

Brannoxtown CNS

Lone Workers Policy

Brannoxtown Community National School (CNS) is a primary school under Patronage of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). Brannoxtown CNS opened in September 2018 with a new Principal, Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick. Brannoxtown CNS operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and follows the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The Principal and the Board of Management fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality, in developing and implementing all school policies.

1. School Ethos

At Brannoxtown CNS, we provide a caring and secure environment for all children and staff. This aim is achieved through strong communication between staff, parents, children and the whole-school community. This specific *Lone Workers Policy* identifies our concerns and support for staff working conditions on-site and outside school hours. It is part of our duty-of-care to staff to ensure that the wellbeing of staff at Brannoxtown CNS is a priority at all times.

2. Policy Objectives

Some staff may need to work by themselves outside of school hours or in isolated work areas. For the patron, KWETB, and management at Brannoxtown CNS, this policy is intended to protect such staff from the risks of lone-working. An underlying objective is to ensure our school's compliance with all Health, Safety and Welfare at work legislation. The specific aims of this policy are to:

- Increase staff awareness of the safety issues involving lone working.
- Increase awareness of the responsibilities of school management (Board of Management and Principal) towards staff that report to them and are required to work alone.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and on-going way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk in as much as possible.
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is provided for all staff who alone at Brannoxtown CNS.

3. Responsibilities

At the time of writing, Lone Workers at Brannoxtown CNS include:

- Teaching Staff in the 'High-Risk' category for Covid-19, who are facilitated to work from home, and
- Caretaking/Cleaning Staff.

This policy also relates to remote work by any staff member, arising from an unforeseen/mandated school closure, e.g., school closure due to Covid-19. The policy applies to *all* situations involving lone working in connection with the duties and responsibilities of staff and local and/or national requirements regarding place of work. This policy also relates to staff working alone on-site after school hours. It also includes, as appropriate, contractors and volunteers.

a. School Management



- Members of School Management at Brannoxtown CNS are responsible for carrying out and regularly updating **formal risk assessments** of all staff who lone work.
- Following risk assessments, **safe systems of work and practices** are put in place to ensure that the risks of lone working are reduced or mitigated.
- Following the identification of the above, **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)/Training**, notices and appropriate information are made available to those who lone work.
- Appropriate **support** is made available to anyone who may have had an incident when lone working.

b. Employees

- Employees are responsible for **taking care of themselves and others** affected by their actions.
- Employees are expected to **follow guidelines and work systems** designed for safe working.
- Employees **report all incidents** that may affect the health and safety of themselves and others and ask for guidance as appropriate.
- Employees **participate in CPD/training** designed to meet the requirements of the policy and to report any concerns they have with regard to lone working.

4. Risk Assessment

At a minimum, risk assessments for those who work **alone at Brannoxtown CNS** include:

- Safe Access/Egress
- Site Security Systems
- Channels of Communication for the employee in an Emergency
- Channels of Communication/traceability
- Authorisations/reporting/recording arrangements for working alone
- Levels of off/on site supervision required
- Protection from violence or aggression

At a minimum, risk assessments for those who work **alone, off-site** for Brannoxtown CNS include:

- Channels of Communication for the employee in an Emergency
- Authorisations/reporting/recording arrangements
- Personal safety/Security.

5. Lone Workers Policy: Monitoring and Reviewing

a. Success Criteria

The effectiveness of this school policy, in its present form, is measured by the following criteria:

- A comprehensive Risk Assessment is complete for each (type of) Lone Worker at Brannoxtown CNS.
- Each Risk Assessment identifies particular hazards/risks, controls and responsibilities for staff at Brannoxtown CNS.
- Lone Worker staff experience strong and supportive leadership in their work.
- Management is satisfied that support for Lone Worker staff at Brannoxtown CNS is comprehensive and satisfies the school's duty-of-care to staff.



b. Implementation and Timetable for Review

Following approval by the Board of Management, this policy will apply with immediate effect at Brannoxtown CNS. This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with a change in Department legislation.

c. Ratification and Communication

Following feedback from members of the Brannoxtown CNS Board of Management, this Lone Worker Policy will be finalised and posted on the school's website. Hardcopies of the policy are available to parents on request. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Brannoxtown CNS in June, 2021.

Signed: 

Date: 15 June 2021

Ms. Deirdre O'Donovan
Chairperson

Signed:

Date: 15 June 2021

Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick
Principal

Appendix 1. Lone Workers Risk Assessment Guidelines

1. Lone Workers at Brannoxtown CNS include:

- staff in the school where only one person works on the premises
- staff who work at the school outside normal hours
- staff who work away from the school
- Caretaking/Cleaning Staff

2. Hazards that lone workers may encounter at Brannoxtown CNS include:

- accidents or emergencies arising at work, including inadequate provision of first aid
- sudden illnesses
- inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities
- physical violence from members of the public and/or intruders

3. Lone workers themselves have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care to look after their own safety and health
- Safeguard the safety and health of other people affected by their work
- Co-operate with their employer's safety and health procedures
- Use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant safety instructions
- and training they have been given
- Not misuse equipment provided for their safety and health
- Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses and other dangerous occurrences

4. Control Measures:

The risk assessment should prescribe control measures to be implemented in order to eliminate/minimise the identified risks. Such control measures may include:

- communication: mobile phone or telephone
- controlled periodic checks
- automatic warning devices, e.g. alarms
- instruction and training in proper procedures
- use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- health surveillance
- first-aid kits and training
- implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
- locking and securing place of work
- implementing correct incident reporting procedures
- provision of counselling, if/as needed.

When establishing safe working arrangements for lone workers, Brannoxtown CNS management need to know the law and standards that may apply to their specific work activity. They must then assess if the requirements of that work activity can be met by people working alone. Issues that need to be addressed when planning such safe working arrangements are:

a. Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Brannoxtown CNS management should identify situations where staff work alone and ask questions such as:



- Does the school workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?
- Can any temporary access equipment that is necessary, such as portable ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
- Can all the substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
- Does the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls/equipment?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

b. Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

c. What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to fully understand the risks and precautions. Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. They should ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, e.g. when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor and how to handle aggression.

d. How will staff be supervised?

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, management is responsible for ensuring their safety and health at work. Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. Supervisors can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty. Supervision of safety and health can often be carried out when checking the progress and quality of the work; it may take the form of periodic site visits combined with discussions in which health and safety issues are raised. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle safety and health issues. Employees new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first. The level of supervision required is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of risk assessment, i.e. the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

Lone workers should be capable of responding effectively to emergencies. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them. Information about emergency procedures and danger areas should be given to lone workers. Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities. Occasionally, the risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

For a lone worker at a remote location, the following factors must be considered by management:



- How long should the work take and how frequently should the worker report in?
- Has the worker a safe means of travel to and from the location, especially out of normal hours?
- Is there access to adequate rest, hygiene, refreshment, welfare and first aid facilities?
- Can emergency services approach the location without hindrance?