

Lone Working Policy

At The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston we aim to ensure that no member of the team is left alone working in either a room alone or within the building at any time.

We recognise that, although our normal practice is for staff to work as part of a team, there may be occasions when an individual member of staff is required to work alone or may temporarily be alone with children or within part of the nursery.

Lone working will only take place where it is necessary, proportionate and has been risk assessed. The nursery will ensure that arrangements for lone working do not compromise:

- children's safety, welfare or safeguarding;
- effective supervision of children;
- EYFS staff-to-child ratio requirements;
- the availability of appropriate first aid;
- emergency procedures;
- staff suitability, competence and training;
- children's individual needs; or
- the safe operation of the nursery.

The EYFS statutory framework requires providers to meet the welfare and safeguarding requirements necessary to keep children safe. Ofsted's early years inspection toolkit also considers whether leaders ensure that supervision, support and monitoring of adults is appropriate.

On the rare occasions that lone working within a room does take place we ensure that a specific risk assessment is completed prior to this taking place, including ensuring that:

- Staff can manage with a variety of tasks such as talking to parents and supervising children safely
- Each member of staff required to work alone holds the required qualifications, training and/or skills for the role, e.g. holds a level 3 qualification, paediatric first aid, safeguarding and child protection training and basic food hygiene
- Staff members working alone are competent in their role
- The staff member can call on others in an emergency, including evacuation or lock down procedures
- There are procedures in place to check in on the staff member and cover for breaks
- The member of staff and children are safeguarded at all times (according to our Safeguarding children and child protection policy)
- Ratios are maintained at all times.

Public liability insurance for lone working will be sought where applicable.

Staff members' responsibilities when left in the building alone:

- 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

- Ensure they have access to a telephone at all times in order to call for help if they need it, or for management to check their safety if they are concerned
- Ensure that the building 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 when left in the building alone:

- Ensure staff working alone are competent and confident to carry out any safety procedures, e.g. evacuation or lock down
- Ensure that the employee has the ability to contact them or a member of the team even if their lone working is outside normal office hours (i.e. access to a phone, contact numbers of someone they can call)
- Check that the employee has someone they can contact in the event of an emergency and the numbers to call
- 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.

Risk assessments are also completed for these occasions including hazards and risks and how these are controlled.

When Lone Working May Occur

Lone working or temporary separation from other staff may occur in circumstances including:

- staff using the toilet;
- staff taking breaks or lunch;
- nappy changing;
- supporting a child who is unwell or requires a quieter environment;
- supporting a child who is upset or requires individual attention;
- supporting a child in a toilet or changing area;
- following a child's interest or supporting an individual child in another area;
- carrying out management or administrative duties;
- opening or closing the nursery;
- cleaning or maintenance activities;
- receiving deliveries or completing other operational duties;
- working outside normal operating hours; or
- responding to an unexpected situation or emergency.

These situations must always be managed so that children remain appropriately supervised and statutory requirements continue to be met.

Temporary lone working does not automatically mean that a staff member is failing to meet safeguarding requirements. The manager must consider the circumstances, duration, location, children's needs and risks involved.

Staff Competence and Suitability

Staff who work alone in an emergency must be suitable, competent and appropriately trained for the duties they are undertaking.

The manager will ensure that staff working alone have the appropriate:

- induction;
- safeguarding and child protection training;
- knowledge of the nursery's safeguarding procedures;
- emergency and evacuation training;
- understanding of health and safety procedures;
- role-specific training and qualifications;
- paediatric first aid arrangements, where required;
- knowledge of the children in their care; and
- confidence and competence to respond appropriately to an emergency.

Where a member of staff is being counted within the EYFS staff-to-child ratios, the nursery will ensure that their qualification meets the relevant EYFS requirements.

The nursery will not require a staff member to work alone if the manager considers that they do not have the necessary skills, experience, training or confidence to do so safely.

The Department for Education's qualification requirements determine which qualifications can be counted towards EYFS staff-to-child ratios.

Staff-to-Child Ratios and Supervision

EYFS ratios must be maintained at all times when children are present, unless a specific permitted exception under the EYFS applies.

Lone working arrangements must never be used as a way of avoiding or reducing the required staffing levels.

