

**Home Visiting and Long Working Policy**

**Line managers:**

Line managers so far as is reasonably practicable within the organisation should:

* Be responsible for the health and safety of employees and others who they manage and/or have responsibility for;
* Ensure that adequate resources are made available to facilitate healthy and safe working practices;
* Ensure that all employees who they manage know and accept their responsibility under this Code of Practice and the PRISM Independent School General Health and Safety Policy. All new staff should be expected to sign a declaration to this effect as part of their induction process. All existing staff should have this code of practice discussed with them and declaration signed at the nest available supervision session following receipt of this document.
* Keep an up to date directory of staff home contact/car details, i.e. home telephone number, mobile numbers, emergency contact person and numbers, address; make, colour and registration of car. This should be kept in a confidential manner and be accessible from the managers home where possible, in addition to the work place.
* Provide support and guidance to any member of staff who may be deemed vulnerable or at risk from service users outside of working hours.

**Employees:**

Employees and others are encouraged to wok healthily and safely and so far as is reasonably practicable should:

* Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, and others who may be affected by their acts and omissions at work;
* Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare;
* Make themselves familiar with, and conform to the PRISM Independent School’s Safety Policies and Health and safety Policy Guides, and Codes of Practice;
* Observe all health and safety rules and procedures at all times and conform to instructions given by their line manager;
* Report to their line manager any unsafe conditions or practice in their workplace;
* Attend health and safety related training courses when instructed to do so.

**Matters relating to health and safety should be addresses and noted on a regular basis through 1:1 and team meetings.**

It is reasonable to expect that all staff will exercise care when undertaking their duties on behalf of PRISM Independent School. Examples of taking such care includes the following, and should be carried out with due regard to the PRISM Independent School General Health and Safety Policy.

**Home Visits: (potential risks/assessment)**

Central to minimising risk is forward planning before the visit is undertaken. This starts with risk assessment which is concerned with gathering as much relevant information as possible. Information might include the following:

* What is known about the individuals current circumstances?
* Have they experienced some recent trauma that might increase the risk of assault? (Bereavement, separation from a partner, prosecution, removal of children. Etc.).
* Have colleagues from other agencies had recent contact that could provide insight into the individuals current temperament.
* Are there drug or alcohol issues.
* Before approaching the premises assesses the risk. Listen and observe and try and evaluate what is happening within. If you are uncertain it is better to leave than to put yourself at risk.
* Before entering the premised consider the presentation, disposition and demeanour of the occupant.
* Upon entering the room consider where the interview is to be conducted and try and position you in easy reach of an exit.

**General precautions:**

* Employees should always carry identification when visiting. This does not mean it has to be worn and visibly on show to the general public.
* Vehicles should be maintained in good working order (regularly serviced, tyres, oil and water checked on a regular basis) and have adequate fuel.
* When parking your vehicle consideration should be given to positioning of the vehicle to facilitate an unhampered and prompt departure.
* Whilst it is advisable to position your vehicle close to the premises you are visiting, consideration should be given to parking in an area that is well lit.
* Make sure valuables are out of site.
* Be aware of dogs both in the neighbourhood and as you enter the property. Do not be deterred from asking the owner to put the dog is another room.
* Ensure that you are aware of reporting requirements in the event of any kind of accident, including road traffic accidents, as soon as it is practicable to do so.

Workers should at all times be aware of their surroundings and should have regard to accessing and exiting any premises. It is considered good practice to try and ensure that if you are driving, that you park in a position that enables you to drive away without having to undertake time consuming maneuvers, e.g. if you are in a cul de sac, turn the vehicle around so it is facing the exit route prior to the visit or meeting taking place. If possible, have your car keys ready in your hand to unlock your car upon returning to it to ensure swift access. **Try to avoid isolated or badly lit areas.**

Wherever possible, plan your visit in advance and get to know your whereabouts. If the visit is an initial home visit, where possible, workers should **undertake a risk assessment regarding potential safety hazards**. This might include a visit to familiarize with the area, checking with colleagues if the area/service user may pose a risk (where they are previously known). If workers feel vulnerable, unsafe or potentially at risk of harm about undertaking a visit based on information that has been provided/instinct, advice and support should be sought from their line manager prior to the visit taking place. If there are concerns about continuing the visit once it has been made, **the worker should walk away and report reasons/concerns to their line manager.** Examples of support available may include arranging to invite the service user to meet with you in an alternative place such as the office or other community based venue, or joint visiting with another member of staff. Consideration should be given to the possible need of two workers undertaking the home visit where it is necessary to observe the home as part of the meeting, and dependant on the nature of the work.

Ensure that you carry with you the minimum required for the purpose of the visit and never leave any belongings of any kind on show inside the vehicle. It is not advisable to carry lap top computers when out on a home visit, or be seen using them in a public place. Where it is necessary to be carrying additional belongings, keep them locked in the boot of the car until needed. Workers should not carry files or other documentation with them that contain personal and/or confidential information about themselves or service users. **Permission should be sort from a manager when it may be deemed necessary to remove confidential information from the office.**

Always try to ensure that any personal belongings are distributed about your body; bags wherever possible should be worn slung across your body-do not make bags something to fight for.

