

Practitioner Lone Working Policy

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PRACTITIONER LONE WORKING POLICY DEC 2025 Review date: DEC 2026

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1. Purpose and Scope

Nudge Education recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working alone. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly. Nudge Education has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. Where associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and Nudge Education have a duty of care to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. While many hazards at work are relatively easy to identify and control, other health and safety aspects are less easy to define. This policy outlines how Nudge Education protects the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of practitioners and young people during any situation where a practitioner is working without direct or close supervision. Lone working is a routine and often necessary part of delivering community-based, transitional interventions. This policy applies to all practitioners, Regional Leads, Assistant Regional Leads (ARLs), Education Intervention Coordinators (EICs), and other staff who engage in direct work with young people, families, or professionals. It should be read alongside the Practitioner Code of Conduct, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, and the Quality Assurance Policy.

2. Definitions

Lone working: Within this policy, 'lone working' refers to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of lone working: "Lone workers are those who work

by themselves without close or direct supervision.” This includes:

- 1:1 community-based sessions
- Home visits/interventions
- Travel to and from sessions
- Initial assessments completed alone

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- Remote digital check-ins when contact is made without another adult present

Higher-Risk Contexts Any environment where limited visibility, family dynamics, mental health needs, behavioural risk, community factors, or lack of nearby professionals may reduce practitioner safety. **Dynamic Risk Assessment** Real-time professional judgement responding to environmental cues, behaviour, presenting needs, and changing circumstances.

3. Legal and Regulatory Context

Nudge Education’s approach to lone working is shaped by:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- HSE Lone Working Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- CPI Safety Intervention principles We have a duty of care to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of practitioners and young people during all lone-working activities.

4. Principles and Values

All lone working at Nudge is guided by:

- Trauma-informed, relational practice
- Maintaining dignity, safety and emotional wellbeing
- Professional boundaries that protect both practitioner and young person
- Inclusion, belonging and equity
- Curiosity, calmness, and connection before control

- High expectations of professional integrity and conduct (as outlined in the Practitioner Code of Conduct)

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5. Roles and Responsibilities

Nudge Education As the employer, Nudge Education has ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of their staff and the young people in our care. Practitioners

- Follow all lone-working procedures, risk assessments, and guidance.
- Maintain professional boundaries, confidentiality, and safeguarding vigilance.
- Check-in and out of a session via the relevant intervention WhatsApp group, including the Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC). Check-in should happen when the young person is present at the session, and check-out when they have left.
- Share 'live location' in the relevant WhatsApp group to allow accurate GPS tracking whilst on a session with a young person.
- Report risks, concerns, and near misses promptly.
- Maintain up to date risk assessments.

Assistant Regional Leads (ARLs)

- Assess staffing levels and increase ratios where risk requires it.
- Oversee practitioner safety, provision quality, and escalation pathways.
- Support practitioners following any incident or concern.
- Review the staffing ratios required for interventions and Initial Assessments.
- Share 'live location' in the relevant WhatsApp group to allow accurate GPS tracking whilst conducting an initial assessment with a young person.

Education Intervention Coordinators (EICs)

- Monitor daily communications, check-ins, and session changes.

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- Coordinate safeguarding responses and liaise with Regional Designated Safeguarding Leads (RDSLs).

- Ensure information flows between practitioners, Regional Leads (RLs), and commissioners.

6. Risk Assessment and Planning

For any work carried out by Nudge Education a risk assessment must be carried out and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments should involve the people potentially affected by the work in specific relation to lone working.

Pre-Intervention

- Assess medical, sensory, behavioural, environmental and contextual risks
- Identify precipitating factors, trauma histories, any access needs, and support strategies
- Confirm whether lone working is appropriate, or if dual staffing is required
- Communicate risk controls clearly to all staff involved

Practitioners must carry out dynamic risk assessments, considering:

- The young person's emotional state
- Environmental safety (public spaces, exits, privacy, bystanders)
- Presence of unknown individuals
- Shifts in behaviour, tone, or body language
- Availability of safe exit strategies
- Tasks must never be completed alone if assessed as dangerous or requiring specialist support

Changes and Reviews Risk assessments must be updated when:

- A young person's needs change
- Incidents occur

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- Environmental circumstances shift
- Practitioners, EICs, or ARLs identify new concerns

7. Communication and Check-In Procedures

The following steps are mandatory for all practitioners :

- Check-in via the relevant intervention WhatsApp group when the young person arrives
- Share live location throughout the session or initial assessment
- Check-out once the session has safely ended The Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC) will follow escalation procedures if a practitioner:
- Fails to check in
- Does not share location
- Does not respond within expected timeframes Practitioners must never begin a session without an operational phone and ability to communicate.

