





Home Visits Policy and Procedure

Policy Date:	28 th November, 2022	Version: 1.0		
Policy Review Date:	November 2025	Headteacher Nitash Odedra		28/11/2022
Ratified by Governing Body:				
Sue Welford (Chair of Governors)			28/11/2022	

Home Visit Policy and Procedure

All home visits conducted must be authorised by the Headteacher. In addition, wherever possible parents / carers should be informed of the home visit prior to arrival. There will be exceptions to this, for example a visit to confirm that an absent child is at home when parents / carers are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visit Definition: A home visit is a visit that requires a member(s) of staff to visit the home of a parent, carer, or guardian in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit. It is not a requirement to enter the home.

Aims

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between parents / carers and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents / carers for the best interests of the child.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parent / carers. They are particularly useful as they enable the parent / carer to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- There are attendance issues/concerns
- Students are being educated at home
- All other means of contact with a family has failed
- Needing to meet with parent / carers to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child to have that discussion in their own home, rather than at school, or where it would be difficult for a parent / carer to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner.
- Trying to establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parent / carers have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- Working with and supporting Ps/Cs/Gs in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- Collecting from or drop a child off at home where there are concerns for a child's welfare if they travelled by other means.
- Dropping off or collecting work for a child when they are completing school work at home, e.g. following a fixed term exclusion or medical issue.

- Visiting a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school
- Investigating situations when there are suspicions that someone maybe on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).

Benefits

Home visits have many benefits for parents and children, as a home visit gives the opportunity to meet a key person in a setting that they are familiar and comfortable with.

Other opportunities are to:

- Establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the child.
- Meet family members that are important to the child.
- Talk about the child and their needs.

Procedures

Before the visit:

- The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to member of staff when undertaking home visits.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parent /carer to come into the school).
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents / carers with or without the child.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances. If it is necessary for some of our more complex families, do the visit in pairs.
- Wherever possible, make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Either make a phone call or send a letter.
- Refer to the 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment' (appendix 1).
- Before leaving, ensure that a member of the senior leadership team and the school office are aware that you are leaving school, the names and addresses of who you are visiting and have an estimated time of how long you will be out on visits.
- Ensure that you have your mobile phone with you and it is fully charged.

During the Visit

- If you are driving, park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.

- If you are walking, be alert for anything suspicious and out of the ordinary and do not continue if you feel unsafe.
- Dress appropriately. If you are walking, make sure you are dressed in warm clothes during the winter.
- Ensure that there are no animals before entering the property.
- Before entering the property, observe the state of the property and be alert for any dangers or suspicious activity. If you feel unsafe, do not proceed.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit. Carry your identification and do not use a necklace lanyard.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility or another responsible adult whom a parent / carer has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the child for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parent / carer is available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then ONLY if you deem it completely safe to do so and necessary.
- Do not enter a child's/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised, contact the school's designated safeguarding lead straightaway to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate, the safeguarding lead will make a referral to social care and you may be advised to call 101 or 999 to request a welfare check. You cannot leave the child alone in a property until a responsible adult arrives, or the police.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger, contact emergency services 999 before consulting with safeguarding staff.
- Assure the parent / carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the head teacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise **not** to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection procedures, you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated person for child protection.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion, etc., of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Be sympathetic, but remain neutral. Don't get personally involved. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation; do not gossip about the school or staff.
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.

- Do not carry large sums of money or other valuables when making a home visit.

After the visit

- Report back to the school on your return.
- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead on arrival back to school. This should be reported on CPOMS.
- At school, do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.
- All home visits should be recorded on CPOMS and SIMS, where appropriate.

Action to take if you are threatened

- If you are threatened or prevented from leaving, stay calm and try to control the situation. Try to appear confident, speak slowly and clearly and do not be enticed into an argument. Try to diffuse the situation by saying you will seek advice from a senior member of staff or colleague.
- Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry.
- If you have to enter the home, seat yourself nearest the doorway. Do not have a person between you and the door. If not possible, refuse a seat and stand in the doorway.
- If staff attend as a pair, wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived. Consider whether sending out two members of staff may escalate the difficulties.
- If working as a pair, agree to a code word (safe word) or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave.
- The same code word should be used if you contact school to alert them that you are in danger and need support.
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety, if you have any concerns about personal safety, and inform school immediately.

After

- Report back in school or, if you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the residence. If you are concerned about your safety, do not visit. It is strongly recommended that no one makes an evening home visit.

Community Lone Working Risk Assessment Appendix 1

WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT

Task being undertaken: - Lone Working Risk Assessment – out of office

Occupations: - All Staff

Any vulnerable persons particularly at risk: - Safeguarding team aware of named visit

Date of assessment: - Any

Hazards	People	Severity of Harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	low	Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding lead prior to visit 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out so others aware. Take mobile phone for communication
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	low	Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch, phone etc for emergency Advise team or partner where you are going Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas where
Walking	Member of staff may be harmed	Confronted by a member of the public Severe cold Severe heat	Possible	Medium	If aggressive or confrontational members of the public is observed, turn back to school or find a safe place and contact school. Back down from confrontation and call for help. Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk
Illness or injury/ accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote	low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate, Alert team members if able to Ensure access to phone. Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed Complete injury at work protocol on return. Avoid going out if there are ice on the pavements. Avoid walking when it is raining and/or when temperatures are higher than 22 degrees Celsius
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	LOW	Before entering property observe and look out for animals and ensure they are behind a gate and under control by the owner. Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals. Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements