SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

LONE WORKING

Reviewed and updated by the Leadership Team: May 2008
Next Review due: as required

General Policy Statement

The College, as the employer, has a legal duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The College is committed to improving the safe working of all employees who may be lone working both inside/outside of normal working hours.

The College will ensure that:

- Guidance on enhancing the safety of lone working is provided and monitored by line managers.
- Line managers support reasonable actions of employees when they find themselves in difficult and compromising lone working situations.
- All lone working activities are risk assessed with the involvement of management and employees.
- Training is provided to line managers and lone workers to enhance their safety during lone working.
- Lone workers are provided with suitable and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- An efficient and reliable awareness register is maintained and made available for use by lone workers and those responsible for monitoring employees.
- Employees follow the College’s procedures to ensure the awareness register is kept up-to-date and reviewed.
- Employees share information across the College and liaise with external agents to ensure the safety of lone workers.
- Employees report all incidents of aggressive and threatening behaviour encountered whilst at work to their line manager and complete the accident/occurrence report forms.
- Line managers follow appropriate procedures and provide support to the employee when incidents are reported to them.
- All reported incidents are investigated by line managers and formal action considered where appropriate.
- Lone working procedures and related risk assessments are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Health and Safety support and guidance is provided to all employees.
Employees have a legal duty to co-operate with the College in minimising risks to themselves and others. This can be achieved by following the policies and procedures to lone working.

**You have the right:**

- to expect the best service from Paignton Community & Sports College as part of Torbay Council;
- we will try to provide that service, with respect and dignity.

**In return:**

- we ask the same from you:
- we reserve the right to ask anyone who abuses us - verbally or physically - to leave the premises. Abusive telephone calls may be terminated. Any violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour to our employees is unacceptable and will be recorded.

**The law:**

You may be prosecuted if you:

- cause any person to feel harassed, alarmed or distressed
- use threatening, abusive or insulting language or behaviour.

You could receive a sentence of up to six months’ imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5,000.

The College as part of Torbay Council will report any such behaviour to the police and will support its employees in taking legal action against perpetrators.

**MANAGING LONE WORKERS**

The key responsibilities of managers are detailed in Paignton Community & Sports College’s Health and Safety Policy.

**Accountability for employees involved in lone working:**

**Governors/Principal:**
- have the responsibility for ensuring the College’s lone working policies and safe working practices are implemented.

**Leadership Team:**
- ensures that adequate instruction and training is provided to employees to enable them to carry out their work activities competently and safely
- identifies lone workers, including those employees who may be lone working from time to time
- ensures that adequate and effective risk assessments are undertaken and regularly reviewed.

**Faculty Heads/Head of Year/Team Leaders:**
- day-to-day maintenance of the health and safety of their team and equal responsibility with Leadership Team for ensuring adequate training is provided
- in liaison with Health and Safety Officer, ensuring that risk assessments are carried out to eliminate the risk or minimise it as far as possible by developing safe working practices.
Employees:

- co-operate with their employer in complying with lone working procedures and in reporting any hazards identified to their immediate line manager.
- attend any training necessary to enable them to work safely.

Planning and Organisation

Lone working activities should be pre-planned wherever possible to ensure no activities go unchecked. Where this is not possible the activity should be covered by risk assessment. Generally the risk to a lone worker should be no greater than if there were two or more employees undertaking the same task. Planning and organisation activities may require delegation of responsibilities. To assist in the planning process, managers must have direct access to all appropriate information.

The planning process will include appropriate procedures for:

- monitoring compliance with policies
- reviewing and amending existing policies where appropriate
- recording actions taken.

Risk Assessment

Fundamental to managing lone working is the need to conduct a structured risk assessment prior to undertaking lone working activities. The College's Risk Assessment procedure must be used for this purpose. Following the risk assessment the necessary control measures can be implemented. The risk assessment process must take into account the changing hazards encountered during lone working activities.

Monitoring and Review

Attention must be given to ensure employees adhere to the College's Lone Working Policies and safe working practices. This can be achieved by monitoring lone workers and auditing their performance, reviewing procedures and recording actions taken. There is a need to review risk assessments regularly and for line managers to monitor performance by:

- undertaking site visits to confirm that operational activity reflects both generic procedures and those specific to the site specific risk(s)
- collecting data on the number of incidents recorded, identifying trends and remedial action taken/required and passing this to directors on a regular basis
- holding regular meetings with employees involved in lone working activities to review their understanding of the procedures and assess the need for amendments.