8. Interventions or Initial Assessments in the Home

Before Arriving

- Confirm that a responsible adult external to Nudge is present (mandatory)
- Avoid addresses flagged as unsafe or high-risk and plan next steps to mitigate future risks
- Ensure the Regional Lead (for Initial Assessments), or the Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC) is aware of timing and location On Arrival
- Assess safety of the property (exits, environment, household members)
- Maintain visible identification (or keep on your person if distressing to the young person)
- Position yourself near an exit

Nudge Education 2025 6 Ending a Visit Practitioners or Assistant Regional Leads must leave immediately if:

- They feel unsafe or threatened
- Boundaries are challenged (e.g. inappropriate conversation, excessive gifts, emotional entanglement)
- Unknown individuals arrive unexpectedly or without identification
- Behaviour escalates and dynamic risk increases

9. Community-Based Sessions

Sessions in parks, cafes, community centres, libraries or public venues must consider:

- Visibility and safeguarding expectations
- Noise levels and privacy for sensitive conversations
- Respecting confidentiality in public spaces
- Accessibility and safety of travel routes
- Ensuring no session occurs in isolated, enclosed, or poorly lit areas
- Practitioners must inform any relevant staff or professionals present of the risks and the required control measures

10. Managing Higher-Risk Situations

Practitioners must remain calm, objective, and avoid escalation. Drawing on the Code of Conduct expectations:

- Use curiosity, connection, and low-arousal approaches to de-escalate
- Maintain clear professional boundaries
- Avoid confrontation or heightened language
- Step back and increase distance if dysregulation rises
- Call for support early, do not wait for crisis
- If the risk of harm becomes immediate, follow CPI Safety Intervention guidance

Nudge Education 2025 7 If ever in doubt: withdraw and seek support.

11. Safeguarding and Reporting

All safeguarding concerns must be:

- Reported immediately to the Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC) or Regional Designated Safeguarding Lead (RDSL)
- Documented in line with the Safeguarding Policy
- Escalated without delay if urgent Confidentiality applies, but never overrides safety. Practitioners must maintain vigilance and not become desensitised to harmful or discriminatory language or behaviour, including swearing or homophobic/racist comments, as outlined in the Code of Conduct .

12. Information Sharing and Data Protection

In line with the Practitioner Code of Conduct:

- Personal data must be handled lawfully, safely, and only when necessary
- No personal phone numbers shared with young people/families
- Confidential information must not be discussed in public spaces
- Photographs must be deleted from personal devices once uploaded
- Location sharing is used strictly for safety purposes
- Breaches of confidentiality or GDPR are serious and may be misconduct

13. Equipment, Digital Tools and Resources

Practitioners must:

- Carry a charged mobile phone
- Use WhatsApp (or WhatsApp for Business) groups professionally and transparently
- Follow digital communication rules outlined in the Practitioner Code of Conduct
- Never work without ID on your person, necessary PPE (if applicable), or agreed safety equipment

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- No practitioner may carry weapons, prohibited items, or unauthorised medication

14. Recording and Quality Assurance

Accurate, factual records protect both young people and practitioners.

Practitioners must:

- Log each session promptly
- Record any concerns, dynamic risk decisions, or near misses
- Participate in 1:1s, Quality Visits and coaching from ARLs Assistant Regional Leads (ARLs) will oversee relationship quality and practitioner wellbeing as part of the quality assurance process, supporting safe, boundaried practice.

15. Staff Wellbeing and Trauma-Informed Leadership

Nudge recognises that lone working can be emotionally demanding.

Practitioners should:

- Access support if necessary from a line manager or through wellbeing support on the Nudge Connection Hub, where access to 24/7 GP and mental health support can be found under the 'Wellbeing and Perks' section.
- Attend termly 1:1s with the Assistant Regional Leads and any additional coaching or guidance from an Assistant Regional Lead and Intervention Safety Team.
- Request additional staffing of an intervention where needed by highlighting ratio concerns to the Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC).
- Debrief following incidents or emotionally challenging sessions with the Intervention Safety Team.

16. Training Requirements

All practitioners must complete:

- Safeguarding Children in Education and Prevent training (Tes Educare)

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- Health & Safety in Education - including Lone Working modules (Tes Educare)
- First Aid training (Educare)
- Any other training (Nudge CPD Guide) which will improve the quality of provision for young people.
- Where required, practitioners must undertake annual CPI Safety Intervention training

Refresher training may be required following incidents or practice concerns.

