Lone working policy

Approved by:	**The Governing Board**	**Date: 09/12/2025**
Version Number:	**2**	
Last reviewed on:	**22nd June 2026**	
Next review due by:	**22nd June 2029**	
Postholder responsible:	James Nation	

Physis Academy Lone Working Policy

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1. Purpose and Scope

Purpose

This policy establishes safe working practices for staff who work alone in the school building outside normal operating hours, ensuring their safety and wellbeing whilst maintaining operational flexibility.

This policy has been developed with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The school is committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation in lone working arrangements
- Advancing equality of opportunity for all staff

- Fostering good relations through inclusive practices

We recognize that lone working may present different risks and barriers for staff with different protected characteristics. This policy ensures that lone working arrangements are safe, fair, and equitable for all staff.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members (teaching, support staff and cleaners) who may need to work in the school building when other staff members are not present, particularly outside of normal school hours.

The school recognizes that staff with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) may face specific considerations in lone working, and this policy ensures appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are provided.

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2. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working occurs when a member of staff is working in the school building:

- Before 8am or after 4:30pm on weekdays
- At any time during weekends or school holidays
- When they are the only person in the building or their area of the building
- When they cannot be seen or heard by another member of staff

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3. Risk Assessment Requirements

General Risk Assessment

Before lone working is permitted, the school must:

- Conduct a risk assessment identifying potential hazards (e.g., intruders, medical emergencies, accidents, fire)
- Identify staff who may need to lone work regularly
- Assess the building areas where lone working may occur
- Consider individual staff circumstances including protected characteristics
- Review and update the risk assessment annually or after any incident

Key risks to consider:

- Personal safety and security threats
- Medical emergencies with no immediate assistance available
- Accidents or injuries with no one to help
- Fire or other building emergencies
- Access to and egress from the building
- Adequate lighting in all areas
- Working with potentially hazardous equipment
- Heightened safety risks related to protected characteristics

Individual Risk Assessments

All staff who lone work will have individual risk assessments that consider:

Age:

- Experience and confidence levels (particularly for less experienced staff)
- Age-related health conditions
- Physical capability for emergency situations
- Confidence with technology and security systems

Disability:

- Physical accessibility of building areas
- Emergency evacuation capability
- Communication needs
- Medical conditions and emergency protocols
- Assistive technology requirements
- Reasonable adjustments needed

Gender Reassignment:

- Any specific safety concerns raised by transgender staff
- Privacy and dignity considerations
- Access to appropriate facilities

Pregnancy and Maternity:

- Pregnancy-related health risks

- Emergency evacuation capability
- Frequency of toilet breaks and building access
- Risk of pregnancy-related medical emergencies
- Physical task limitations
- Stage of pregnancy

Race:

- Any concerns about racial harassment or hate crime
- Cultural considerations
- Language needs for emergency procedures

Religion or Belief:

- Prayer time requirements
- Religious observance affecting lone working times
- Fasting periods affecting energy levels
- Religious dress considerations for safety
- Any concerns about religious hate crime

Sex:

- Gender-based violence and harassment risks
- Safety concerns in isolated areas, car parks, and when arriving/leaving
- Caring responsibilities

Sexual Orientation:

- Any concerns about homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic hate crime
- Safety concerns when alone and visible

Intersectionality:

- Recognition that staff may hold multiple protected characteristics and face compounded risks
- Holistic assessment of individual circumstances

Equality Impact Assessment

The school will regularly review whether lone working arrangements have any disproportionate impact on staff with protected characteristics, including:

- Whether certain groups are disproportionately required to lone work
- Whether certain groups are disproportionately excluded from lone working
- Whether certain groups experience more safety incidents
- Whether reasonable adjustments are being made effectively

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4. Reasonable Adjustments

Legal Duty

The school has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff to avoid substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented to enable disabled staff to lone work safely where possible. Adjustments are not optional or discretionary - they are a legal requirement.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments for lone working may include:

