



## Lone Working Policy

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## **General Statement**

The purpose of this document is to ensure the safety of staff and students. It should be read in conjunction with Children and Young People's Service Health and Safety documents and should take account of guidance from health colleagues. All staff should have a copy of the Suzy Lamplugh leaflet 'Keeping Safe – Working Alone'.

## **Principles**

Staff should not put themselves at personal or professional risk because of doing their job. The guidelines below should be followed. Staff should feel confident that professional behaviour would have the support of the Children and Young People's Service. If in doubt it is important to seek the advice of colleagues.

## **Professional Boundaries**

### **Confidentiality**

No information about any student or their family should be disclosed to anyone without the parents' consent, except in cases of child protection. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form to give permission for professionals to liaise with one another.

## **Assessment and Identification of Hazards**

- Travelling
- Individual teaching and support in student's homes or other outreach locations
- Working alone in bases
- External visits with students
- Incidents and Accidents

## **Travelling and Individual Outreach Teaching**

All staff who transport students using their own vehicles, whether permanent Brunel College staff or outreach teachers should have the appropriate business insurance cover on their motor vehicle insurance certificate. It is recommended that staff be covered by membership of an emergency breakdown and repair service.

- Staff should ring the Brunel College to let their line manager or colleagues know where they are, where they are going and what time they will be back.
- If working as an outreach teacher, the Headteacher should have a weekly timetable of planned teaching sessions
- If your travel plans change, pass on your new plans to colleagues.
- If you have a mobile phone always keep it on so that you can be contacted (turn it to silent during meetings)
- If you feel uncomfortable about making a home visit, take a colleague with you.
- Do not make a visit unaccompanied if you feel uncertain about the situation.
- Always make the initial home visit with another colleague, who could be a professional from another Children and Young People's Service team or agency (EWO, Social Worker, Community Nurse or SENCO). Find out background information from colleagues before you visit.
- Make sure you have planned your route and the time needed.
- Try to park your car as close as possible to the venue. If you cannot park close by, be aware of the risks involved in walking (handbag, phone etc.) and practice protective behaviours.

- Do not carry a lot of cash or valuable items
- Ensure you leave nothing visible in your car. Lock up all valuables in the boot, including children's notes.
- If an accident should occur when you are driving alone or carrying a passenger or student, you are advised to complete an 'Incident Recording Sheet' at the time of the incident.

### **Identifying Unsafe Settings**

- If you feel the home or setting is not appropriate for teaching in, complete the risk assessment form and let your line manager know, as teaching should, in these instances, take place elsewhere.
- Only enter a house on invitation from a parent and show your identification.
- Do not enter a house unless another known adult is present. This is preferably and usually the parent but could sometimes be another member of the family known to you. You should not teach in a student's home when there is no other adult present. Alternative teaching arrangements should be made in these cases. Inform the Headteacher.
- Never enter a house where a parent or another adult is not fully dressed.
- It is inadvisable to go upstairs or into a bedroom.
- Parents should be made aware that they have prime responsibility for the safety of their child. In order to protect the teacher, it is Brunel College policy that outreach education should not be undertaken in the teacher's own home. As soon as the student is ready for reintegration, sessions should be undertaken at the student's school as part of an integration programme. The longer the student is away from school the harder it is to go back, and the aim of Brunel College is to integrate the student back to school as soon as possible before anxiety causes further difficulties.

### **Lone Working at Brunel College**

- If you are working alone at the centre, shut outside doors securely but ensure you can exit easily.
- Discuss emergency exits with colleagues and arrange furniture so that exits, especially fire exits are clear at all times.
- If you are working in a base during the school holidays, please ensure that either a professional colleague is aware that you are there, or you have left clear details with a member of your family and they know how to contact the Headteacher.
- Continue to carry out all the usual agreed safety considerations.
- Read and review the Health and Safety Policy in a team meeting once a year.
- If it is dark when you leave, keep to well-lit routes to reach your car.
- Report any health hazards, aggressive behaviour or difficult to manage incidents immediately to the Headteacher and document in case you need evidence later.
- If you work late let a colleague know you are in the building and tell them when you leave.
- Timetabling should have regard to the availability of another adult (not necessarily the education team, but with other professionals if in need)
- Consider the age and sex of the pupil when working alone with a pupil.
- Consider visibility and consider leaving the door open.
- Never leave colleagues working alone unless they know where you are and can contact you.

### **External Visits with Students**

Staff in Brunel College will always follow the Policy for External Visits and make risk assessments. Through outreach, teaching staff can address National Curriculum Learning Objectives across a range of subjects and in real community settings. Teachers can maximize resources and opportunities if they use the museum service, the library, shops, services, and local industry. Assessments can be made in these settings and contact can be made with other adults and young people. This is often a target in the student's reintegration programme.

However, it must be borne in mind that there are risks in taking students out of the centre. Brunel College Health and Safety Policy must be adhered to at all times and all staff should be aware of risk assessments

which should be made with the parents, carers, a senior member of staff from Brunel College or the student's home school. Assessments and arrangements should be recorded and kept as part of record keeping.

### **When making educational visits always:**

- complete a Journey Checklist before making a journey with a child or young person in the car and leave a copy in your base with another member of staff. If you have doubts because of this do not make the journey or seek advice on how to address the concerns and raise the safety level.
- ensure that any young person under 12 years of age or less than a height of 4 feet 11 inches (150 cms.) must be seated in the back of the car with a seat belt on.
- It is recommended that all children and young people sit in the back of the car using car restraints.
- give the parent a mobile phone number if you have one and take the student's home telephone number or other contact number with you.
- let the parent know the departure time and the time expected back, the destination and the car registration number
- make a risk assessment to decide if a second adult is needed to supervise the child
- check if the student is taking any medication and what time the next dose is due
- ensure that road safety rules are taught and followed
- park as near to the destination as possible
- If at any time a member of staff should feel uncomfortable about transporting a student take him/her straight home or back to the ward/school and do not take him/her out again. Write up your reasons as a record on an incident form on MyConcern and talk this through with a line manager from Brunel College as soon as possible. Other arrangements should be made for transporting the student if necessary.

### **Incidents and Accidents**

Following the Children Act (1989) there was an increase in young people, particularly those who are distressed or emotionally disturbed, making false accusations against professional staff, usually abuse. It could also happen that parents, distressed, angry, frustrated or emotionally fragile could make an accusation or complaint. It is essential to minimise the chance of such accusations. The advice in the Suzy Lamplugh leaflet is helpful and all staff should be aware of how they communicate with students and adults and practise effective listening skills. If there has been a difficult situation or uncomfortable incident or accident staff should contact their line manager and record this appropriately.

Staff should ensure that they always write notes after any incident, accident or near miss on an Incident Recording Sheet. As well as being part of the required teaching and learning records these will serve as evidence if necessary and are helpful for good reflective practice. You will need to give your records to the SENDCO of the school ready for the student's review and may need them for performance management. For outreach teachers there are forms in the Procedures for Outreach Teaching pack. All incidents, accidents or near misses should be reported by the line manager to the Health and Safety team.

### **Conclusion**

It is very important to be cautious, sensible, and professional while being mindful of the sensitive nature of the children with whom we work. It is possible to worsen the situation by over dramatising or becoming too formal. Stay relaxed, low key with a positive attitude about education and stay outside the dynamics of the

family, which can be extremely complex. These guidelines should serve to minimise the risks inherent in the work we do.