17. Responding to Emergencies

Practitioners must follow emergency procedures:

- Call 999 where there is immediate risk
- Withdraw from unsafe environments

- Contact Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC) as soon as safe
- Document the incident using the Nudge Safeguarding Form
Safeguarding/Incident/Accident Form
- Engage in a follow-up debrief and review

A young person must never be transported in a practitioner's vehicle unless risk-assessed and verified:

- Vehicle is safe and roadworthy
- Evidence of in-date business insurance has been provided and uploaded to Parim / emailed to EIC
- Evidence of in-date UK Drivers Licence has been provided and uploaded to Parim / emailed to EIC

18. Reporting Incidents and Near Misses

Practitioners must report the following to the Education Intervention Coordinator (EIC):

- Any safety incident

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- Any near miss that could have resulted in harm
- Boundary challenges
- Environmental hazards
- Escalations during sessions Incident reports will be reviewed by the Intervention Safety Team and used in future safeguarding planning, service improvement, and quality assurance.

19. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. If quality assurance data, or incident data indicates a need for change, or where practitioner, commissioner, or parent feedback suggests improvement. This policy has been signed off by the Nudge Education Directorate. Charlotte Nutch Director of Partnerships & Services 5 Dec 2025

20. Linked Policies and Documents

- Quality Assurance Policy
- Practitioner Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Trauma Informed Practice Policy

All Policies can be found here.

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NEO Online Addendum

This addendum applies the canonical Nudge Education policy above to the online provision context of Nudge Education Online (NEO). It is sourced from NEO - Lone Working Guidance v04.26.docx.

NEO BY NUDGE EDUCATION

Lone Working Guidance Nudge Education Online

Policy Owner	Director, Nudge Education Online & Head of School (as Health and Safety Coordinator during the initial period), with safeguarding input from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved	April 2026
Review Date	April 2027
Version	04.26
Operating Company	Nudge Education Ltd (Company Number 10192753)
Proprietor	Diego Melo
Accreditation Route	Online Education Accreditation Scheme (OEAS) — accreditation in progress

This policy applies to all learners, staff, practitioners, contractors, volunteers and visitors of Nudge Education Online (NEO). NEO is a fully online alternative provision for learners aged 11–18, operated by Nudge Education Ltd. NEO is not a DfE-registered independent school and is not subject to Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection. NEO is pursuing OEAS accreditation only.

1. Statement of Intent

Nudge Education Online (NEO) is a fully online alternative provision. All NEO staff, practitioners, contractors, and volunteers work remotely. Remote working in NEO is lone working by definition: every staff member delivers, supports, or administers learning from a separate location, usually their own home or a co-working space, without a colleague physically present. Lone working in an online provision carries specific risks — isolation, overwork, delayed access to help in an emergency, reduced sight of colleague wellbeing, and safeguarding risks that can emerge from an unsupervised home environment on either side of the screen. This Guidance sets out how NEO manages those risks while respecting the flexibility and inclusion that remote working makes possible. Lone working at NEO is a day-to-day operational reality, not an exceptional circumstance. This Guidance is written to be practical, not aspirational.

2. Scope

This Guidance applies to: All NEO staff, including the Director / Head of School, DSL, Deputy DSL, SENCo, and administrative staff. All qualified subject-specialist teachers delivering live lessons. All named practitioners. All contractors, freelancers, and external providers working on or for NEO. All volunteers, including guest speakers delivering enrichment from their own location. Any in-person enrichment activity where a member of NEO staff is working with learners or families without a second NEO adult physically present.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 — duty to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health, safety, and welfare of workers. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 — risk assessment duty. Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002). Reporting of Injuries,

Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). Working Time Regulations 1998. Equality Act 2010 — reasonable adjustments. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) — safeguarding applies whether staff are on-site or remote. HSE guidance on lone working and protecting lone workers. UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 — securing personal data in a home setting. OEAS accreditation criteria.

4. Key Lone Working Risks at NEO

Risk	What It Looks Like	How NEO Mitigates
Isolation and loneliness	Reduced day-to-day contact with colleagues; limited informal support; slower identification of struggle.	Regular check-ins, structured team rhythms, reflective supervision, access to EAP or equivalent.
Overwork and boundary erosion	Longer hours, reduced rest, blurring of work and home time.	Clear working hours, Right to Disconnect guidance, workload reviews, annual leave planning.
Delayed help in an emergency	Medical event, power or connectivity loss, mental health crisis, incident involving a learner during a session.	Emergency contacts system, buddy system, escalation map, incident reporting, external services numbers.
Poor home workspace	Ergonomic issues, trip hazards, electrical faults,	Annual DSE self-assessment (see Health and Safety Policy §7); reasonable adjustments; equipment loans.

