



LONE WORKING POLICY

Last reviewed:	November 2025
Next review due:	November 2026

Statement of intent

Lone working is when a person is working by themselves without close or direct supervision. This could be while at work, when a situation takes a staff member away from the rest of the team, or while working on admin tasks away from the setting. Safety is also just as much about psychological safety as it is about physical safety. This policy is to ultimately protect staff who are working alone and consequently the children attending the nursery.

We understand that there may be times during the day, and beyond, when our staff may be left alone with the children, such as for the following reasons:

- Nappy changes and changes of clothes
- Supporting children with toileting
- Following a child's interest, as this may lead staff away with a child to explore an area
- Local walks with a small group of children
- The duties some team members have, e.g. administration duties, opening and closing the setting, carrying out cleaning or maintenance at the settings, senior staff onsite outside operating hours
- Completing administrative responsibilities from home or elsewhere.

The risks of lone working include:

- Physical risks
 - Working at heights, using ladders and lifting
 - Trips, falls and injuries while on your own
 - The use of machinery, electrical or other equipment or chemicals
- Security risks
 - Allegations being made against a staff member
 - A potential for violence or threatening behaviour towards an individual
 - Encountering intruders
 - Experiencing theft
 - Working in remote areas, particularly after dark and outside normal working hours.
- Health risks
 - Competency, ability and medical condition of the individual

- You may not have immediate access to first aid or help in an emergency.

This is not an exhaustive list, individuals will be expected to report all situations which leave them open to any health and safety issues to the nursery owner. All hazards must be identified and assessed and control measures applied where necessary to eliminate or mitigate the risks.

To ensure that staff and children are not left in vulnerable situations, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Good communication should ensure that all staff are aware of each other's intentions and whereabouts. Staff should inform their colleagues if they intend to leave the site, even for a short period. This gives them the opportunity to seek cover if necessary.
- Staff should ensure that they are appropriately placed around the site to maintain the supervision and safety of the children.
- Staff should be aware that the safety and wellbeing of the children is paramount. Staff should use their initiative when attending to minor occurrences.
- Staff should take reasonable care of their own health and safety, including not working at height, carrying heavy loads or using powerful tools on their own.
- Staff should inform managers of any medical conditions, hazards, incidents or accidents immediately. Medical conditions such as past fainting episodes, serious allergic reactions or pregnancy should all be considered.
- If staff are staying on site late alone then they should inform the manager or nursery owner when they have safely left the premises.

Nappy changing / toileting / changes of clothes

Staff should ensure child and staff member are visible to other staff when nappy changing and toileting whilst maintaining children's privacy. Toileting and changing clothes will take place in designated areas (toilet, potty stations) when possible. Further guidance around this is in our toileting and nappy changing policy.

Local walks / being alone with a child

- Staff members will carry a first aid kit when leaving the site with children.
- Staff will always carry their work mobile phone. They will be able to be reached on this phone at all times by other staff members.
- As far as possible, staff will stay in sight of other staff members. However, when this is not possible, they will inform other staff of their intention and whereabouts at regular intervals at least every half an hour by phone.

All staff responsibilities:

- To take part in safety training
- Continuously assess lone working conditions and if anything feels off or unusual, to take action
- Agree on emergency code words with colleagues, these can be used discreetly without raising alarm e.g. with abusive/threatening conversations
- Ensure ratios are maintained
- There is someone to call on in an emergency if required
- Everyone is familiar with and understands what to do in emergency situations e.g. first aid, encountering dogs, suspicious persons.

- The member of staff and children are safeguarded at all times (relating to additional policies as above)
- Report any gaps in emergency or safety procedures e.g. not having access to the emergency contact details list.

Employee's responsibilities:

- To make a member of the management aware of when they are working and make plans to check in at their expected time of completion of the work
- To ensure they have access to a mobile phone at all times
 - This mobile phone should be fully charged
 - Colleagues' numbers, their emergency contact numbers, children's parents numbers and their emergency contact numbers should all be pre-programmed into the phone.
 - This phone should be used to call for help if they need it
 - This phone should also be used for management to check their safety if they are concerned
 - Be aware of any local areas where there is weak mobile phone signal
- Ensure that the site remains locked so no one can walk in unidentified
- Report any concerns for working alone to the management as soon as is practicably possible.

Management's responsibilities:

- To assess risks specific to lone workers and restrict hazardous tasks (e.g. those requiring heavy lifting or dangerous equipment)
- To ensure staff working alone are competent and confident to carry out any safety procedures e.g. fire evacuation
- To ensure that each member of staff required to work alone has the training and/or skills for the role; e.g. paediatric first aid certificate, safeguarding training and competency, food hygiene training and, if children younger than school reception age are present; hold a level 3 qualification.
- To ensure that the employee has the ability to contact them or a member of the team if their lone working is outside normal office hours (i.e. access to a phone, contact numbers of someone they can call)
- To check that the employee has someone they can contact in the event of an emergency, and the numbers to call. The Little Firefly have an adult emergency contact details list.
- To ensure that employees have the ability to access a telephone whilst lone working
- If reporting in arrangements have been made and the employee does not call in, to follow it up.

A risk assessment is also completed for these occasions including hazards and risks and how these are controlled.

Working from home

The Little Firefly staff are able to work from home (or a location of their choosing) to complete their administrative responsibilities at work. Staff should be aware of surroundings and any

difficulties that may arise from working alone at home and have someone they can contact if they need to.

Travelling between locations

The Little Firefly staff may travel to a different site, setting or family home. Whether you are driving, using public transportation, or walking, prioritising your personal safety is essential to minimise risks and ensure you reach your destination safely.

- Walking - avoid isolated and poorly lit areas. Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Cycling -
- Driving - ensure your car has not been tampered with and is safe to drive, and locked. Have an emergency plan in case of breakdown etc and a way to contact someone.
- Public transport - use well-lit, busy stops/stations and inform someone of your travel and arrival time.

Psychological wellbeing

The Little Firefly support psychological wellbeing for those working alone by offering:

- Regular supervisions - managers regularly schedule virtual or in-person check-ins with their line reports. This provides an opportunity to discuss any concerns, receive support and clarify objectives.
- Scheduled breaks - every staff member has a break during the working day and it can be discussed if a staff member needs more or longer breaks. This gives time to reduce stress and prevent burnout.
- Social interactions - the team organises occasional social activities for their staff to enjoy together.

Vulnerable staff

It is worth remembering all the information above from the lens of a more vulnerable member of staff. This could be a female member of staff, new and expectant mothers, older workers, workers who are new to the job, inexperienced and low qualified workers, agency and temporary workers, workers with a disability and workers with underlying health issues.

Cultural awareness

When you work with diverse families, having cultural awareness helps you avoid misunderstandings and foster positive interactions. Understanding cultural differences enhances communication, ensures respectful interactions, and helps prevent conflicts.

Conflict management

The Little Firefly staff team work closely together but sometimes child-led interest may take a staff member off alone e.g. on walks with children, or speaking with parents outside the gate. Handling conflict and aggression calmly and effectively is crucial for maintaining safety in lone working situations. We advise using non-threatening body language and calm communication.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

- Lone working risk benefit analysis
- Safer recruitment policy
- Allegations of abuse against a staff member policy
- Safeguarding policy

- Toileting and nappy changing policy
- Useful contacts list
- Risk assessment policy
- Adult emergency contact details

External references:

- [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 - HSE](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [Employers - driving and riding safely for work - Overview - HSE](#)