



Working Alone with Students Policy

In most situations, at VLC, it's best practice to have at least two adults present when working with children and young people.

Sometimes it may be appropriate or necessary for an adult to have one-to-one contact with a child or supervise a small group on their own. This may be within the centre, at the home of a student or online. Examples of times when a VLC staff member may need to work alone include: outreach academic work, outreach outdoor pursuits, video online teaching, centre teaching if the other staff are deployed elsewhere.

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children. If you are working alone with children, you need to take steps to ensure everyone involved is safe.

All staff at VLC are Safeguarding trained and the policies and procedures apply. This document should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding policies and risk assessments. It should also be read in conjunction with our distance learning policy.

Procedures:

For outreach work, staff should agree the following with parents/carers prior to the session:

- what activities will take place during sessions and what the teaching will cover
- where sessions will take place
- whether there is any extra support the child needs, for example if they have a special educational need or disability (SEND) or additional needs
- where parents or carers will be during the session (ideally they should be within earshot so that you are never completely alone with a child).

This discussion is a good time to explain VLC safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Please provide the parents with the VLC student and parent code of conduct for outreach sessions.

When working in a home environment, staff should make sure that everyone is comfortable with the environment.

- Is there a desk or table to work at? Is this big enough so that you don't need to sit too close together? (If you're working online, you and the child should still both sit at a table or desk).
- Is there anything inappropriate in the room that needs to be removed, for example posters with bad language or nudity? If you're working online, do you have a neutral background?
- Is there any confidential information in the room that should be removed (such as bank statements)?

If you're using a computer during a face-to-face session, or sharing screens online, be mindful of what a child might see on your computer - only open things that are needed for the session.

Other considerations are:

- work in a room that has windows and ensure curtains are open so other people can see in
- never work in a bedroom
- leave the door to the room open
- make sure there is another adult within earshot and/or give parents the option of sitting in on the session
- don't allow parents to leave their child with you while they go out.
- maintain a professional relationship (for example by working at a desk and dressing appropriately for work)
- Details of what is covered in the session should be completed on the distance learning form on the g-drive.
- Any concerns raised during the session should be referred to the line manager using green forms or incident forms or safeguarding meetings.
- Spend five minutes at the end of each session updating parents and carers on how the session went. This is also a good opportunity to discuss areas where you need support, for example if a child is displaying challenging behaviour, is struggling with a particular subject or is anxious about something.

Risk Assessments

Prior to outreach learning activities taking place, staff should have completed a student risk assessment.

The home or learning place should be visited and a full risk assessment carried out for the area including adequate contingency plans should an unexpected incident occur that requires immediate attention. Within the risk assessment, risks to the lone worker should be thoroughly considered to include both physical and verbal risks.

Insurance and Travel

Staff travelling (apart from to and from a VLC centre) will need to provide the following:

1. Drivers licence and insurance
2. Evidence of business insurance (VLC will reimburse any additional costs incurred)

Staff must not commence outreach work unless they:

- are fully aware of relevant risks and ways to minimise them, as set out in the employer's risk assessment
- are fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence
- are briefed about the area in which they will be working
- are provided with all relevant information on particular pupils, their medical needs and any aggressive tendencies, as well as the background of parents/carers, including any aggressive tendencies, which can help prevent violent incidents occurring
- are aware of the existence of aggressive pets
- are aware of the need to leave an itinerary with expected departure/arrival times with a responsible contact, who knows how to react if the person has not returned when expected and to phone colleagues about possible changes of plan
- carry, and keep switched on, a mobile phone so they are contactable at all times
- receive a pre-arranged telephone call from this responsible contact approximately ten minutes into any visit at a new address to check all is well, and that a code word has been determined beforehand which can be used to summon assistance should this be required
- have arranged a prior appointment with the parent/carer whom they are going to meet and do not enter the house if either the child is at home alone or if the parent/carer, with whom the appointment has been made, is not there
- ensure that doors of teaching rooms are left open for greater transparency and safety
- appreciate the importance of having a clear exit route, and for this purpose position themselves where they have easy egress through the door
- are aware of the importance of leaving the home immediately if they feel uncomfortable in any way (an ongoing risk assessment)
- should not give lifts to pupils or family members, or teach elsewhere other than the location specified on the risk assessment
- are aware that they must avoid, and be seen to avoid, any act or omission which could call their professionalism into question or otherwise place them in a compromising position
- always inform the parent/carer if finishing the lesson before the agreed time
- avoid evening visits wherever possible
- carry an identity card, which should not be worn around the neck, and show it on a first home visit
- consider carrying an alarm
- do not carry large quantities of cash or credit/debit cards when making home visits.