Risk	What It Looks Like	How NEO Mitigates
	inadequate lighting or ventilation.	
Safeguarding risks (staff side)	A learner sees inappropriate content or people in the staff member's background; an intruder enters the home.	Neutral background guidance, separate workspace, door closed during live sessions, pause/leave protocol.
Safeguarding risks (learner side)	A learner's home environment poses risk visible only in video.	Staff trained to recognise and escalate via the Safeguarding Policy; practitioner as continuity point.
Mental health and stress	Compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, burnout.	Reflective supervision (for pastoral/safeguarding staff), EAP, workload review, protected rest days.
Data protection in the home	Personal data visible on unattended screen; family members overhearing calls; insecure storage.	Data protection practice: screen lock, use of managed devices, Google Workspace only, no printouts.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Proprietor	Named accountable person under OEAS; ensures NEO invests adequately in lone worker safety and wellbeing; receives annual assurance from the Director / Head of School.
Director, NEO & Head of School	Operational owner of this Guidance; maintains the risk assessment; acts as Health and Safety Coordinator during the initial period; chairs annual review.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Advises on safeguarding dimensions of lone working; ensures pastoral and safeguarding staff receive reflective supervision; on-call point for serious incidents during core hours.
Line managers (in practice, the Director / Head of School during the initial period)	Hold regular check-ins; monitor workload, wellbeing, and capacity; approve reasonable adjustments; notify the Proprietor of significant concerns.
All staff, practitioners, contractors, volunteers	Follow this Guidance; maintain their own home workspace safely; attend check-ins; complete DSE self-assessment; report hazards, incidents, and near misses; look after themselves and colleagues.
Buddies (peer check-in partners)	Provide day-to-day peer support: quick check-ins, noticing change, signalling concern upstream where appropriate. Buddies do not replace managerial responsibility.

6. Lone Working Risk Assessment

A generic NEO lone working risk assessment is maintained by the Director / Head of School and reviewed at least annually. An individual risk assessment is completed with each new starter as part of induction and whenever a significant change occurs (for example, change of address, change of household composition where relevant to the workspace, change of health, or change of duties). Assessments cover the home workspace, digital environment, health and wellbeing, safeguarding considerations, and emergency arrangements. Where residual risk is not acceptable, reasonable adjustments are made. Where adjustments cannot bring the risk to an acceptable level, duties are varied.

7. Communication and Check-Ins

7.1 Daily Rhythm

Staff are expected to be contactable during agreed working hours via Google Chat, Google Meet, or NEO email. Live lessons are hosted on Google Meet; the lesson itself functions as visible contact. A daily team stand-up (or asynchronous equivalent) provides a quick visible check-in. Staff log off clearly at end of day to protect rest.

7.2 Weekly and Termly Rhythm

Weekly 1:1 check-in with line manager (during the initial period, the Director / Head of School). Termly reflective supervision for pastoral and safeguarding staff, facilitated by the DSL or an external supervisor. Termly workload review to catch overload before it becomes a problem. Annual wellbeing conversation distinct from performance management.

7.3 Buddy System

Every staff member, practitioner, and regular volunteer is assigned a buddy. Buddies check in with each other at least weekly by chat or short call. Buddies know each other's working pattern and are a low-stakes first signal of concern. Buddying does not replace line management or supervision; it is peer support.

8. Safety During Live Sessions

8.1 Staff Environment

Staff conduct live sessions from a quiet, private space where practical. A neutral background is preferred; virtual backgrounds are acceptable but must not distort the staff member beyond recognition. Sensitive documents are not left visible in the frame or on a second screen that is shared. Household members are asked not to enter the workspace during a live session wherever practical. Staff do not broadcast from bedrooms or unsupervised private spaces where practical.

8.2 During a Session

Staff follow the moderation controls set out in the NEO Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy. If a learner's behaviour, disclosure, or home environment raises an immediate concern, staff follow the disclosure and escalation routes in the NEO Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. If the staff member themselves experiences a safety issue during a session (intruder, medical event, power or connectivity emergency), the pause-and-leave protocol below applies.

8.3 Pause-and-Leave Protocol

If a staff member needs to leave a live session urgently for their own safety: End the session for learners (or hand over to another staff member already present if practical). If the session cannot be ended immediately, mute camera and microphone. Contact the Director / Head of School or the DSL (or their deputies) by phone or chat at the first safe opportunity. If in immediate danger, call 999. The session is recorded on the incident log and follow-up support is arranged.

