

## Venue & Lone Worker Policy

### 1. Policy statement

1.1 In this document Read Easy means each of Read Easy UK (a charitable incorporated organisation) and the volunteer groups that are affiliated to it. Where the expression “Read Easy” or “the organisation” or “Affiliated Group” is used it means the CIO and/or those persons who comprise each volunteer group from time to time.

1.2 Each Read Easy Group has a responsibility to ensure that all those involved in its activities are not put at risk, so that they will feel secure and able to concentrate on the learning process. This policy sets out how the Affiliated Group will protect Reading Coaches and Learners who work together on a one-to-one basis, and procedures for Venue arrangement and use.

### 2. Definitions

**Venue** carefully selected premises in which the learning session takes place

**Venue Organiser** A member of the Management Committee, or the Coordinator if the responsibility has been delegated to him/her responsible for setting up a Venue to use for reading sessions

### 3. Status of the Policy

3.1. This Policy has been approved by Read Easy UK. It sets out the requirements and procedures for the provision of an appropriate and safe learning environment, and the legal conditions that must be satisfied by all Affiliated Groups.

3.2. The Trustees of Read Easy UK and the Committee Members of each Affiliated Group are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy. Any questions or concerns about the operation of this Policy, or if you consider that this policy has not been followed, you should raise the matter in the first instance with your Safeguarding Champion.

### 4. To whom does this policy apply?

4.1. The duties of this policy apply to Management Committees, Coaches (“Learning Coaches”) and those who are in receipt of our services (“Learners”).

### 5. Adopting an official venue

5.1. The Affiliated Group Venue Organiser shall be responsible for setting up a Venue to use for reading sessions, it is important that these Venues are chosen in accordance with this policy for safety and insurance purposes,



- 5.2. The Venue Organiser should arrange to visit suitable Venues and talk to the Venue providers. The Venue Organiser must bring with them a blank copy of the Venue Agreement sheet to be completed during the inspection of the Venue.
- 5.3. The Venue Organiser must satisfy him/herself that the Venue is suitable for the Affiliated Group's needs and meets basic health and safety requirements.
- 5.4. The Venue Organiser must ensure that the Venue provider expects that there will always be a member of their staff or person in a similar position of responsibility on the premises during the times offered to Read Easy, and also that the requirements outlined in clause 6 of this policy can reasonably be met.
- 5.5. The Venue Organiser must then go through the Venue Agreement with the Venue provider and fill out the required details.
- 5.6. If the Venue Organiser is satisfied with the suitability of the Venue, he/she must submit the Venue Agreement to the Management Committee for approval.
- 5.7. Once a Venue has been approved by the Management Committee, the Venue Organiser should produce a typed version of the Venue Agreement and send a copy with a letter of confirmation to the Venue provider, to confirm the arrangement.
- 5.8. Sessions will not take place in the proposed Venue until the management committee has approved its suitability for safe learning and the Venue provider confirmed the arrangement.
- 5.9. Each Venue must be reviewed annually, by a Venue Organiser, to make sure that it is still suitable and that the arrangement is working well.

## **6. Arranging a reading session**

- 6.1. It is the responsibility of the Coach to book a Venue that has been approved in accordance with clause 5 of this Policy. The Venue should meet the needs of both coach and learner, and should be chosen and agreed by both. The booking procedure is as follows:
  - 6.1.1. The Coordinator should supply the Coach with a copy of the Venue Agreement for the chosen Venue.
  - 6.1.2. The coach must read this thoroughly, taking into account any specific requests from the Venue provider.
  - 6.1.3. The coach must then arrange to visit the Venue to ensure that it is suitable for their reading sessions. If possible, you should try to talk to the Venue provider and, at the very least, the person normally responsible for being on the premises, as well as familiarising yourself with the location of fire exits, first aid kits, telephones, toilet etc.
  - 6.1.4. The coach must inform the Venue provider of the days and times that they intend to use the Venue for the learning sessions, and ensure that there will always be a member of their staff or person in a similar position of responsibility, on the premises during the learning session so that the learning relationship does not become isolated.



- 6.1.5. The Coach must explain the meeting place, days and times clearly to your Learner, as well as writing down the essential details clearly, so that if necessary a friend or relative can read the details to them. Appointment slips are provided at the back of the Coach Handbook for this purpose;
- 6.1.6. The coach must keep the Coordinator informed of the Venue arrangements and the intended meeting times, as well as keeping the Coordinator up-to-date about any significant changes of plan.

- 6.2. The Coach will need to provide the learner with a mobile telephone number on which the learner can reach them if he/she needs to cancel.
- 6.3. The coach must not give personal landline numbers or home addresses. If it is necessary to ring the Learner from your landline, please dial 141 before the telephone number, so that the Reader will not be able to see the number that is calling.
- 6.4. In the interests of safety, the coach should not arrange to meet a Learner anywhere other than in one of the approved Venues or at a public library during a general opening time. Meeting a Learner in an alternative location could result in your not being covered by the insurance.
- 6.5. Please be punctual for reading sessions, and if delayed ring the Venue provider and/or the Reader to explain.

## **7. During the reading session**

- 7.1. Please announce yourself at reception when you arrive and sign in, if necessary.
- 7.2. Check that there are no changes to the venue since your last visit, specifically that you will not be alone during the learning session, or that if this will be the case that it will only be for a few minutes. (NB - If you are working with an adult at risk you will not be able to continue with your session under these circumstances.)
- 7.3. If the Learner does not turn up, please try to make contact by phone number before leaving the Venue. Record all 'no-shows' on your reading record sheet. If there are persistent problems, please discuss this with the Coordinator.
- 7.4. Reading sessions should last for no more than 30 minutes and Moving Ahead sessions no more than 60 minutes. More than this may require too much concentration from your Learner and may be counter-productive. At the end of the reading session, the coach should make sure that the Learner is clear about the arrangements for the next session.

