



Lone Working Policy

Organisation: Supreme Mentoring Services

Policy Owner: Taj Reid

Role: Founder / Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead

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1. Policy Statement

Supreme Mentoring Services (SMS) is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all individuals working for or on behalf of the organisation.

Due to the nature of mentoring and outreach work, SMS personnel may sometimes work independently, travel between locations, deliver 1:1 interventions, work within community settings or undertake activities away from their usual place of work.

SMS recognises that lone working does not necessarily mean that an activity is unsafe. However, working without close or direct supervision can increase risk because immediate assistance may not be available if an incident occurs.

SMS will therefore identify, assess and manage foreseeable risks associated with lone working and ensure that appropriate control measures are in place.

The safety of staff and mentors, alongside the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people, must remain the primary consideration when determining whether lone working is appropriate.



2. Purpose

he purpose of this policy is to:

- establish clear expectations for safe lone working;
- identify circumstances in which SMS personnel may be considered lone workers;
- reduce foreseeable risks to staff, mentors, children and young people;
- establish appropriate risk assessment and control measures;
- provide clear procedures for check-in, communication and emergency situations;
- ensure professional boundaries are maintained during 1:1 work;
- support personnel to make appropriate dynamic risk assessments;
- establish procedures for responding to violence, aggression, safeguarding concerns or other incidents; and
- ensure lone working arrangements remain appropriate to the individual, environment and activity.



3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of Supreme Mentoring Services, including:

- employees;
- mentors;
- workers;
- contractors;
- self-employed personnel;
- volunteers; and
- other individuals authorised to deliver SMS services.

It applies wherever SMS-related lone working may occur, including:

- schools and education settings;
- alternative provision;
- community venues;
- outreach settings;
- off-site mentoring activities;
- travel between assignments;
- home or family visits where specifically authorised;
- remote working;
- online mentoring where relevant; and
- other locations where an SMS worker may operate without close or direct supervision.



4. Definition of Lone Working

For the purposes of this policy, a lone worker is someone who undertakes work without close or direct supervision and may therefore not have immediate access to assistance if something goes wrong.

Lone working can include situations where a worker:

- is the only SMS representative within a setting;
- works in an isolated part of a building;
- undertakes community or outreach work independently;
- travels independently between assignments;
- attends an authorised home or community visit;
- works outside normal operating hours; or
- otherwise undertakes work where immediate assistance is not readily available.

Being alone with a child during an appropriately arranged 1:1 mentoring session does not automatically constitute unsafe practice.

However, the environment, level of visibility, accessibility of other responsible adults, known risks and safeguarding arrangements must always be considered.



5. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- relevant Health and Safety Executive guidance concerning lone workers;
- relevant HSE guidance concerning violence at work and work-related driving;
and
- applicable safeguarding and data protection requirements.

SMS will review this framework as legislation and statutory guidance develops.



6. Principles of Safe Lone Working

SMS will apply the following principles:

Lone working should be planned

Where lone working is a foreseeable part of a role or activity, the risks should be considered in advance.

Risk should be proportionate

The existence of lone working does not automatically make an activity unsafe. Decisions should consider the actual risks presented by the individual, activity, location and circumstances.

Communication must be possible

Personnel undertaking lone working must have a reasonable method of contacting another person or obtaining assistance.

Workers must be empowered to withdraw

No SMS worker is expected to remain in a situation they reasonably believe presents an immediate or unacceptable risk to themselves or another person.

Safeguarding remains paramount

Lone working arrangements must never compromise the safeguarding of a child or young person.



7. Risk Assessment

SMS will assess foreseeable lone-working risks and implement proportionate control measures.

Depending upon the activity, consideration should be given to:

- the location;
- accessibility of the premises;
- whether other responsible adults are nearby;
- the age and needs of the child;
- known behavioural or safeguarding risks;
- history of violence, aggression or absconding where known;
- SEND, communication or sensory needs;
- the nature of the activity;
- travel arrangements;
- time of day;
- mobile-phone coverage or other communication arrangements;
- emergency procedures;
- access to first aid;
- environmental hazards;
- previous incidents;
- worker experience and training; and
- any other information reasonably relevant to safety.

Where risks cannot be adequately controlled, the activity must be modified, postponed, relocated or undertaken with additional personnel.



