



# Lone Working Procedure



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## 1. Introduction

GreenHouse Mentoring (GHM) aims to ensure the safety and well-being of its volunteers and staff when engaging in activities on its behalf which are specifically designed to be carried out unaccompanied or without immediate access to another person for assistance.

All GreenHouse Mentoring volunteers who regularly engage in lone-working on behalf of GHM are expected to participate in the Buddy System. This is to ensure that another adult knows the whereabouts, time and date of the mentoring session in order to safeguard against any potential risks to the volunteer mentor and to the mentee.

If a close friend or family member agrees to take part in the Buddy System, it is vital that he/she understands the reasons behind the buddy system and the procedures explained below. GHM will keep a signed copy of the Alternative Buddy Agreement document on the volunteer's file for record purposes.

## 2. Applicability

This policy applies to all GHM Staff and Volunteers.

## 3. Definitions

Within this document, the following definitions are understood:

<b>Volunteers</b>	any person currently volunteering with GHM with a signed Volunteer Agreement;
<b>Staff</b>	any member of the GHM Team with a formal written and signed contract;
<b>Buddy</b>	any person who agrees to assist a volunteer by ensuring that mentoring sessions are completed on time and safely
<b>External Persons</b>	any other person or organisation that has had or is having contact with GHM and does not fall into the above three categories.

## 4. Policy Authority

This document is approved by the GreenHouse Mentoring Manager.

Written By	Version/ Date	Comments
Ruth Gookey	31/1/2011	Initial Draft / Issue
Ian Pirks	14/08/2013	Updated to include standard document format & latest information & merged Lone Working and Buddy Arrangements procedures

## 5. Principles of Policy

The following principles will apply within GHM:

- ◆ In all cases, GreenHouse Mentoring staff and volunteers will work within the GHM Vision, Mission & Values statement.
- ◆ GHM aims to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff, volunteers and service users at all times.

## 6. Procedure

### 6.1 Lone Working

GreenHouse Mentoring will take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of volunteers and staff when engaged in lone-working. GreenHouse Mentoring, where reasonably practical, will ensure that:

- a. Risk assessments have been carried out for the following area where lone-working will take place:
  - Schools
  - Children's centres
  - Public places
  - Young Parent Mentee's homes
  - GreenHouse Office
- b. Volunteers and staff will be made aware of the above mentioned risk assessments prior to meeting and/or working
- c. All volunteers and staff will have access to GreenHouse Mentoring guidelines and procedures relating to lone-working
- d. A buddy system (see 6.2 ) for monitoring volunteers and staff who are engaged in lone-working activities will be set-up and maintained by GreenHouse Mentoring, and training will be given on this system.

- e. All staff and volunteers involved in maintaining the buddy system will be trained in GreenHouse Mentoring procedures and will know what to do if a volunteer or staff member does not check-in and is unreachable during or immediately following their lone-working activity.
- f. No volunteer or member of staff will be forced or coerced in any way to engage in activities which require lone-working. If necessary a volunteer or staff member will be offered an alternative role or task within GreenHouse Mentoring which does not involve lone-working. An alternative role may involve different or extra training, and it cannot be guaranteed that it will involve the same amount of time or day of the week as the lone-working activity.
- g. Training in mentoring and child protection best practice will be provided where applicable.

GreenHouse Mentoring requires all volunteers and staff to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety and well-being when engaging in lone-working activities on behalf of GreenHouse Mentoring. All volunteers and staff should:

- a. Make every reasonable effort to know and understand the GreenHouse Mentoring policy, procedures and guidelines related to Lone Working;
- b. Comply with GreenHouse Mentoring policy and procedures for lone – working;
- c. Comply with the GreenHouse Mentoring buddy system if engaging in lone-working activities on behalf of GreenHouse Mentoring
- d. Attend any training in relation to lone-working on behalf of GreenHouse Mentoring;
- e. Alert the GreenHouse Mentoring Manager or Assistant Managers regarding any incident or near-incident which may occur during the course of lone-working or lone-working activities on behalf of GreenHouse Mentoring.

