

Minimum staff numbers and lone working in Out of School clubs

Since September 2014, changes to the requirements of the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register have meant it is no longer a legal requirement to always have two members of staff on the premises.

However, all the safeguarding and welfare requirements of both registers must be met regardless of the number of staff on duty.

Before/after school care and holiday provision Paragraph 3.41 of the safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 states:

Where the provision is solely before/after school care or holiday provision for children who normally attend reception class or older during the school day, there must be sufficient staff as for a class of 30 children. It is for providers to determine how many staff are needed to ensure the safety and welfare of children, bearing in mind the types of activities and the age and needs of the children.

Whilst we would not recommend anyone to work alone in a childcare setting (except for childminders), it is acknowledged that there may be short periods of time when lone working is acceptable. For example, at the beginning of an after school club session when staff are collecting children from different schools and numbers are low and/or at the very end of the day when there may only be one or two children left at the club. All out of school settings are different and should make a decision about lone working after considering the following:

- How will a lone worker manage an emergency situation?
- Are there other people working on the premises who could be summoned in an emergency? For example, head teacher, caretaker.
- How will one person maintain supervision (within sight or hearing) of all children particularly when using toilets or during intimate care situations?
- How will individual members of staff be protected from allegations of abuse or neglect when alone with children?
- Will lone workers cope with a variety of tasks such as talking to parents and supervising activities whilst maintaining the safety and welfare of children?
- Each member of staff required to work alone must have the training and/or skills for the role; first aid certificate, child protection training and competency, food hygiene training and if children younger than school reception age are present; hold a level 3 qualification.
- Public liability insurance cover for lone working.

If deciding to allow a single member of staff to be on duty, it is important to have documentation to support and protect staff and children in the setting. This should include the following:

- A risk assessment for lone working.
- A lone working policy to ensure staff can work alone whilst maintaining the safety and welfare of children and themselves. This should link to your safeguarding and recruitment policies.
- Written agreements from staff, managers and parents for periods of lone working.

The [Out of School Alliance](#) has further guidance and templates for lone working risk assessment, policy and checklist available to members on their website.

The [Health and Safety Executive](#) also has information on their website.