional judgment and common sense for dealing with the particular circumstances that arise. All GROW staff follow the policy and procedure which alerts them to make sure that they are always emotionally regulated on the occasions that a child is in crisis.

Further guidance on specific matters is set out below

1. One to one situations

These can be planned, unplanned, on-site or off-site events. The planning process will need to identify their purpose, need and the working arrangements and procedures to be followed. The frequency will also be a factor. Other considerations include:

- informing other key colleagues of planned events, start/finish times and any concerns

Whenever possible be visible e.g. window, door kept ajar: there are many places where 1:1 work can take place outside of a single room.

- is there an opportunity/need for a witness to be present or close by
- think carefully about seating arrangements
- proximity considerations, body language, tone of voice, attitude
- any specific issues e.g. cultural, gender?

Support arrangements.

- are there any other viable alternatives to a 1:1 session

2. Supervision of changing for PE or swimming

This can be a particular concern with primary aged pupils given their greater potential need for support from the supervising member of staff, and where a teacher is supervising pupils of the opposite gender.

3. Home visits (see Lone Working policy)

Through the planning process, identify whether these are necessary (consider alternatives) and if so, whether this should involve working alone or a visit by two colleagues. Information about the family and any potential risks is required for an effective assessment before deciding on the visit. The visit should not take place if the risk is deemed too great.

4. Transportation of Children

Staff undertaking the transportation of children must comply with any statutory requirements (e.g. for education visits) and the LPAT policy including appropriate vehicle insurance cover. Heads and Deputy Heads of Provision should ensure that staff assigned meet these requirements and are made aware of their responsibilities when carrying out transportation activities.

There will be occasions when children need to be transported in situations. Examples of these are the transport of sick pupils or on occasions when the child has been deemed too unsafe to travel on the LA arranged transport. These will usually subsequently involve car journeys from school to home. In the latter category the behaviour may necessitate more than one member of staff. Where it is only feasible or justifiable to use one member of staff it may be helpful if that person is the same gender as the child being transported. This may not be possible especially where, for example, a senior member of staff needs to undertake the trip.

Other considerations in emergency situations are: Where possible, pupils will travel in the back seats. Such transportation will usually be a last resort (the norm being a collection by a parent, or approved carer, or ambulance in an emergency).

5. School trips including residential trips

Anyone undertaking a school trip must refer to the on "Educational Visits policy".