The Health and Safety Officer will be responsible for monitoring the arrangements for lone Working.

Recording violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour (VATB)

All incidents of VATB must be recorded on the Accident/Occurrence Report Form. For reportable accidents (e.g. serious occurrences such as broken limbs etc.) you will need to contact the Health and Safety officer IMMEDIATELY to establish the need to complete a further form for the HSE, Plymouth. The Health and Safety Team at Torbay Council are able to complete the HSE form on your behalf only if the TC/B/28 arrives with them within three days.

Managers must consider informing the Police in the case of serious incidents and, can seek advice from the Health and Safety Team at Torbay Council.
Awareness

Managers must make sure that all incidents of VATB are given the highest priority and that action is taken immediately.

Immediately after an incident the employee should discuss the incident with their line manager who should complete the Accident/Occurrence Report Form. Instructions about where to send the copies are included on the form. A copy must be sent to the Health and Safety Team at the Town Hall, Torquay.

Employees should not delay in completing and sending the Accident/Occurrence Report Form if their manager is unavailable.

The manager and employee should discuss the incident and Managers should be aware of the importance of informing others of the potential hazard.

Employees may receive information from outside the Council (e.g. Police, Health Authority) regarding individuals who may pose a threat to lone workers. In such circumstances the risk of potential danger to employees working alone will require this information to be readily accessible. Managers must ensure that this information is passed to the Health and Safety Team.

RECORDING AN INCIDENT OF VATB
EMPLOYEE MONITORING/COMMUNICATIONS

LONE WORKING GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

Following risk assessment of employees who are lone working, managers must ensure that:

- effective procedures are established for monitoring the whereabouts of employees at all times
- effective procedures are established for communicating with employees at all times
- all procedures which have been put in place are followed
- where monitoring procedures have failed to locate an employee, immediate search procedures are implemented
- training is provided in the use of monitoring procedures and any communication equipment used.

Key features of the monitoring system

- Line manager to hold personal details of each employee in a secure place, including name, home address, telephone numbers, next of kin, passport size photograph.
- Employees to provide details of their proposed whereabouts to a nominated person(s).
- Plans are in place to ensure continuity of monitoring, e.g. during sickness, lunchtimes etc.
- Any deviations from the route must be advised beforehand.
- Mobile telephone numbers and employee vehicle details to be recorded accessibly and updated on a regular basis.
- Any change of the vehicle being used must be advised by the employee beforehand.
- Employees must call in, depending on risk assessment, at pre-determined intervals to report they are safe and their current whereabouts.
- If the employee fails to contact the nominated person within the specified overdue time limit (e.g. 15 minutes) then the agreed search procedure must be implemented.
- Alternatively the risk may dictate a more pro-active monitoring approach, e.g. the nominated person initiating contact with the employee at pre-determined intervals.
- The search procedure may involve (a) the nominated person attempting to make contact with the employee, (b) a second person initiating a search, and (c) calling the police.
- An auditing system should be set up to ensure all the systems are working effectively.
- For out-of-hours working, alternative procedures should be in place.

EMPLOYEE MONITORING/COMMUNICATIONS

LONE WORKING GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

- Employees must follow the monitoring procedures set up and use the communication equipment provided in accordance with the training and instruction given.
- Employees must report any loss, damage or obvious defects in the communication equipment to his/her manager as soon as is possible.
- Employees will be encouraged to put forward any suggestions regarding the monitoring procedures or the communication equipment to their manager which may improve their safety whilst working.
- Employees must provide a nominated person with details of any changes to their routine, e.g. change of vehicle, deviation from proposed route etc. prior to working alone.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Policy:

Paignton Community & Sports College as the employer is committed to providing a safe working environment for all its employees who may be lone working. The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 place a duty on the employer to provide PPE and on the employee to use it. Paignton Community & Sports College will ensure that employees are
provided free of charge with appropriate, adequate and well-maintained PPE and that they are trained to use if effectively.

All employees must follow the College’s policies, procedures and guidance on PPE.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

LONE WORKING GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

Introduction

Paignton Community & Sports College has a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Managers in the College play an important role in ensuring the safety of employees. The Personal Protection Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 place a duty on the employer to provide PPE.

Guidance

Effort must be made to eliminate the hazard or use a less hazardous alternative. Even where controls and safe systems of work have been applied, some hazards might remain.

It is at this point that PPE will be needed.