8. Dynamic Risk Assessment

Not every change in circumstances can be predicted.

SMS personnel are therefore expected to undertake an ongoing dynamic assessment of risk during their work.

This means remaining alert to changes such as:

- escalating behaviour;
- unexpected individuals arriving;
- changes to the environment;
- deterioration in weather;
- unsafe locations;
- substance misuse;
- weapons or threatening objects;
- conflict;
- a young person becoming distressed or dysregulated;
- a young person attempting to leave an agreed location;
- breakdown of communication arrangements; or
- any situation that makes the worker feel unsafe.

Workers should consider:

What has changed?

What is the immediate risk?

Can I manage the risk safely?

Do I need assistance?

Should the activity stop?

Personnel have authority to end or withdraw from an activity where continuing would create an unacceptable risk.



9. 1:1 Mentoring in Schools

1:1 mentoring is a core part of SMS delivery and is not, in itself, considered inappropriate lone working.

Where possible, 1:1 sessions should take place in an appropriate professional environment.

Good practice includes:

- using rooms approved by the host setting;
- ensuring relevant school staff know where the session is taking place;
- maintaining appropriate visibility where reasonably practicable;
- avoiding unnecessarily isolated locations;
- knowing how to summon assistance;
- following the school's safeguarding procedures;
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries; and
- ensuring that the location remains suitable for the needs of the young person.

The need for confidentiality within mentoring should be balanced appropriately against safeguarding and personal safety.

A confidential conversation does not require a mentor and young person to be placed in an unnecessarily isolated or unsafe environment.



10. Working Within Schools and Partner Settings

When SMS personnel work within another organisation, they must familiarise themselves with relevant local arrangements, including:

- signing-in and signing-out procedures;
- safeguarding reporting arrangements;
- emergency procedures;
- fire and evacuation procedures;
- first-aid arrangements;
- behaviour-management procedures;
- procedures for requesting assistance; and
- any relevant risks communicated by the setting.

SMS personnel should know how to contact an appropriate member of staff if assistance is required.

Where the host setting has additional lone-working or safeguarding requirements, SMS personnel should comply with those requirements unless they conflict with law or SMS safeguarding procedures.



11. Community-Based Mentoring

SMS interventions may take place within community environments.

Before community-based work takes place, consideration should be given to:

- the suitability of the location;
- expected levels of public access;
- travel arrangements;
- known risks associated with the area;
- communication arrangements;
- the young person's needs and vulnerabilities;
- appropriate supervision;
- weather and environmental conditions;
- emergency arrangements; and
- arrangements if the young person leaves or refuses to remain at the agreed location.

Public locations should be selected carefully. Being in a public place does not automatically make an activity safe.

Mentors must maintain professional boundaries at all times.



12. Off-Site Activities

Where mentoring includes an agreed off-site activity, the activity should be proportionate to the objectives of the intervention and appropriately authorised.

The mentor should consider:

- destination;
- transport;
- activity-specific risks;
- medical or additional needs known to SMS;
- safeguarding concerns;
- emergency contacts;
- communication arrangements;
- weather;
- accessibility;
- the young person's behaviour and presentation; and
- procedures if the young person goes missing or leaves the activity unexpectedly.

Activities presenting significant or unusual risks may require a specific written risk assessment.



13. Home Visits

Home visits must only take place where they form an authorised and legitimate part of SMS work.

Before undertaking a home visit, personnel should consider:

- why the visit is required;
- whether an alternative location would be more appropriate;
- who is expected to be present;
- known safeguarding or behavioural concerns;
- previous incidents;
- communication arrangements;
- arrival and expected departure time;
- parking and safe access/exit;
- pets or other environmental hazards where known; and
- whether two workers are required.

Personnel should not enter a property where circumstances appear significantly different from those anticipated and create an unacceptable risk.

Workers must not enter or remain where there is an immediate threat of violence or serious harm.

If a worker feels unsafe, they should leave when safe to do so and contact the appropriate person.



14. Check-In and Check-Out Arrangements

For higher-risk lone-working activities, SMS may establish a check-in/check-out procedure.

This may include recording:

- worker's name;
- location;
- young person or activity;
- expected start time;
- expected completion time;
- expected travel arrangements; and
- agreed contact arrangements.

The level of monitoring should be proportionate to the risk.

