

# **Lone Working Policy**

Under section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974, Vibrance has a legal duty, so far as practical, to ensure all staff's health, safety and welfare at work. This is to protect employees from all acts of violence and abuse. Vibrance considers all acts of violence and abuse unacceptable and commits to providing safety at work for all staff.

## **Description of work-related violence**

Any incident where an employee is abused, threatened, assaulted or has any damage to their property whilst during their employment.

## **Aim**

This document protects staff from violence in lone situations and fulfils the duty of care towards employees.

This document covers all temporary or permanent employees within Vibrance who are lone workers, i.e., working in homes, the community, or schools.

## **Responsibilities of Management**

- Responsibility that every reasonable preventative measure is in place to protect staff.
- Training and guidelines for staff should be provided as part of their induction.
- Ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as deemed necessary.
- Ensure staff have mobile phones (personal or owned by Vibrance).
- Ensure that any incidents are reported to the Health and Safety Executive. If a staff member is absent from work for more than three days, this will also be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

## **Responsibilities of Staff**

Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, it is the duty of every employee to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of himself/herself and any other person who may be affected by his/her actions or omissions at work.

- Employees should ensure they are familiar with policy and procedures written in this document and comply with them.
- Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.
- Staff must converse with the designated Health and safety team on matters of Health and Safety. At no time should they put themselves or others at risk by their actions. All potential hazards, accidents, or near misses that have been witnessed should be reported to the manager immediately.
- Car users are always responsible for the maintenance of their vehicles for work.
- If a staff member is involved in a road traffic accident, they should notify the management with details a.s.a.p.
- If any medical conditions affect any safety aspect, staff should notify management and report them on risk assessment forms.

## Lone Working Policy

- Staff should contact management (or a delegated person in his absence) at least once during their working day.

### Home Visits – Health and Safety

- No home visits will be undertaken without first seeking approval from Vibrance's management (Excluding pick-up/drop-off from outside of a student's residence).
- Anyone conducting a home visit should notify the management when and where such visits are taking place and provide an up-to-date contact number. Staff will be provided with a mobile phone if necessary.
- At the time of the initial visit, staff should note the environment and any potential risks for lone working at a future date—a generic risk assessment must be completed before and after the first visit.
- A risk assessment should be carried out before work commences when visits occur in public or any community building (libraries, community centres).
- When working in education and public areas, staff should avoid isolated situations, e.g. rooms with doors closed and no view outside. Any premises for use on a one-to-one basis should be equipped with a telephone if you don't have a mobile phone.
- CCTV protects vibrance areas (signage is clearly displayed). If there is a suspicion that an allegation will be made or concern about inappropriate behaviour by students when in a lone working situation, staff must notify management at the earliest opportunity to ensure that video evidence is retained.
- On any home visit, ensure you are never left alone with a child. The caregiver/parent should be present always, preferably in the same room. This also promotes good practice of working supportively and cooperatively with parents.
- Never agree to be left alone with a child in the house.
- If you are ever left alone in a room with a child, ensure the door is ajar.
- If the child becomes ill or has an accident during your session, inform the parent/carer immediately. In case of accidental injury, report to the manager immediately and complete an accident form.
- If you become ill, inform the parent/carer immediately. Inform managers if you are unable to return to work. In case of injury, notify the manager as soon as possible. You may then seek medical attention.
- If your session with the learner involves working closely or making any physical contact, e.g., lap play, ensure the parent/carer understands the reasoning behind this.
- If any person within the household unacceptably interrupts your session, end it and rearrange it for a later date.
- If, during your session, any verbal or physical threats or abuse threaten your safety, leave at once and notify management. It is then your responsibility to log every detail immediately.
- Never give out your personal information, such as landline or mobile telephone numbers or home addresses.

## **Lone Working Policy**

- Never agree to keep any of the confidences that may be given to you. If you think anything may be disclosed to you, warn that you are duty-bound to pass any information regarding any aspect of children's safety or well-being.
- All settings should have policies and practices in place to respond to violence. Staff should make sure they are fully informed of any existing policies or practices in the setting in which they are working.
- Be aware of who to contact in the setting should the need arise.
- Always Park your vehicle in a well-lit area and avoid isolated parking places. All valuables should be out of sight and locked away securely.
- You must always have written carer/parental consent for transporting any students (completed approval for educational visit form), and your vehicle must be appropriately insured and taxed.
- If your vehicle should break down, contact management and decide for yourself and the students travelling with you to be safely transported by alternative means.

### **Visiting protocol**

- All visits are to be made by prior arrangements by either telephone or personal contact.
- Ensure the purpose of the visit is made clear.
- Carry your Vibrance ID card with you.
- Remember you are a visitor.
- Aim to arrive on time, at the earliest arranged. If you arrive late, call ahead with an explanation.
- If, on arrival, someone other than you are expecting meets you, feel free to rearrange your appointment.
- If you feel uncomfortable about your personal safety during your visit, leave immediately and notify the management.
- Always have contact numbers for the management to hand in case of emergency.
- Never leave any confidential or sensitive information on view.
- If you are visiting in pairs, agree on an exit strategy in case you are uncomfortable and need to leave.

### **Avoidance and Diffusion Strategies**

- Never expose yourself to unnecessary risks
- Always visit in daylight and be on time
- Having knocked on the door, stand back by 2 or 3 meters
- If at any time you have any doubt, make an excuse to stay on the doorstep
- Make a note of body language
- Use humour
- Be calm
- Keep serious
- Seek advice
- Listen

## Lone Working Policy

- Communicate
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Always be non-judgmental
- Be apologetic/empathies
- Stay out of their space
- Never undermine
- Offer a way out without losing face
- Give respect
- Be insistent in a quiet way
- Be assertive with care but not in an aggressive manner
- Give yourself time to think
- Be aware you have backup/support
- Set boundaries
- Be aware that doing this may be difficult
- Leave yourself a way out
- Always make a note to yourself to make sure you have a clear and unobstructed clear exit.

### Crisis – Appropriate Responses

- Call for assistance (back-up)
- Walk away
- “Can I help you?”
- Pause or call an end to the meeting
- “What can we do?”
- “How can we move forward?”
- Set boundaries – give clear, concise signals.
- Have roles defined
- Explanation of consequences
- Don’t try a hero response – personal safety is paramount, and always
- Record and witness
- Chance for debriefing