

Victor Harbor Primary School

Working in Isolation Policy



This school policy is implemented in line with the Department for Education's Working in Isolation Procedure and WHS information:

<https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/controlled-procedures/working-in-isolation-procedure.pdf>

[Working alone or in isolation \(edi.sa.edu.au\)](https://edi.sa.edu.au)

An employee is defined as working in isolation when they are isolated from assistance of other people because of the location, time or the nature of the work being undertaken. Department employees may be required to work in isolation as part of their role description. For some this may be infrequent. For others it's a regular part of their duties over long periods of time.

Work in isolation can include but is not limited to camps and excursions in remote or isolated areas, hazardous tasks undertaken alone, working on site after hours and home visits, school holidays and vacation periods.

When undertaking hazardous tasks or activities, it's important to consider the potential risks of working alone or in isolation.

Employees must NOT undertake any high-risk tasks when working alone.

Before starting work in isolation staff must consider and ensure any possible hazards are identified and controlled. Hazards may include, but are not limited to:

- the length of time an employee may be working alone
- the time of day when an employee may be working alone
- the individual competencies of an employee working alone
- work location
- nature and type of work being performed
- availability and accessibility to communication
- access to primary workplace and facilities and off-site not located in the primary facility
- hazardous manual tasks
- environmental factors
- weather conditions
- home or off-site visits

Instruction and training:

All employees must complete the following [WHS training](#) before working in isolation or in remote situations:

- conducting home visits
- [personal safety and conflict awareness](#)
- [safer lone working](#).

Home or off-site visits:

If conducting a home or off-site visit:

- arrange the visit during core business hours if possible.
- arrange for 2 workers to be in attendance, particularly for all initial visits
- ensure a co-worker accompanies a new employee who does not have prior visiting experience
- park the vehicle so that the exit is not easily blocked by another vehicle, do not park in the driveway or in front of the house
- park the vehicle facing the direction of the safest exit route
- keep car keys and mobile phone accessible, don't place them in a bag where they may be difficult to access. If 2 workers are conducting the visit, 1 should carry the car keys and the other hold the mobile phone
- check the signal strength of the mobile phone before entering the location
- introduce yourself, show your identification and explain the reason for your visit
- ensure you are visiting the correct person.

Re-consider entry if:

- the person you are visiting is not present
- there is a large number of people present that were not identified during pre-visit discussions
- you are not invited to enter
- anyone in the house appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs
- high levels of security devices such as electronic or self-locking doors/gates are installed.

Do not proceed with the visit if at any stage you:

- consider yourself to be at risk or feel unsafe
- are subjected to harassment, abuse and/or aggressive behaviour
- are requested to do so.

Check in with the nominated contact when the visit is complete.

Working alone on-site:

Leadership will only recognise the need for staff to work on school site alone in daylight hours.

No alone after dark working activities by any staff member on the school site will be allowed.

Where reasonably practicable staff should not be on school site alone outside of school hours.

If possible, employees will ensure that there is someone with them when they need to work outside of school hours.

All staff working alone must have access to and carry a mobile phone.

To work alone on-site staff will ensure:

- Leadership has been consulted by the staff member of their work needs.
- Leadership is informed when a staff member wishes to attend or remain on the school site after the school cleaner or OSHC have completed their daily work schedule (verbally, in writing, email, SMS or phone call is acceptable).

- Leadership is informed when a staff member has entered onto the school site on the weekend / vacation periods / student or staff free days (SMS or phone call only is acceptable).
- If working alone time is longer than 3 hours, arrange scheduled check-ins with leadership.
- Leadership is informed when the staff member has completed their work and left the school site on the weekend / vacation periods / student or staff free days (SMS or phone call only is acceptable).
- When missed contact to leadership occurs, SMS is to be used by staff when leaving the school site on weekend / vacation periods / student or staff free days.
- Some form of communication (mobile phone / school landline) is readily available at all times when on the school site.
- Correct security alarm keys are available for the area working in.
- Staff are capable of alarming the building.
- The building being worked in is secured. Keep doors and windows locked.
- Access is not allowed to anyone suspicious or without official identification.
- Staff know the location of the first aid kit.
- If you are leaving and it results in someone being left alone on site, you must advise them that you are leaving the building/area and ensure the doors are locked and secured for their safety.
- All doors and gates are locked that they pass through.
- All doors and buildings are locked and are made secure on leaving the premises.
- The alarm is reactivated.

Staff must follow emergency invacuation / evacuation procedures and call Police Security, Police, Fire and Ambulance in an emergency incident.

- In the event of an incident, the staff member must call the **Police on 131 444**, or in a life threatening situation call **000** and **Police Security on 8116 9230**. Any incidents occurring during 'working alone' to be reported to the Principal immediately.
- IRMS will be completed for all 'working alone' incidents.
- If approached by Police Security personnel, the staff member will phone the Principal for identification purposes if required.
- Debriefing or Counselling sessions will be arranged by the Principal if there is an incident.

If you arrive at school and find any sign of intruders, do not enter the building. Call the police immediately. If you become aware of intruders or vandals, do not challenge them. Call the police immediately.

Communication and Review

- Consultation, discussion and sharing amongst teachers, students and parents/carers via various communication channels was undertaken when developing this policy.
- This policy was ratified by the Victor Harbor Primary School Governing Council Oct 2024
- The policy can be accessed via the school office or website.
- The policy will be reviewed biennially, review date Oct 2026