Routine mentoring within a staffed school environment will not normally require the same check-in arrangements as an isolated community or authorised home visit.



15. Missed Contact Procedure

Where a formal check-in arrangement has been established and a worker fails to make contact as agreed, reasonable attempts should be made to contact them.

If contact cannot be established, consideration should be given to:

1. attempting contact through agreed channels;
2. contacting the relevant venue or responsible person where appropriate;
3. assessing known information about the activity and risk;
4. contacting the worker's nominated emergency contact where appropriate; and
5. contacting emergency services where there is reasonable cause to believe the worker or another person may be at immediate risk.

The response should be proportionate to the circumstances.

16. Mobile Phones and Communication

Personnel undertaking lone working should, where appropriate:

- have access to a functioning mobile phone or other reliable communication method;
- ensure the device has sufficient charge;
- maintain appropriate emergency contact details;
- consider mobile coverage when planning remote activities; and
- notify the appropriate person if communication arrangements fail.

Personal telephone numbers must not be shared with children or young people unless expressly authorised through an agreed SMS arrangement.

Digital communication must comply with the SMS Online Safety Policy and Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy.



17. Violence, Aggression and Threatening Behaviour

SMS recognises that personnel working with children, families or within community environments may occasionally encounter challenging, aggressive or threatening behaviour.

Workers should not deliberately place themselves at risk in order to continue an intervention.

Where behaviour escalates, personnel should:

- remain calm where possible;
- maintain appropriate physical space;
- avoid unnecessarily confrontational behaviour;
- identify a safe exit;
- seek assistance;
- follow the host setting's procedures where applicable;
- end the activity where necessary; and
- contact emergency services where there is an immediate risk of serious harm.

Any significant incident of violence, threats or aggression must be reported to SMS.

Relevant risk assessments and working arrangements should subsequently be reviewed.



18. Physical Intervention

SMS personnel should avoid physical intervention unless it is lawful, necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

Personnel must follow relevant SMS procedures and, when working within a commissioning setting, applicable site procedures and training requirements.

Lone workers must consider the increased risks associated with attempting physical intervention without immediate assistance.

Where possible, assistance should be sought rather than attempting to manage a significant physical incident alone.

Any use of physical intervention must be appropriately reported and recorded.



19. Safeguarding Concerns During Lone Working

Lone working does not alter an individual's safeguarding responsibilities.

If a child makes a disclosure or a worker observes something that creates a safeguarding concern, the worker must:

1. prioritise immediate safety;
2. listen appropriately;
3. avoid conducting their own investigation;
4. avoid promising absolute confidentiality;
5. make an accurate record;
6. report the concern promptly through the appropriate safeguarding route; and
7. contact emergency services where there is an immediate danger to life or serious harm.

Where SMS personnel are working within a school or education setting, the school's DSL should normally be informed in accordance with local procedures, alongside SMS's own safeguarding arrangements where applicable.



20. Allegations and Professional Boundaries

Working alone with a young person requires particularly clear professional boundaries.

Personnel must:

- maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries;
- avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- use appropriate professional language;
- avoid personal or secretive communication;
- not transport young people without appropriate authorisation;
- avoid creating situations that could reasonably be misinterpreted;
- accurately record significant incidents or concerns; and
- report any allegation or professional-boundary concern immediately.

An allegation made against an SMS worker must be managed in accordance with the SMS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and applicable allegations-management procedures.



21. Transporting Young People

Where transportation of a young person by SMS personnel forms an authorised part of an intervention, appropriate arrangements must be established beforehand.

Consideration must be given to:

- appropriate authorisation;
- parental/carer or commissioning-setting agreement where required;
- valid driving licence;
- appropriate business-use motor insurance;
- roadworthiness of the vehicle;
- seatbelts;
- appropriate seating arrangements;
- journey planning;
- known behavioural or safeguarding risks; and
- emergency arrangements.

Transporting a child in a private vehicle must never be arranged informally simply for convenience.

Personnel must not use a handheld mobile phone while driving.

Any accident or significant incident occurring during authorised transportation must be reported.



22. Driving and Travelling for Work

SMS personnel may travel between schools, community locations and other assignments.

Where a personal vehicle is used for business purposes, the worker is responsible for ensuring that:

- they hold the appropriate driving licence;
- the vehicle is appropriately insured for business use;
- the vehicle is roadworthy and legally compliant;
- they are fit to drive; and
- they comply with road traffic law.