9. In-Person Enrichment Activities

Lone working by NEO staff with learners in person (for example, a one-to-one enrichment visit) is avoided where at all practical. The default is a second NEO adult present, or a suitably DBS-checked adult from the host organisation. Where a staff member must work alone with a learner or family in person, a specific risk assessment is completed before the activity. Travel arrangements, check-in and check-out times, emergency contacts, and alternative arrangements are confirmed with the line manager before departure. The staff

member checks in on arrival and on departure via Google Chat or phone. Any concern arising during or after the activity is reported to the DSL and the Director / Head of School.

10. Wellbeing and Mental Health

NEO treats staff wellbeing as an operational, not ornamental, concern. Lone workers carry additional wellbeing risks that require active management. Staff have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or equivalent confidential support where available. Reflective supervision is provided for staff in pastoral and safeguarding roles, at least termly. A Right to Disconnect principle applies: outside agreed working hours, staff are not expected to respond to email, chat, or calls except in the case of a safeguarding emergency. Leaders model this. Workload is reviewed with line managers at least termly. Mental health first aid awareness is included in annual CPD. Staff are encouraged to seek support early. Asking for help is a strength; deteriorating silently is a risk to the staff member and to the safety of the provision.

11. Emergency Arrangements

11.1 If Something Goes Wrong

If a staff member experiences a health, safety, or safeguarding emergency while working: If the emergency is life-threatening, call 999. Contact the Director / Head of School (or the Proprietor if the Director / Head of School is unavailable) as soon as safely practical. For a safeguarding emergency involving a learner, follow the NEO Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The DSL is the primary contact. Log the incident on the NEO incident register within 24 hours using the incident reporting form. Where the emergency affects capacity to deliver live lessons, NEO activates its business continuity arrangements (see NEO Data Protection, Confidentiality and Privacy Policy §9).

11.2 If NEO Cannot Reach a Staff Member

Where a staff member misses scheduled activity without notice and cannot be reached by chat or phone: Buddies are contacted first. Named emergency contact (provided by the staff member at induction) is contacted. If the staff

member cannot be reached and concern is serious (for example, a safeguarding shift has been missed without explanation), the Director / Head of School contacts emergency services to request a welfare check, and records the decision.

12. Home Workspace, Equipment, and Data

Staff are provided with guidance on home workspace setup (see NEO Health and Safety Policy §7). NEO-managed devices are the default for NEO work. Personal devices may be used only with managed Google Workspace accounts and only for permitted activity. Screens are locked whenever the workspace is unattended. Printed material is avoided wherever possible; where printing is necessary, materials are shredded or destroyed securely and never left accessible to household members. Personal data is never processed outside Google Workspace without DPO approval. Staff comply with the Cyber Security Standards for Schools baseline, as adapted by NEO — including two-factor authentication, strong passwords, timely OS and browser updates, and reporting of any device loss or compromise.

13. Reporting, Recording, and Learning

All incidents, near misses, and concerns are logged on the NEO incident register within 24 hours (see NEO Health and Safety Policy §11). Incidents involving safeguarding are additionally logged on the NEO safeguarding log. Patterns of incident or near miss are reviewed termly by the Director / Head of School and DSL, and lessons fed into this Guidance, the Health and Safety Policy, and CPD. RIDDOR-reportable incidents are escalated to the Proprietor and, where required, to the Health and Safety Executive.

14. Training

Every member of staff, practitioner, contractor, and regular volunteer receives, as part of induction and annually thereafter: Overview of this Guidance. DSE and home workspace safety (NEO Health and Safety Policy §7). Mental health first aid awareness. Recognising and responding to lone worker risks (both their own and those of colleagues). Pause-and-leave protocol. Cyber security and data protection in the home environment. Safeguarding disclosures during live sessions (integrated with KCSIE 2026 training). Specialist training (for

example, paediatric first aid for staff supporting in-person enrichment) is provided where required.

15. Monitoring and Review

This Guidance is reviewed annually by the Director / Head of School, with input from the DSL and staff. An interim review is triggered by any significant lone-working incident or material change in operations. Staff feedback, incident trends, and wellbeing data inform revisions. The Proprietor receives an annual summary as part of the health and safety assurance cycle.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside: NEO Health and Safety Policy NEO Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy NEO Staff Code of Conduct NEO Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy NEO Data Protection, Confidentiality and Privacy Policy NEO Safer Recruitment and Use of Volunteers Policy NEO Whistleblowing Policy NEO Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure NEO Artificial Intelligence Policy (Diamond Standard — NEO Implementation)

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