Once inside the building, particularly on home visits, always try to position yourself such that you are able to exit the room or building quickly without being impaired by furniture, or a closed door.

**If any member of staff feels they are being threatened harm at any time,** they must report the matter to their line manager and an incident form should be completed and logged as necessary. Incident forms can be located on the intranet. In such incidences, the manager and member of staff should carefully consider the most appropriate course of action, including reporting the matter to the police.

**Dress code:** Workers should at all times be mindful to the image they portray by how they are dressed; avoid wearing clothes that may have the potential to cause offence e.g. images and slogans on t-shirts. Footwear should be of a nature that is easy and comfortable to walk in. Loose fitting items around the face and neck, such as earrings, necklaces, scarves and worn I.D could potentially pose as a health and safety hazard to workers; do not wear items that could be quickly and easily caught hold of.

**Do not impede your senses unnecessarily** – avoid wearing a hood, talking on the phone unnecessarily or listening on ear phones.

**Mobile telephones**: Staff should always ensure that their mobile phones are charged and switched on during working hours. Whilst it is possible that answering mobile phones could potentially pose a risk to safety in some situations, it could also server to alert other people to the fact that the worker has access to a means of communication.

**Office based procedures for home visiting:**

It is important that health and safety procedures are followed at all times. The following guidance is in relation to office based practice that will help you to ensure your own safety as much as possible.

**White board** (whereabouts) – this provides a quick reference for other team members as to where you are. This should be completed in addition to your weekly diary sheet and should clearly state the estimated time you expect to return to the office where appropriate. The white board should also indicate where you have arranged for a member of the admin team to use the CHECK procedure.

**CHECK** procedure – if the word CHECK is written on the board, it is the responsibility of the worker to ensure that s/he has provided a member of the admin team with all relevant information. This would include the visit the procedure relates to, name and address of the family and estimated time of visit. If any of the details change after the worker has left the office, it the responsibility of the worker to ensure that the changes are relayed to the same person they arranged the initial CHECK with. A time should be agreed when the admin worker will ring you on your mobile to CHECK you are safe. If the visit finishes sooner that the estimate time of the CHECK call, the worker must ensure that a call is made to the admin worker who will remove the indicator from the white board, replacing it with the time you are due back in the office. If after several attempts of trying to contact you without success, the police will be alerted.

**Evening visits** - if the visit is due to be the last of the day, and a return to the office is not planned that day, a ‘buddy’ should be sought and procedures followed as outlined within the CHECK procedure. This ideally would be either an operational or team manager. However, on occasions when this is not possible, it may be another colleague. If your buddy is unable to contact you by mobile for any reason at the agreed time, and you have not contacted him/her, then it will be usual for your buddy to ring your home telephone number in an attempt to check you are safe. If there attempts fails to confirm your safety, then the police will be alerted.

**Procedure for ‘Mr.Crier’** – this procedure will come into play during any work based activity whereby a worker feels under threat or at risk of violence.

**Whoever takes a Mr.Crier call, you must see it through to conclusion.**

If you are the worker making an urgent request for help, you will say:

**“I’m running late, can you let Mr.Crier know!”**

If you are the worker who receives this call from a colleague, you should immediately notify the police, providing them with relevant details of the persons location and circumstances.

A team manager **MUST** be informed as soon as this procedure is activated. The manager should then liaise with police and if safe to do so, also undertake a visit to the known location.

Lone working:

There may be occasions when it is either planned, or becomes apparent, that workers are likely to be wanted or needed to work late than other colleagues. Where this may be the case, it is good practice to undertake the following:

* Ensure you are familiar with the emergency scheme for your premise and where exit points are;
* Check who else may be in the building and where they are located;
* Check who has responsibility for locking the building for the night/weekend; ensure that person is aware you are there and let them know when you are leaving;
* Ensure wherever possible that you are not leaving the building alone, particularly if it is dark outside and/or the exit is isolated;
* If your car has been parked in an isolated place in proximity to the work base, move it to a place nearer the work based exit whist other colleagues are around;
* Have consideration to your visibility from outside-close the blinds or work where you are not so obviously visible to outsiders;
* Ensure that access points to the building are locked preventing access from the outside;
* Consider very carefully the information you or other colleagues may be giving out to service users who are enquiring about a colleague’s whereabouts. If the member of staff being asked about is not available, then it is important that the caller is told just that. The caller should not be given any indication as to where the staff member may be, or the specific time that they are due to return to or leave the office. Such information may enable callers who present a risk to safety, predict when a member of staff may be entering or exiting the building and may lie in wait. Consideration should be given to the need to notify the colleague in question. A member of the management team should also be alerted so that issues relating to a potential or actual aggressive service user can be appropriately addressed and dealt with.
* Ensure you are aware of first aid provision and the location where they are kept;
* Report any accidents to your line manager or other nominated person as soon as possible (including road traffic accidents);
* Ensure (as appropriate) that your line manager is aware of any medical issues you may have, and that these are reviewed via a personal plan, taking account of potential circumstances that may arise as a result.
* **Try to ensure wherever possible, that you are not completely alone in the building at the end of the day.**