Workers should not undertake journeys where fatigue, severe weather, vehicle condition or another foreseeable factor makes travel unsafe.

Workers must not feel pressured to drive unsafely in order to meet appointment times.



23. Personal Safety and Confidential Information

Workers should avoid unnecessarily disclosing personal information during lone-working activities.

Personal home addresses and other unnecessary private information should not be provided to children, families or service users.

Personnel should remain conscious of:

- where they park;
- visibility when entering or leaving locations;
- personal belongings;
- confidential records;
- identification;
- keys;
- mobile devices; and
- information displayed on vehicle dashboards or screens.

Confidential information concerning children must be handled in accordance with SMS data protection and confidentiality procedures.



24. Medical Emergencies and Accidents

Personnel should familiarise themselves with relevant emergency arrangements before undertaking lone work.

If a serious accident or medical emergency occurs:

1. assess immediate danger;
2. contact emergency services where required;
3. provide assistance within the limits of competence and training;
4. contact the appropriate school, organisation or SMS representative;
5. ensure parents/carers are contacted through appropriate arrangements where required; and
6. complete relevant accident or incident records.

Workers must not place themselves at unreasonable risk while attempting to assist another person.



25. Incidents and Near Misses

All significant lone-working incidents and relevant near misses should be reported to SMS.

This includes:

- violence or aggression;
- threats;
- safeguarding incidents;
- accidents;
- situations requiring emergency assistance;
- serious communication failures;
- significant professional-boundary concerns; and
- circumstances where a worker had to terminate an activity because they felt unsafe.

Near misses are important because they may identify risks before someone is harmed.

SMS will use incident information to review risk assessments and improve working arrangements.



26. Training, Information and Supervision

Personnel must receive sufficient information, instruction and support to undertake lone working safely.

Depending upon their role, this may include:

- safeguarding training;
- professional-boundary guidance;
- risk assessment;
- conflict management;
- behaviour management;
- emergency procedures;
- first aid where appropriate;
- online safety;
- reporting procedures; and
- role-specific training.

New or inexperienced personnel may require additional supervision before undertaking certain lone-working activities independently.



27. Staff Wellbeing

SMS recognises that lone working can sometimes contribute to feelings of isolation, stress or anxiety.

Personnel are encouraged to raise concerns regarding:

- workload;
- personal safety;
- challenging cases;
- repeated exposure to distressing information;
- isolation;
- stress; or
- any aspect of lone working affecting their wellbeing.

Supervision and management arrangements should provide opportunities to discuss such concerns.

Seeking support will not be regarded as an indication that an individual is incapable of performing their role.



28. Responsibilities

Founder / Policy Owner

The Policy Owner has overall responsibility for:

- implementing this policy;
- ensuring appropriate risk-management arrangements are established;
- ensuring significant incidents are reviewed;
- ensuring appropriate training and information are provided;
- reviewing working arrangements following incidents or changes in risk; and
- ensuring safeguarding remains central to lone-working decisions.

SMS Personnel

All personnel are responsible for:

- following this policy;
- cooperating with risk assessments;
- following agreed control measures;
- maintaining appropriate communication;
- reporting hazards and concerns;
- undertaking dynamic risk assessment;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- reporting incidents and near misses; and
- taking reasonable care of their own safety and that of others.



29. Right to Stop or Withdraw From an Activity

SMS personnel have authority to stop, postpone or withdraw from an activity where they reasonably believe that continuing would expose themselves, a child or another person to an unacceptable risk.

Where possible, workers should move to a safe location and inform the appropriate SMS or host-setting representative.

A decision made in good faith to prioritise immediate safety will be supported and subsequently reviewed to determine whether additional controls are required.

30. Related SMS Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy;
- Safer Recruitment Policy;
- Confidentiality Policy;
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy; and
- Complaints Policy.



31. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
- SMS introduces a new form of service delivery;
- a serious incident or near miss occurs;
- risk assessments identify additional controls;
- concerns are raised by SMS personnel or commissioning organisations; or
- organisational practice changes.

Learning from incidents, staff feedback and safeguarding practice will be incorporated into future versions of this policy.

Policy Owner: Taj Reid

Role: Founder / Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead

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