- Managers must comply with the College’s general policy on PPE.
- Managers must undertake a full risk assessment of employees working in his/her section.
- This risk assessment must identify the hazards and provide appropriate control measures.

- The control measures may involve the use of PPE. Examples of control measures include mobile phones, radios and attack alarms.
- Where PPE has been identified in the risk assessment as being necessary to control the risk, then it must be made available.
- Managers must make employees aware of the relevant guidance available.
- When choosing appropriate PPE managers will involve the employee and may consult the Health and Safety Team.

Managers must ensure that:

- employees are instructed to use and trained in the use and wearing of PPE and that they understand why it is needed, when it should be used and its limitations
- equipment is properly maintained including cleaning, repair, drying, storage and replaced when required
- employees make proper use of PPE and report its loss, destruction or any fault in it
- proper inventories for PPE are kept
- PPE is used when needed.

There are a number of points to consider when selecting PPE for employees:

(a) The item is appropriate to the risk or risks involved and the conditions at the place of work where exposure to the risk may occur.
(b) PPE must fit properly and suit the wearer (size, fit and weight).
(c) If more than one item of PPE is to be worn they must be compatible, i.e. wearing ear defenders with a helmet.
(d) Equipment must be of good quality and wherever possible made to a recognised standard, i.e. British Standards or have the ‘CE’ mark.
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

LONE WORKING - GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

Introduction

The College will ensure that you are provided with PPE which is suitable, right for the job and free. Managers will be expected to undertake a risk assessment of all lone working activities and provide appropriate control measures where hazards are identified. These control measures may include the use of PPE, however its use must be seen as the last resort if the hazard cannot be eliminated.

Guidance

- Employees must use PPE provided, in accordance with training and instruction given.
- Employees must report any loss, damage or obvious defect in PPE to the manager.
- Employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their PPE is returned to the accommodation provided after use.
- Failure to wear PPE provided may result in disciplinary action being taken.

GUIDANCE ON SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN VATB INCIDENTS

Action by the Council:

Although the College will make every effort to protect its employees, it cannot guarantee that a violent incident will not occur. Torbay Council will be fully supportive of employees who are threatened or assaulted in the course of, or arising out of, carrying out their duties.

Immediately after the incident ends

- The person who has been threatened or assaulted should be asked what he/she needs. Whenever possible, managers and colleagues should ensure that these needs are met.
- Where possible, those involved in dealing with the incident should be brought together by the manager for an informal, open discussion. They should be thanked for their contribution and involvement and advised of the arrangements for any post-incident de-briefing if this is appropriate.
- Anyone who has been involved in a VATB incident should be offered a quiet area in which to relax and recover his or her composure with a chosen individual, e.g. a close colleague, or alone if preferred, before being seen by a line manager.
- Transport should be offered to, and organised for employees who may be too exhausted or upset to drive themselves home.

Post incident de-briefing

Being involved in a violent situation can be both physically and psychologically painful for all parties involved. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that there is post-incident debriefing and long term support which should help to prevent the possible development of stress-related difficulties.

A post-incident de-brief by a trained person should happen within 48-72 hours of a serious incident occurring. This will allow the employees to discuss:

- what happened
- any trigger factors
- their role in the incident
- how they felt during the incident
- how they feel now
- how they might feel over the next few days
- what can be done about it

The co-ordinator should be contacted in Human Resources (on 01803 207347 or if appropriate on the emergency out-of-hours number, 01803 550405) to arrange for the de-briefing to be facilitated. Those who have been trained for this task must be contactable quickly and be able to give immediate priority to requests for de-briefing. This is not an in-depth therapy, but an opportunity to ventilate feelings, gain an overall picture of what happened and what may have triggered it, and to share similar emotional reactions. Emphasis should be placed on the normality of reactions and on providing further support should it be needed. Confidentiality and the avoidance of allocating blame are basic requirements of this process. Adequate time must be allowed for the process. Any procedural lessons learned from the collective experience should be fed back to management.

It is recognised that not all incidents will require a full de-briefing and it is not mandatory for employees to attend. This de-briefing does not replace the valid role played by other local informal support systems or counselling services.

Approximately one month after the incident, the line manager should discuss with each employee informally and individually how they are feeling. Any employees who appear to be experiencing problems as a result of the incident should be referred to the Occupational Health Physician via the Co-ordinator.

