



Preschool
St Joseph's Hindmarsh

Policy

Working Alone



WORKING REMOTELY OR IN ISOLATION POLICY & GUIDELINES

CONTEXT

St Joseph's School Hindmarsh (SJSH) is a school community that recognises the uniqueness of every person, nurturing faith and wellbeing, and pursuing excellence in education.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to minimise, as far as practicable, risks associated with working remotely or in isolation at SJSH. When working alone, the risks of certain hazards may be increased due to the reduction of immediate assistance in the event of an incident.

This policy applies to all work carried out in general work areas, classrooms, hall, preschool, OSHC and grounds, undertaken at SJSH outside normal working hours and when working alone.

All staff (full-time, part-time and casual), cleaners, and maintenance personnel are covered by the policy requirements when working alone.

DEFINITION

Working Alone – a worker can be considered to be working alone if there is a reasonable expectation that a call for assistance will not or cannot be responded to and the worker's absence may not be noticed for some time. Risks to workers may be higher when they are working alone. A fall, exposure to dangerous chemicals or an assault can have very different consequences if a worker is alone than if they have a co-worker(s) or capable assistants in the immediate vicinity. The degree of risk will determine the level of protection the worker needs.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

It is the responsibility of the Principal and the School Board to ensure compliance with this policy and its implementation. Staff are responsible for taking all reasonable practical steps to ensure their own safety and security when working alone. This includes following the requirements of these guidelines and any additional procedures deemed necessary.

Procedures Regarding Working Alone During Normal School Hours

Staff who must work alone as defined above during part or all of the school day:

1. Must do a risk assessment (see Appendix) to determine the nature and extent of risks posed by working alone in their particular work situation, and they must put in place appropriate control measures to keep themselves safe
2. Must have quick access to a mobile phone with which they can call immediately a co-worker, the Main Office or relevant Emergency Services.
3. Must inform their direct Supervisor (Principal or Deputy Principal) or another appropriate staff member of the nature, location and timing of the work alone situation
4. Must take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety while working alone. This includes only operating such equipment or machinery as they are qualified and experienced to use and that is safe to operate by one person.

NOTE: Staff should generally not work alone:

1. In workshops where hazardous substances are handled or housed and where there is a significant risk of injury or exposure to the hazardous substances being used.
2. In areas where power tools or hand tools that could cause injury are used.
3. In areas where moving machinery is used.
4. Whenever any high risk hazards exist.

Where it is necessary, however, for staff to work alone in such areas, the Principal should ensure that staff are fully qualified and trained in the use of hazardous substances and equipment, and ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put into place to ensure that staff comply with this requirement. Any equipment identified as requiring a two-person operation, for safety reasons, must not be operated by one person.

Common work alone situations where employees may be at risk include:

- Employees who handle cash and are at the front line for visitors.
- Employees who perform hazardous work or operate powered equipment in isolation to others (ie, grounds sheds) and who have no regular interaction with other employees. Maintenance and Cleaning Contractors are often in this situation
- Employees who are at risk of violent attack because they are isolated from other workers or public view and perhaps work early morning or late afternoon/evening. Maintenance and Cleaning Contractors are also often in this situation. Hence, the importance for these workers to have quick access to a mobile phone and to inform on-site co-workers of their work plans during such times.

Procedure for Working Alone Outside Normal School Hours

Normal school hours at SJSH are 8.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday inclusive.

Staff who work alone outside normal school hours:

1. Must do a risk assessment in consultation with the WHS Coordinator (see Appendix) to determine the nature and extent of risks posed by working alone in their particular work situation and must put in place appropriate control measures to keep themselves safe. This risk assessment must be signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal
2. Must have quick access to a mobile phone with which they can call immediately a co-worker, family member, friend, or relevant Emergency Services
3. Must inform an appropriate family member or friend of the nature, location and duration of their working alone situation. The staff member should phone this person on arrival at school and when they are leaving the school. If a long stay at school is anticipated, the staff member should arrange to contact this person at regular intervals during the stay (eg every 2 hours)
4. Must carry some form of identification.
5. Must take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety while working alone. This includes:
 - a. Locking school gates and doors behind them to reduce the likelihood of intruders.
 - b. Signing in on arrival. By using this procedure staff can be aware of who else is on-site at the time they sign-in.
 - c. Only operating such equipment or machinery as they are qualified and experienced to use and that it is safe to operate by one person.
 - d. Locking doors and gates and turning on the security alarm when you leave ensures that the school is left secured.
6. All other school policies apply throughout the working alone situation.

NOTE: No individual, who has a medical condition that may give rise to a life-threatening situation, may work alone or outside normal school hours without notifying the Principal of the condition.

HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

Working alone or out of normal school hours is not permitted when any high risk hazards exist (as assessed using the SJSH WHS Risk Management Tool). High risk hazards, which may be encountered include but are not limited to:

- Operating equipment or machinery, including workshop machinery capable of inflicting serious injury, such as lathes and power saws.*
- Working with, or near, highly toxic or corrosive substances where there is a significant risk of exposure to the substance, taking into account the volume used.
- Using apparatus that could result in explosion, implosion or the release of high energy fragments or significant amounts of toxic or environmentally damaging hazardous material.
- Climbing high ladders (above 1 metre)*
- Working on any electrical installation or equipment
- Working with significant volumes of flammable substances
- Welding.

*** Note that in this case, if a thorough and accurate risk assessment of the particular task to be performed indicates that the risk involved is less than “high”, the task may be performed, providing that all other aspects of the Working Alone Policy are followed.**



Richard Ellerman
Chairperson

Dated: 23 November 2021



Maria D'Aloia
Principal

Dated: 23 November 2021

REVISION RECORD

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