Lone Working Policy

Policy Statement

Binfield Preschool is aware that sometimes staff are required to work without close or direct supervision, which includes staff working outside normal hours (e.g. opening up/closing the building) and staff working away from their fixed base (e.g. attending essential meetings off site). Therefore, in order to maintain the safety of staff, we ask all workers to adhere to the following policy.

Wherever possible it is Preschool's intention to minimise lone working. Whilst there is no legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the HSW (Health & Safety at Work) Act and the MHSW (Management of Health & Safety at Work) Regulations still apply. These require that hazards at work are identified and risks are assessed appropriately so that reasonable measures can be taken to avoid, control and mitigate the risks. Lone workers must be deemed medically fit to perform their role and should refrain from any activity e.g. heavy lifting, which would be more safely undertaken alongside others.

Underpinning this policy is the principle that individuals are also responsible for their own health and safety and should not put themselves at risk unnecessarily.

Procedures

Opening Preschool in the morning:

- The building should not be opened earlier than 8.30am to avoid unnecessarily long periods of lone working.
- When accessing the building first thing, especially if alone, staff should remain alert and vigilant to any signs of risk or danger e.g. damage to the premises, an intruder who may still be on site, problems with the lighting and/or heating etc, and know what procedures to follow in these scenarios. If concerned, the first member of staff on site should wait for another staff member to arrive before accessing the building.
- In case of an emergency, staff should calmly assess the situation and not put themselves at risk unnecessarily. They should act to control the situation and reduce any risk to themselves, by contacting the appropriate services and the chair of committee as soon as possible.
- They should not enter the building alone if they think an intruder is present. They should call the police and remain at a safe distance outside the building and contact the chair of committee as soon as possible.
- If there is evidence of a break-in, they should call the police and ask them to attend.
• Staff should always carry a mobile phone that is charged, with sufficient credit and with relevant numbers stored for ease of access in an emergency.
• All staff must be mindful of their responsibility for their own safety and that of their colleagues and must not put themselves or their colleagues at risk unnecessarily.
• Staff should be familiar with the procedures to follow if they smell gas or fumes (do not switch on any lights or electrical appliances and do not use naked flames; call the emergency number displayed in the building; remain at a safe distance in a ventilated area; do not allow anyone to enter the building). Contact the council and the chair of committee as soon as possible.

Closing the building at the end of the day:
• Where possible, a staff member should not be left alone to close the building at the end of the day to avoid risk.
• Wherever possible staff should leave together or with a colleague at the end of the day.
• Should a child remain uncollected, it is expected that at least two colleagues remain on the premises to safeguard the child and staff.

Attending meetings, home visits or training off site and alone
• To enable preschool to check on a member of staff if they feel it necessary, staff should always ensure their contact details are kept up-to-date and inform the manager of any changes to their address or phone number(s) immediately.
• Staff should carry a charged mobile phone with sufficient credit and have relevant contact numbers stored in it for easy access to be able to communicate with preschool or the chair of committee in an emergency.
• If a particular meeting presents an additional risk e.g. if a member of staff is likely to encounter a parent/s who may be volatile, the member of staff should consider additional control measures in advance of the meeting e.g. stagger the departure; leave with someone else on the course; arrange to be met from the meeting by a colleague or family member; where possible, attend the meeting with a second member of staff. Consider whether it is essential for a member of staff to attend at all – could they send a report instead?
• For home visits, staff should always go in pairs (ideally the designated keyworker and the manager or assistant manager should attend) and take a mobile phone with them in case of emergency.
• If the environment of the visit appears at all threatening, staff would be encouraged to leave the premises promptly, even if the purpose of the visit has not been accomplished.

Lone working with children on-site
• Staff should not be expected to conduct individual work with a child in an isolated area where they cannot be seen by anyone else. Where it is necessary to close doors, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.
• If a child is being changed, they are entitled to privacy, dignity and safety, but the door should remain open in order to safeguard the child and the member of staff.
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<th>Binfield Preschool</th>
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<td>Name of signatory</td>
<td>Adrian Hone</td>
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<td>Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)</td>
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