For disabled staff:

- More frequent check-ins
- Personal alarm systems
- Modified working hours or locations
- Buddy systems
- Accessible emergency procedures (visual and audio alarms)
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)
- Assistive technology
- Working in more accessible areas of the building
- Modified security procedures
- Emergency equipment (e.g., evacuation chairs)
- Alternative communication methods
- Extended time for tasks
- Adapted workstations

For pregnant staff:

- More frequent check-ins
- Modified working hours
- Working in areas close to facilities
- Restrictions on certain tasks
- Personal alarms
- Enhanced emergency protocols

For staff with caring responsibilities:

- Flexible lone working times
- Advance notice of lone working requirements
- Sharing of after-hours work

For staff with religious needs:

- Flexible working times to accommodate prayer or religious observance
- Private space for prayer
- Consideration of religious festivals and fasting periods

For staff who face heightened safety risks:

- Enhanced security measures (CCTV, lighting, secure parking)
- Personal alarms
- More frequent check-ins
- Buddy systems
- Security escort services
- Modified working locations or times

Process for Requesting Reasonable Adjustments

Staff may request reasonable adjustments by:

1. Speaking to their line manager or a member of SLT
2. Explaining what adjustments they need and why
3. Working with the school to identify appropriate adjustments
4. Having adjustments documented in their individual risk assessment

The school will:

- Consider all requests seriously and sympathetically
- Consult with the staff member about their needs
- Implement adjustments unless genuinely unreasonable
- Review adjustments regularly to ensure effectiveness
- Not disadvantage staff who require adjustments

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5. Authorisation and Notification Procedures

Authorisation

Staff must:

- Obtain prior approval from their line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team before lone working
- Have an individual risk assessment completed before approval is granted
- Understand that approval decisions will be based on objective risk assessment, not assumptions about protected characteristics

Approval Process Safeguards

Line managers must ensure that:

- Approval decisions are based on objective risk assessment
- Protected characteristics are not used as a basis for refusal without justification
- Reasonable adjustments are considered before refusing approval
- If approval is refused, the reason is documented and shared with the staff member
- Staff may appeal refusal decisions if they believe the decision is discriminatory

Staff have the right to:

- Decline to lone work if they feel unsafe for any reason, including concerns related to protected characteristics
- Request alternative arrangements without penalty or disadvantage
- Have their concerns taken seriously and addressed

Notification

Staff must inform a designated contact person (e.g., family member, colleague, or SLT member) of:

- Their expected arrival and departure times
- Their location within the building
- Contact details
- Expected tasks to be completed

The school will:

- Maintain a log of staff lone working, including dates, times, and locations
- Monitor lone working patterns by protected characteristics to identify any disproportionate impacts
- Ensure the designated safeguarding lead is aware of lone working arrangements, particularly if students may be present

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6. Safety Procedures

On arrival:

Staff working alone must:

- Sign in on the staff sign in sheet
- Ensure the building is secure (lock external doors behind them)
- Check that fire exits are accessible
- Identify the nearest telephone
- Keep their mobile phone charged and accessible (or use alternative communication method if reasonable adjustment)
- Work in well-lit areas close to exits where possible
- Avoid working in isolated areas of the building (e.g., basement areas, far corners)

During lone working:

Staff must:

- Keep doors unlocked from the inside for emergency exit
- Not admit visitors unless pre-arranged and authorised

- Contact their designated person at agreed intervals (e.g., on arrival and departure)
- Trust their instincts – if something feels unsafe, leave immediately
- Avoid working with potentially dangerous equipment or in high-risk areas (e.g., science labs, DT workshops) unless specifically trained and authorised

The school recognizes that:

- Some staff may face heightened safety risks due to protected characteristics
- Staff experiencing harassment, discrimination, or feeling unsafe should leave immediately and report the incident
- Additional safety measures will be provided where needed (e.g., personal alarms, enhanced check-ins, security escorts)

