



# Lone working policy for volunteers

Last reviewed: October 2021

Date of next review: October 2022

## Overview and scope

The Access Project takes the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers seriously, especially when they are leading tutorials alone either from home or out in the community without close or direct support or supervision.

This policy is designed to raise awareness of the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to give guidance on how to manage such risks.

This policy applies to all volunteers who may find themselves working 1:1 with a student at any time whilst undertaking duties for The Access Project. Before commencing any lone working, volunteers should ensure that they have read the following guidance and have assessed risks accordingly.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children Policy and our Volunteering Online Health and Safety Policy.

## Definition

Within this document, "lone working" refers to situations where volunteers in the course of their duties work alone (either in the office or from home) or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance.

This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

This also refers to situations when volunteers find themselves working alone with students when no other members of staff from The Access Project are present, such as during tutorials.

## General guidelines for lone working and reasonable precautions

Volunteers should take reasonable precautions to take care of their own safety when lone working. These might include:

- Checking the directions for a destination
- Ensuring someone knows where they are going and when they are expected home
- Ensuring that they have a charged phone with them

- Avoiding poorly lit or deserted areas
- Taking care when leaving or entering empty buildings especially at night
- Knowing what measures are in place where you are working:
  - If in your place of work, check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies
  - If in a public place, e.g. a coffee shop, ensure you know where the exits are.
- Ensuring that equipment such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

Further to this, volunteers should:

- Raise any concerns with their University Access Officer (UAO) (or line manager for staff volunteers) immediately
- Report any accidents, incidents, injuries or “near misses” to their UAO or line manager
- Report any safety practices that need to be improved or risks not otherwise identified.

## Guidelines for one-on-one meetings with students

Whilst volunteering with The Access Project, volunteers will be required to hold meetings one-on-one with their students to provide tuition. Volunteers should protect themselves and their students by following these guidelines:

### a. Working with a student face to face

- Tutorials should be held Monday to Friday after school, commencing no later than 6:30 pm
- If conducting a tutorial face to face, volunteers should ensure that the meeting takes place in either:
  - A public place, such as a local coffee shop
  - A communal area in their place of work, e.g. the staff canteen
  - An office with other people present.
- Volunteers should never be working with students at their home, the student’s home or any other private residential area (including university halls of residence)
- If, at their place of work, volunteers only have the option to carry out a tutorial with just the student and volunteer in the room, they should ensure a colleague is made aware of:
  - Where they are conducting a meeting/ tutorial
  - When they are conducting a meeting/ tutorial
  - How long the session is likely to last.

In this circumstance:

- The volunteer should prop the door ajar (as long as this does not contradict other Health and Safety guidance, for example, Fire Safety) or hold the meeting in a room that can be seen into (such as a glass meeting room)



- Volunteers should sit nearest to the door when working alone with a student
- There should be an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency.
- Volunteers should not be transporting students one-on-one under any circumstances
- For travel safety advice you can [direct your student here](#)
- Should a student not arrive within 15 minutes of the time expected, volunteers should call The Access Project's office number on 020 4513 5999. The Access Project staff on duty should follow the internal on call procedure.

## b. Working with a student online

- Meetings should be kept to a reasonable length (generally no longer than 1 hour) and should commence no later than 6:30 pm Monday to Friday
  - Only in exceptional circumstances can tutorials be held outside these times, and only with prior communication and planning with your UAO.
- Meetings and tutorials should only be conducted through the online platform that The Access Project provides. All meetings held through this platform will be recorded and monitored so that recordings can be reviewed should a safeguarding incident occur
- Online tutorials must not happen on Facebook, Skype or any other form of social media
- Volunteers and children must wear suitable smart casual clothing, as should anyone else in the household who may pass the computer screen
- Any sessions should be held in appropriate areas of the home, with doors open and the student's parent or carer in close proximity during the session
- Volunteers and students should have a neutral background if on a video call - this includes ensuring nothing that could disclose personal information is visible
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including from family/household members in the background
- If any tutors or students are deemed to be sharing inappropriate content, they will be removed from the platform and appropriate safeguarding measures will be followed according to our Safeguarding Children Policy.

## Assessing risk

When assessing risk relating to holding tutorials, volunteers are expected to follow the guidance in this policy.

Due to the variety of locations used for tutorials, The Access Project will be unable to assess each individual location for risks. We encourage our tutors to complete a risk assessment for their own tutorials, and may wish to use the example template in Appendix A to structure this. Volunteers should also refer to the Online Health and Safety Policy for risk considerations for online tutorials.

Potential risks that individuals could be exposed to during lone working for The Access Project include (but are not limited to):

- Being the recipient of physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Being accused of perpetrating physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful abuse
- Neglecting one's own duties to safeguard children

When undertaking risk assessments, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the task, special circumstances, likely outcomes
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations
- Any other special circumstances.

The tutorial tasks themselves are unlikely to present any significant risk to volunteers or students as they should be focused on working through academic tasks, e.g. completing questions set by the tutor, reviewing past exam papers, etc.

The Access Project will provide tutors with any information regarding the students they are working with that might suggest the student poses a risk to themselves or others, in line with our Safeguarding Children Policy.

## Reporting incidents

Should a safeguarding incident occur during the course of a tutorial, this should be reported as soon as possible after the incident and no later than 24 hours after such incident.

Staff and volunteers should report any safeguarding concerns or incidents that place themselves or the students at risk to The Access Project's Designated Child Protection Officer, following our Safeguarding Children Policy.

## Safeguarding contacts

Designated Child Protection Officer: Jennifer Guerin  
Email: [staying-safe@theaccessproject.org.uk](mailto:staying-safe@theaccessproject.org.uk)  
Phone number: 020 4513 5999 (option 1 for safeguarding)



## Appendix A – Risk assessment template

### The Access Project: Hazard checklist and risk assessment

Location of tutorials:	
Tutor name:	
Date of assessment:	

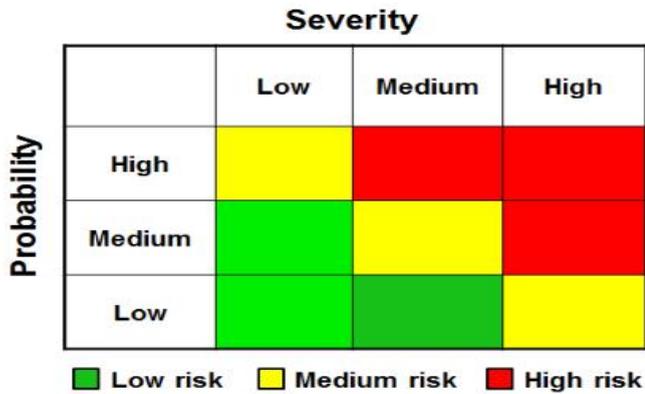
#### Hazard checklist

This hazard list is not exhaustive and other hazards may be identified.

Alcohol and smoking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adverse weather conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioural difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting lost	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dangerous tools/weapons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Falling objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazardous substances	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/first aid provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Renovations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slips/trips/falls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manual handling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of computers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deep waters	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Risk Matrix



## Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who is at risk?	Severity	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Controls to minimise risk
		L M H	L M H	L M H	
Getting Lost	Student	M	H	H	Ensure the student is provided with adequate directions in advance of the tutorial.  Student and tutor will have a charged phone in case of a student getting lost.