Regardless of any other considerations, when engaged in GreenHouse Mentoring lone working activities, volunteers should:

- a. Only engage in a lone-working session when the type of activity, venue and time has been agreed by a GHM staff member.
- b. Notify their buddy and the GHM office IN ADVANCE of any change of venue or time for the lone-working session.

## 6.2 Buddy System

Before the GHM volunteer mentor takes part in lone working they should ensure that their nominated alternative buddy (i.e. a non GHM volunteer) has read and understood fully the information about the Buddy System. They should then sign a copy of the Alternative Buddy Agreement form (filed in <\\GHMserver\Shared\GHM> Forms) and return it to Sue Pirks at The GreenHouse: [sue.pirks@stopsley.net](mailto:sue.pirks@stopsley.net)

Prior to the GHM volunteer embarking on a lone working session, the GHM volunteer mentor should tell his/ her nominated buddy. The GHM volunteer mentor should ensure that they exchange their mobile and home telephone numbers, the GHM office and emergency telephone numbers, and the time and place of the mentoring session.

Both individuals should check-in with each other at the end of the mentoring session. For example if the GHM mentor does not call their nominated buddy within half-hour of the expected end time of the session, the buddy should call the GHM volunteer mentor to check that they are alright.

If there is no answer the buddy should call the GHM volunteer mentor again after 10 minutes.

If there is no answer the buddy should try the GHM volunteer mentor again after 10 minutes.

If there is still no answer, the buddy must call the GHM office (01582 528213) or the emergency mobile (07598 428 234) if it is out of office hours (9am-5pm) and inform the person who answers that their GHM volunteer mentor has not checked in.

### 6.3 Buddy System Opt-out

Greenhouse Mentoring (GHM) has identified the 'Buddy System' as the most effective way as an organisation to monitor and safeguard our volunteers when engaging in Lone Working – that is, when volunteering on behalf of GHM without access to direct back up or support. For the purposes of our policy, 'direct back-up and support' means GHM staff, other GHM volunteers or staff at a school or childrens' centre where the volunteering is taking place.

All Greenhouse Mentoring volunteers who regularly engage in lone-working on behalf of GHM are expected to participate in the Buddy System. Training is given to all volunteers and as of July 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 all volunteers will be aware of this requirement before agreeing to a volunteer role which will require lone-working.

GHM is aware that our existing lone-working volunteers had no expectation or knowledge of this requirement when they accepted their role and so, for those volunteers who are unwilling or unable to take part in the Buddy System, we are providing an opt-out option.

**If a volunteer 'opts out' of the requirements of the Buddy System, they must understand fully that GHM will not be able to effectively monitor them or their safety during their lone-working sessions. They must also understand and accept that access to the emergency phone can only be**

**offered if the volunteer informs the GHM office the time and date of each of their lone working sessions, in advance and in person.**

Also, while GHM will always do its best to safeguard and protect its volunteers, the Buddy System of monitoring lone workers has been identified as the way it will do so. Therefore, to opt out of this system is to discharge GHM of its responsibilities towards the volunteer in the area of lone working and monitoring.

The option to 'opt back in' will be available indefinitely, and GHM staff will be available for advice and training to all volunteers, irrespective of whether they have opted out of the Buddy System.

See Buddy\_System\_Opt-out Form in \\GHMserver\Shared \GHM Forms.

## 7. Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

The Relationships Team will file a copy of the Buddy Agreement Form (see <\\GHMserver\Shared\GHM Forms> ) in the volunteer's file.

Any issues with Lone Working will be reviewed in the Staff Team meetings under the Safeguarding item.

## 8. Policy Review

Next policy review due before: August 2016

Policy last reviewed on: 14/08/2013

### Approved by:

Sue Pirks .....

(GreenHouse Mentoring Manager)

Date .....