On departure:

Staff must:

- Inform their designated contact person that they are leaving
- Sign out on staff sign in sheet
- Ensure all areas they have used are secure
- Ensure all external doors are locked

Accessibility of Procedures

The school will ensure that:

- Safety procedures are accessible to all staff, including those with disabilities
- Procedures may be modified as reasonable adjustments where needed
- Alternative communication methods are available for staff who cannot use mobile phones
- Individual risk assessments identify any necessary modifications to standard procedures

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7. Emergency Procedures

In case of emergency, staff should:

- Call 999 immediately for police, fire, or ambulance services
- Evacuate the building if safe to do so

- Contact their designated person and a member of SLT
- Not return to the building until emergency services confirm it is safe

Emergency contact numbers must be:

- Displayed prominently near all telephones
- Saved in staff mobile phones
- Include: 999, designated SLT member, site manager/caretaker, alarm company
- Include specialist support services where appropriate (e.g., hate crime reporting, domestic abuse services)

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

Disabled staff who lone work must have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) that:

- Identifies how they will evacuate in an emergency
- Specifies any assistance or equipment needed
- Is reviewed regularly
- Is known to relevant staff and emergency services

The school will ensure:

- Emergency alarms are both visual and audible
- Emergency procedures are accessible to all staff
- Emergency equipment is available where needed (e.g., evacuation chairs, personal alarms)
- Staff who cannot evacuate independently have specific arrangements in place before lone working is permitted

Reporting Hate Crimes and Discrimination

Staff who experience hate crime, harassment, or discrimination while lone working should:

- Leave the situation immediately if safe to do so
- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Report to True Vision (www.report-it.org.uk) or local police (101)
- Report to their line manager or DSL

- Access support from specialist organizations

The school will:

- Take all reports seriously
- Provide support for victims
- Investigate incidents thoroughly
- Implement additional safety measures
- Report to appropriate authorities

8. Specific Restrictions and Safeguards

Medical Conditions and Disabilities

All staff will have individual risk assessments to determine whether they can lone work safely, with reasonable adjustments where needed.

Staff with medical conditions or disabilities will have specific assessments to identify:

- Any additional risks
- What reasonable adjustments are needed
- What additional controls or emergency protocols are required
- Whether lone working is safe with adjustments in place

The school will not:

- Apply blanket restrictions based on medical conditions or disabilities
- Presume that disabled staff cannot lone work
- Refuse lone working without individual assessment and consideration of reasonable adjustments

Pregnancy

Pregnant staff must have a specific pregnancy risk assessment before lone working is permitted.

The risk assessment must consider:

- Pregnancy-related health risks
- Emergency evacuation capability and reduced mobility
- Risk of pregnancy-related medical emergencies
- Frequency of toilet breaks and building access

- Physical task limitations
- Stage of pregnancy

Pregnant staff may be restricted from lone working depending on individual circumstances and stage of pregnancy. Alternative arrangements will be made to ensure pregnant staff are not disadvantaged.

High-Risk Areas

Staff must not work alone in high-risk areas (e.g., science labs, DT workshops, PE facilities with equipment) without specific authorisation, training, and enhanced risk assessment.

Feeling Unsafe

Staff must not work alone if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe doing so for any reason, including:

- Concerns related to protected characteristics
- Previous experiences of harassment or violence
- Mental health or wellbeing concerns
- Safety concerns about the building or local area
- Any other reason

Alternative arrangements will be made without penalty or disadvantage to the staff member.