**Legal action**

Where a VATB incident has occurred, managers should consider whether the following are appropriate:
- sending a formal letter to the person involved in the alleged incident to warn that legal action may be taken if the behaviour re-occurs
- seeking an injunction to prevent the person involved in the alleged incident from entering the College's premises, or from harassing the employee
- providing legal advice from the Legal Support section to the employee, their Line Manager and trade union officer if civil action is being contemplated.

Advice should be sought from Legal Services in these circumstances.

If legal proceedings are initiated as a result of an incident arising in the course of, or out of, an employee carrying out their duties, the College will grant leave with pay to the employee, or other employees who are witnesses, to attend court.

**Counselling**

Employees who have experienced VATB will also be offered counselling and this can be arranged through the Line Manager.

**Caring for employees who have experienced violence and are absent from work**

Employees who are physically or psychologically injured as a result of violence may need time off work to recover. They may need to come to terms with what happened, recover from shock or their injuries or regain their confidence. Other people may prefer to go straight back to work.

It is important to keep in touch with employees who are off work recovering. The employee(s) may need de-briefing or need other help that the College can identify and/or supply. He/she is likely to want to be in touch with work and to know what has happened as a result of the incident, as well as to be reassured that people care about them and support them in their absence.
When considering visiting it is well worth finding out who the individual would like to see and when they would like to see them. Some people may need a few days to come to terms with what has happened to them before seeing people from the workplace.

**Sick Leave Arrangements**

Certified sickness absence resulting from an assault at work will be recorded as industrial injury absence. Periods of absence attributable to an assault occurring in the course of, or arising out of, carrying out his/her duties will not normally count against an employee’s entitlement to sick pay. Advice should be sought from HR.

**Compensation**

In the event of permanent disablement arising from an assault, the benefits payable will be at least at the levels set by the NJC National Agreements.

Claims for personal injury following assault can be submitted to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for payment. Guidance on eligibility under the Board’s provisions, advice on making a claim and application forms are available from the Legal Support section.

If an employee suffers a loss or damage to personal property as a result of an assault or similar incident in the course of their work, then a claim can be made to the Head of Service in respect of such loss. The Council will consider reimbursing reasonable costs for expenses incurred as the result of an attack sustained in the course of, or arising out of, an employee carrying out their duties, for example:

- costs of transport home, to the GP or hospital
- repair or replacement of damaged clothing
- costs of dental repair or treatment
- repair or replacement of glasses or watch broken in the incident
- prescription charges
- repair of damage to the employee’s vehicle if this was involved in the incident
- loss of insurance ‘no-claims’ bonus.

**TRAINING STRATEGY**

**Responsibility for training**

- Paignton Community & Sports College recognises its responsibility for providing appropriate training for employees who work alone.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that access to relevant training is available to all employees at the appropriate time. Training needs will be identified by risk assessment.
- Employees have shared responsibility for highlighting areas of risk. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they attend training when offered.

**Training should be on-going and appropriate**

Training should concentrate on the prevention of VATB. Skills taught may include both physical and psychological techniques as well as training in equal opportunities, antidiscrimination and the Disability Discrimination Act.

Training cannot be seen as a "one-off" and therefore managers must consider the need for refresher training.

**Post-incident support**

The College will set up a network of people who will be trained in post-incident de-briefing skills. They will provide support to employees within 48-72 hours of a serious incident occurring.
**Induction for lone workers**

Every employee appointed to a post which involves lone working will receive training and guidance in lone working as an additional part of their induction programme.

**Proposed Training Programme**

**Induction Programme for lone workers**

This will include:

- how to use any personal protective equipment supplied to aid safety
- awareness of the hazards and risks associated with their jobs
- familiarisation with the contents of the College’s Lone Working Policy and procedures
- basic training in recognising the warning signs of violence and calming techniques
- correct use and means of access to the Awareness Register (if appropriate)
- correct procedure following an incident of VATB
- any other information which is deemed necessary for the safety of the employee in their current post.

**Other training**

The following additional training will be made available for lone workers where appropriate:

- dealing with violence and aggression
- breakaway techniques
- drink and drug abuse
- assertive communication skills
- customer focused interpersonal skills
- equal opportunities/anti-discrimination

**Training for managers**

Managers with responsibilities for lone workers will receive suitable and sufficient training in:

- personal protective equipment
- risk assessment
- initial de-briefing skills
- safe working practices applicable to lone working situations
- correct procedure following an incident of VATB
- other training which is identified as a need to support their team in safe lone working.