The manager will ensure that:

- children remain appropriately supervised;
- staff are deployed according to the needs of the children;
- staff can see and hear children appropriately;
- children who require closer supervision receive it;
- additional staffing is provided where children's individual needs require it;
- staff are not left responsible for more children than they can safely supervise;
- staff breaks and other duties are planned so that supervision remains effective; and
- staff can summon assistance quickly if required.
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The nursery recognises that effective supervision is more than simply maintaining ratios. Staff deployment will take account of children's ages, needs, activities, the environment and any additional safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Communication and Check-In Arrangements for Emergency Lone Working

Staff working alone will have access to a telephone or walkie talkie.

Where appropriate, a check-in system will be used.

The staff member will agree with the manager:

- when they are starting lone working;
- the expected duration;
- how they will make contact;
- who they will contact if they require assistance; and
- when they are expected to confirm that they have finished.

If a staff member fails to check in as agreed, the manager or nominated person will follow this up promptly.

The nursery will maintain emergency contact information so that staff can obtain assistance when required.

Emergencies

Staff working alone must be familiar with the nursery's emergency procedures, including:

- fire evacuation;
- lockdown/security procedures;
- serious accident or injury;
- medical emergency;
- missing child procedures;
- safeguarding concerns;
- dealing with an intruder;
- contacting emergency services; and
- emergency contact arrangements.

Lone working arrangements must not prevent the nursery from responding appropriately to an emergency.

Where the staff member is unable to safely manage an emergency alone, they must immediately seek assistance and contact the appropriate emergency service where necessary.

First Aid

The nursery will ensure that its arrangements for lone working do not compromise the EYFS requirements relating to paediatric first aid.

When children are present, the nursery will ensure that the required paediatric first aid arrangements are in place.

Where a staff member is working alone with children, management will ensure that the staff member's role and location allow appropriate access to first aid support and emergency assistance.

The EYFS requires appropriate paediatric first aid arrangements when children are present, including at least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate available on the premises.

Staff Working Alone in the Building

Where a member of staff is alone in the building and children are not present, they must:

- inform the manager or designated person;
- have access to a working telephone;
- have emergency contact numbers available;
- know how to summon emergency assistance;
- follow the nursery's security arrangements;
- ensure external doors are secure;
- avoid undertaking tasks for which they have not been trained or authorised;
- report any hazards or concerns;
- follow agreed check-in arrangements; and
- inform management when they have finished.

Staff should not undertake high-risk maintenance, electrical, working-at-height or other specialist tasks while lone working unless the nursery's risk assessment specifically permits this and the staff member is appropriately trained and authorised.

Management Responsibilities

Management will:

- ensure lone working is appropriately risk assessed;
- ensure children remain safe and appropriately supervised;
- ensure EYFS staffing requirements are met;
- ensure staff are suitable, competent and appropriately trained;
- ensure safeguarding procedures are followed;
- ensure appropriate first aid arrangements are maintained;
- provide staff with access to emergency contact arrangements;
- ensure staff know how to respond to emergencies;
- establish appropriate check-in arrangements where necessary;
- review any incidents, accidents or concerns relating to lone working;
- take action where a lone working arrangement is found to be unsafe; and
- regularly review the effectiveness of lone working arrangements.

Managers will not expect staff to undertake lone working where the identified risks cannot be adequately controlled.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- following this policy and relevant risk assessments;
- maintaining effective supervision of children;
- following safeguarding procedures;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- using agreed check-in arrangements;
- keeping management informed of their location where appropriate;
- reporting hazards, concerns, incidents and near misses;
- seeking assistance when they feel unable to safely manage a situation;
- not undertaking duties for which they are not trained or competent; and
- informing management if they believe a lone working arrangement is unsafe.

Staff have a responsibility to speak up if they believe that children's safety, welfare or safeguarding could be compromised.

Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

Lone working arrangements will be monitored by management.

The nursery will review arrangements:

- following an accident or incident;
- following a safeguarding concern;
- following a near miss;
- following concerns raised by staff;
- when staffing arrangements change;
- when the premises or activities change;
- when guidance or statutory requirements change; and
- as part of the nursery's regular policy and risk assessment review.

The nursery will use incidents, staff feedback, risk assessments and management oversight to identify whether lone working arrangements remain safe and effective.

Ofsted's current inspection approach places importance on leaders' oversight, supervision, support and monitoring of adults, alongside effective safeguarding arrangements.

The nursery will ensure that policies and procedures are not simply in place but are understood, implemented and regularly reviewed in practice.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>11/08/2026</i>	F.Joyce	<i>December 2026</i>