Security

Staff must not:

- Prop open external doors or disable security systems
- Admit unauthorised visitors
- Work alone if security systems are not functioning

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9. Building Security and Safety Measures

The school will ensure:

General Security:

- CCTV coverage of key areas, prioritizing areas where staff work alone

- Adequate external lighting, particularly near entrances, car parks, and routes between building and parking
- Regular testing of security and alarm systems
- Clear signage for emergency exits
- Well-maintained locks and access control systems
- Secure parking close to building entrance where possible

Enhanced Security for Vulnerable Staff:

- Additional security measures in areas where staff who face heightened risks work alone
- CCTV coverage prioritizing safety of vulnerable staff
- Enhanced lighting in isolated areas
- Personal alarm systems available on request
- Security escort services for staff leaving late (where feasible)
- Panic buttons or emergency call systems where appropriate

Accessibility:

- Security systems are accessible to all staff, with adjustments where needed
- Emergency exits are accessible to disabled staff
- Accessible routes from building to car park
- Accessible emergency equipment

Staff should:

- Be aware of CCTV locations
- Report any security concerns immediately
- Request additional security measures if they have concerns related to protected characteristics
- Use personal alarms if provided

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10. Health and Wellbeing Considerations

Recognition of Diverse Needs

The school recognises that:

- Regular lone working can impact staff wellbeing and work-life balance
- Lone working may have different wellbeing impacts for staff with different protected characteristics, including:
    - Staff with mental health conditions (anxiety, PTSD, depression)
    - Staff who have experienced violence, harassment, or discrimination
    - Staff from groups facing heightened safety risks
    - Staff with caring responsibilities
    - Pregnant staff
    - Disabled staff
    - Staff for whom lone working causes isolation or stress

Staff Rights and Support

Staff should not feel pressured to work alone outside normal hours.

Alternative arrangements will be provided as reasonable adjustments where needed, including:

- Flexible working hours
- Working from home
- Sharing after-hours work with colleagues
- Modified working locations
- Buddy systems
- Enhanced support and check-ins

Staff will not be disadvantaged if they cannot lone work due to:

- Disability
- Pregnancy
- Caring responsibilities
- Wellbeing concerns
- Safety concerns related to protected characteristics
- Any other protected characteristic

Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers should:

- Regularly review the necessity of lone working
- Discuss workload and wellbeing with staff who regularly lone work
- Encourage staff to maintain healthy work-life boundaries
- Consider whether tasks could be completed during normal working hours
- Monitor whether certain groups in their teams are disproportionately affected by lone working
- Ensure caring responsibilities (regardless of sex or marital status) are considered
- Provide mental health support for staff who find lone working isolating or stressful
- Ensure religious observance and practices are accommodated

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11. Monitoring and Review

Policy Review

The school will:

- Review this policy every 3 years
- Investigate any incidents or near-misses involving lone workers
- Consult with staff about their experiences and concerns, including staff from diverse protected characteristic groups
- Update risk assessments following any incidents
- Conduct equality impact assessments at each review

Equality Monitoring

The school will monitor lone working arrangements by protected characteristics to identify any disproportionate impacts, including:

- Who is lone working (patterns by protected characteristics)
- Who is requesting not to lone work and why
- Who is being refused approval for lone working and why
- Incidents and near-misses by protected characteristics
- Staff satisfaction with lone working arrangements
- Whether reasonable adjustments are being requested and implemented

- Whether certain groups feel unsafe lone working
- Whether certain groups are disproportionately experiencing wellbeing impacts

Equality data will be:

- Collected with appropriate data protection safeguards
- Analyzed to identify patterns and disproportionate impacts
- Reported to governors annually
- Used to inform policy improvements and address disparities

Incident Investigation

All incidents and near-misses will be investigated, including:

- What happened
- Whether protected characteristics were a factor
- Whether additional safety measures are needed
- Whether the incident indicates a pattern or systemic issue
- What actions will be taken to prevent recurrence

Consultation

The school will:

- Consult with all staff about lone working experiences
- Specifically seek views from staff with different protected characteristics
- Ask about experiences of discrimination or heightened risks
- Consult on reasonable adjustments and support needs
- Ensure consultation methods are accessible to all staff
- Act on consultation findings to improve the policy

