The Island Lone Working Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the arrangements The Island uses to protect volunteer mentors and staff who work alone with a child or young person. It explains the precautions mentors and staff must take before, during and after a session, and the action to take if a safety concern or emergency arises.

The Island will not knowingly match a mentor with a young person who is considered to present an unacceptable risk when working alone.

Relevant information known to The Island will be shared with the mentor where this is necessary to support safe working and appropriate risk management.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteer mentors undertaking one-to-one mentoring activities on behalf of The Island. It applies whenever a mentor is away from direct supervision, including travel to and from sessions, activities in public places and approved trips outside York.

Each young person's circumstances and needs are different. Where these arrangements may need to be adapted, the mentor must discuss this with their supervisor in advance so that risks can be assessed, recorded and managed appropriately.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Island

- Assess relevant risks before a mentoring match or activity begins.
- Share relevant safety information with the mentor.
- Maintain current emergency contact details for mentors.
- Provide appropriate supervision, guidance and support.
- Review incidents, concerns and changes in circumstances, and update risk controls where required.

3.2 Volunteer mentors

- Follow this policy, safeguarding procedures, agreed boundaries and instructions from their supervisor.
- Plan sessions in advance and consider the location, activity, travel arrangements, timing and communication needs.
- Keep The Island informed of safety concerns, incidents and relevant changes in circumstances.
- End a session if they believe that they or the young person may be at risk.

4. Safe Working Arrangements

4.1 Work within duty-phone hours

Mentoring sessions must normally take place while the duty phone is available.

The duty phone number is 01904 628449, option 3. It is available from 9am to 21.00 pm. The line accepts calls only and does not provide a text-message service.

If an activity is expected to finish outside these hours, for example an evening theatre performance, the mentor must agree alternative contact arrangements with their supervisor in advance.

4.2 Make sure someone knows the plan

Before each session, the mentor must tell a reliable family member or friend where they are going and when they expect to return. Where possible, this should be someone they live with. That person should have the duty phone number and know to contact The Island if the mentor does not return as expected.

If a mentor has no suitable person to contact, they should call the duty phone before the session and provide their session plans.

4.3 Keep contact details current

Mentors must ensure that The Island has accurate emergency contact details and must report any changes promptly.

4.4 Carry a charged mobile phone and identification

Mentors must carry a fully charged mobile phone throughout the session. The Island's office and duty phone numbers should be saved in the phone. Mentors must also carry their Island ID badge and the contact list provided with it.

4.5 Use safe locations

Mentors should use agreed public or community locations and must not enter the young person's home. Although no concerns may be known about the young person or their family, The Island cannot control who else may be present in the home.

Before visiting an unfamiliar venue or area, the mentor should check for relevant risks, including access, lighting, transport, mobile-phone coverage and how to leave safely.

4.6 Plan transport

Mentors must make safe arrangements for themselves and the young person to travel to and from the session. This may include checking public transport times, planning collection arrangements and using a well-lit parking area.

4.7 Trips outside York

A mentor who wishes to take a young person outside York must inform The Island at least one month in advance. The activity must not go ahead until the necessary consent forms and risk assessments have been completed and approval has been given.

4.8 Trust your judgement

If something does not feel safe or circumstances change unexpectedly, the mentor should end the session, move to a safe place and contact their supervisor or the duty phone as soon as possible.

5. Emergencies and Immediate Concerns

In an emergency, or where there is an immediate concern for the safety or wellbeing of the mentor, the young person or another person, call 999. When it is safe to do so, also inform The Island using the duty phone and notify the mentor's supervisor.

For urgent concerns that do not require the emergency services, contact the duty phone on 01904 628449, option 3. Mentors must not rely on text messages to report a concern.

6. Incident Reporting and Follow-up

Any accident, near miss, threatening behaviour, safeguarding concern, missed check-in or other lone-working incident must be reported to the mentor's supervisor at the earliest safe opportunity. The mentor should provide a factual account and complete any required incident or safeguarding record.

The Island will review the incident, offer appropriate support and decide whether further action, supervision, changes to the activity or an updated risk assessment are required.

7. Related Guidance

This policy should be read alongside The Island's child protection and safeguarding guidance, mentor boundaries guidance, training materials and any activity-specific risk assessment or instruction provided by a supervisor.

8. Policy Review

Policy owner: Charity Manager
Approved by: Board of Trustees
Approval date: 02/11/2026
Next review date: To be completed 02/11/2028
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