## **8. Having someone in sight and within earshot**

- 8.1. The Affiliated Group only uses Venues that it believes to be safe and where there will be someone else on the premises as it does not have staff to oversee learning sessions. It is therefore essential that to avoid risk abuse to the Learner or Coach or allegations of the same, that Coaches always follow procedures:
- 8.2. before starting a reading session, check that there will be someone on the premises for that 30 minute period;



- 8.3. when conducting a reading session, make sure that you leave the door open, and arrange the chairs so that you are in sight from outside the room;
- 8.4. ensure that the reading session is conducted within earshot of someone else;

You should not carry out a session with a Learner unless condition 2 is either met in full if working with an adult at risk, or at least mostly when working with other readers, and that either condition 3 or 4 can be satisfied.

## 9. Relationship with your Learner

- 9.1. Remember that your principal role is to act as a coach, not as a friend. It is therefore important that the relationship between you and the Learner remains professional. Be careful, safe, reliable and kind, but avoid a position where you can be taken advantage of.
- 9.2. All Coaches will receive training before they start coaching. The training will include a session on establishing appropriate boundaries with Learners and how to manage challenging situations that may arise during the reading relationship.
- 9.3. Dress appropriately and don't carry unnecessary valuables. If you need to leave the room, take your bag with you.
- 9.4. Never lend, give, or make gifts of money or other consideration to a Learner. If you are worried that a Learner is in need, please discuss this with the Coordinator. Similarly, never borrow or accept money or gifts of any significant value from a Learner.
- 9.5. Be careful what you talk about and how much you reveal about yourself. Avoid getting too emotionally involved or getting into situations that could be misunderstood. If in doubt, ask yourself whether you may be placing the Learner, yourself or another person at risk. You can always speak to the Coordinator if you have any doubts.
- 9.6. Please do not visit the Learner at his/her home or offer lifts. If a Learner has problems with transport to or from the reading session, suggest that perhaps a friend may be able to help. Otherwise, speak to the Coordinator.
- 9.7. Some Learners may want family members to accompany them to their reading sessions. This has proved beneficial on occasions, but this request must come from the Learner. You should be certain that this is the Learner's wish and exercise the utmost sensitivity and strictest confidence when meeting and communicating with the Learner's friends and family.
- 9.8. Remember that the focus of the relationship should always be helping to improve the Learner's literacy skills.
- 9.9. Be aware that same sex learning partnerships do not mitigate the risk of or allegations of abuse.

## 10. Reporting concerns

- 10.1. If you are concerned about anything arising from your meeting, please discuss it with the Coordinator or if of a safeguarding nature, your Safeguarding Champion directly. Make sure that you are familiar with the Affiliated Group's Adult Safeguarding Policy



and the procedure for informing someone about allegations of abuse. Checking against it whenever you have concerns to follow its procedures accurately.

10.2. For concerns of other natures please discuss with your coordinator.

### **11. Emergencies and reporting procedures**

- 11.1. Should an emergency arise during a reading session, always call for help from those located on the premises.
- 11.2. Some Venues will have qualified first aiders who can assist in an emergency and there should always be a first aid kit available. However, if the situation requires it, you should ring the emergency services immediately. If you are in doubt as to whether it is necessary to contact emergency services, err on the side of caution and ring the relevant service.
- 11.3. As soon as it is practical to do so, please write a short report of any such incident and the action taken. You should provide a copy of this report to the Coordinator unless it is of a safeguarding nature in which case follow the duties of the safeguarding policy.
- 11.4. Some Venues may require you to record the incident in an accident book. You should be aware of whether a Venue has an accident book having read the Venue Agreement. Please ensure that you comply with the Venue's procedure for reporting accidents.
- 11.5. In the case of fire, please follow the Venue's fire instructions. Remember that having left the building, you and your Reader will need to assemble at the agreed assembly point, as specified in the Venue Agreement, where the Venue staff will need to account for you before you can leave the premises.

### **12. Confidentiality**

- 12.1. Confidentiality is of paramount importance. Remember that it may have taken a great deal of courage for a Learner to ask for help with their literacy. They may be very reluctant to let others know of their difficulties. Any information that you do share with others should be limited to discussions on a 'need to know basis'. This may include talking to the Coordinator or the Safeguarding Champion about the Learner's progress, but it does not, for example, include talking to other Coaches or the Learner's family, if the Learner has not given his/her consent.
- 12.2. Coordinators and venue organisers should ensure that Venue providers and their staff also understand the need to maintain confidentiality about the learners using their Venues.

### **13. Monitoring and review of this policy**

- 1.1. Recommendations for any amendments should be reported to the Read Easy UK who review this policy annually.
- 1.2. We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.
- 1.3. Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in the Organisation concerned taking further action.



- 1.4. If you require further information on this policy please speak to your Safeguarding Champion or Venue Organiser.

#### **14. Note about Lone worker Notices and Appendices**

Please note that this policy requires Volunteers and Employees of the Organisations to be clear about it's requirements. To help Affiliated Groups meet this requirement, Read Easy UK has made various provisions:

- 1) A Lone worker notice for all Volunteers who take up roles in the Organisations is included in the relevant volunteer handbook, and as an Appendix (A) to this policy.
- 2) General guidelines about precautions for ensuring coach and reader safety are included in the Reading Coach handbook.
- 3) Please ensure that all involved in the Organisations are provided with the necessary information.