Reporting to Governors

The school will report to governors annually on:

- Patterns of lone working
- Equality monitoring data and any disproportionate impacts
- Incidents and near-misses
- Reasonable adjustments made

- Actions taken to address disparities
- Staff satisfaction and wellbeing
- Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Policy effectiveness and any recommended changes

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12. Responsibilities

The Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and monitored
- Ensure the policy complies with the Equality Act 2010
- Authorise lone working arrangements
- Ensure risk assessments are completed and reviewed
- Investigate incidents and take corrective action
- Allocate resources for security measures and reasonable adjustments
- Monitor equality impacts and report to governors
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are made for disabled staff
- Address any disproportionate impacts on protected characteristic groups
- Ensure pregnant staff have appropriate risk assessments
- Provide additional safety measures for staff who face heightened risks

Line Managers will:

- Approve lone working requests
- Complete equality-sensitive risk assessments for their team members
- Consider reasonable adjustments before refusing lone working approval
- Ensure approval decisions are not discriminatory
- Monitor lone working patterns
- Monitor whether certain groups in their teams are disproportionately affected
- Support staff wellbeing
- Ensure staff understand and follow procedures
- Receive training on equality law and reasonable adjustments

- Accommodate religious observance and practices
- Consider caring responsibilities in lone working arrangements
- Support staff who experience harassment or discrimination

All Staff will:

- Follow this policy and associated procedures
- Report any concerns or incidents
- Not lone work without authorisation
- Take responsibility for their own safety
- Report experiences of discrimination, harassment, or hate crime
- Request reasonable adjustments if needed
- Inform line managers of any concerns related to protected characteristics
- Respect colleagues' protected characteristics and diverse needs

Governors will:

- Ensure the policy complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Challenge any evidence of disproportionate impacts
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated for reasonable adjustments and safety measures
- Approve the policy and any significant changes
- Monitor policy effectiveness

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13. Safeguarding Considerations

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. Staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral. Every school should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties.

When students are present:

- Lone working in the school building with students is **not permitted** under any circumstances
- At least two members of staff must be present when students are in the building

- All safeguarding procedures must be followed as outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy
- The designated safeguarding lead should be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns and should have the appropriate status and authority to carry out the duties of the post

Equality in safeguarding:

- Safeguarding procedures will be applied fairly regardless of staff protected characteristics
- Students will be supervised by diverse staff teams where possible
- Staff will not be excluded from safeguarding duties based on protected characteristics

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Appendix A: Risk Assessment Template

Lone Working Individual Risk Assessment

Staff Member: _____
Role: _____
Date of Assessment: _____
Assessed by: _____
Review Date: _____

1. Lone Working Details

Frequency of lone working: _____
Typical times: _____
Typical locations in building: _____
Typical tasks: _____

2. Individual Circumstances

Please consider the following (tick all that apply and provide details):

Age-related factors:

- Less experienced/new to role
- Age-related health conditions
- Confidence with technology/security systems
- Other: _____

Disability:

- Physical disability affecting mobility/evacuation
- Sensory disability (visual/hearing impairment)
- Learning disability or neurodivergence
- Mental health condition
- Long-term health condition
- Requires assistive technology
- Other: _____

Pregnancy and Maternity:

- Currently pregnant (stage: _____)
- Recently returned from maternity leave
- Breastfeeding
- Other: _____

Protected characteristics considerations:

- Staff member has raised concerns about safety related to race
- Staff member has raised concerns about safety related to religion/belief
- Staff member has raised concerns about safety related to sex/gender
- Staff member has raised concerns about safety related to sexual orientation
- Staff member has raised concerns about safety related to gender identity
- Other: _____

Other individual circumstances:

- Caring responsibilities
- Religious observance requirements
- Previous experience of harassment/violence
- Mental health/wellbeing concerns about lone working
- Other: _____

3. Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk Level (L/M/H)	Controls in Place	Additional Controls Needed
Intruders/unauthorized access			
Medical emergency			
Accident/injury			
Fire/building emergency			
Evacuation difficulties			
Harassment/discrimination			
Violence/hate crime			
Working with hazardous equipment			
Poor lighting/isolated areas			
Communication difficulties			
Other:			

4. Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments required (if any):

- More frequent check-ins
- Personal alarm system
- Modified working hours/locations
- Buddy system
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)
- Accessible emergency procedures

- Assistive technology
- Modified security procedures
- Enhanced lighting/security
- Private space for prayer
- Flexible timing for religious observance
- Other: _____

Details of adjustments: _____

5. Emergency Procedures

Designated contact person: _____
Contact number: _____
Check-in times: _____
Emergency evacuation plan: _____
Specific emergency considerations: _____

6. Decision

- Approved - lone working permitted with controls/adjustments in place
- Approved with conditions - specify: _____
- Not approved - reason: _____
- Alternative arrangements - specify: _____

If not approved, have reasonable adjustments been considered? [ ] Yes [ ] N/A

Staff member's signature: _____ Date: _____

Line manager's signature: _____ Date: _____

Review notes:

Appendix B: Equality Monitoring Form

Lone Working Equality Monitoring (Confidential)

This information is collected to monitor whether lone working arrangements have any disproportionate impact on staff with protected characteristics. All information is confidential and will be used only for equality monitoring purposes.

Reporting period: _____

Staff Lone Working Patterns

Protected Characteristic	Number of staff who lone work regularly	Number of staff who requested not to lone work	Number of staff refused approval	Incidents/near-misses
Age: Under 25				
Age: 25-39				
Age: 40-54				
Age: 55+				
Disability: Yes				
Disability: No				
Pregnancy: Currently pregnant				
Sex: Female				
Sex: Male				
Race: White British				
Race: Other (specify)				
Religion: Christian				
Religion: Muslim				
Religion: Other/None				

Analysis

Disproportionate impacts identified: _____

Actions taken: _____

Reasonable adjustments made: _____

Staff satisfaction (from surveys): _____

Recommendations: _____

Completed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix C: Useful Contacts

Emergency Services

- **Emergency (Police/Fire/Ambulance):** 999
- **Non-emergency Police:** 101

School Contacts

- **Headteacher:** James Nation
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** James Nation
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:** Domoni Supple, Katherine Mooney
- **Site Manager/Caretaker:** _____
- **Alarm Company:** _____

Hate Crime Reporting

- **True Vision (online hate crime reporting):** www.report-it.org.uk
- **Police non-emergency:** 101

Support Services

LGBTQ+ Support:

- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk
- LGBT Foundation: www.lgbt.foundation
- Mermaids (transgender support): www.mermaidsuk.org.uk

Anti-Racism Support:

- Show Racism the Red Card: www.theredcard.org
- Tell MAMA (anti-Muslim hate): www.tellmamauk.org

- Community Security Trust (antisemitism): www.cst.org.uk

Disability Support:

- Scope: www.scope.org.uk
- Equality and Human Rights Commission: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Domestic Abuse:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Mental Health:

- Samaritans: 116 123
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk

General Support:

- ACAS (workplace rights): 0300 123 1100
- Equality Advisory Support Service: 0808 800 0082

Monitoring

	Signature	**Date**
Policy Reviewed By: Domoni Supple	**D.Supple**	**22/06/26**
Next Review Date:		**22/06/29**
Interim Review Comments:	Comprehensive equality provisions added across all protected characteristics. Reasonable adjustments section added. Pregnancy provisions added. Equality monitoring framework implemented. Risk assessment template updated. Enhanced safety measures for vulnerable staff.	

	Signature	Date
Policy Reviewed By:		
Next Review Date:		
Interim Review Comments:		
Policy Reviewed By:		
Next Review Date:		
Interim Review Comments:		