



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY

Home Visits Policy

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Policy Statement

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are to be used when:

- Staff are designated to collect students when they 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 have failed.
- Meeting with parents/carers to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interests of the child to have that discussion in their own home, rather than at school or where it would be difficult for a parents/carers to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
- Establishing that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response, and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- Working with and supporting parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school when attendance is an issue.
- Collecting from or dropping 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 schoolwork at home, e.g. following a fixed term suspension or medical issue.
- Visiting a child who has been off school for a period, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school.
- Investigating situations when there are suspicions that someone may be 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).

Student attendance triggers for a welfare home visit:

- After 3 consecutive days absence
- Persistent or prolonged period of absence
- A student is not attending due to issues within school
- For a student being educated offsite or at an alternative provision, where the student has not engaged with their sessions that means they have not been seen for 3 consecutive days
- School staff have concerns for a student's physical or mental health, safety or overall wellbeing
- Lack of communication or engagement with parents or carers
- Persistent lateness

1. About this Policy

- 1.1 The policy outlines the procedures for a member of staff carrying out a home visit, whether this is to visit a student, a parent/carer, another member of staff or other.
- 1.2 The school recognises that staff are one of its most important assets in providing a high- quality service and, as such, wishes to maintain a consistent approach to the welfare of its staff and their safety when completing home visits.
- 1.3 The School has a legal responsibility to provide safe systems of work, and individuals have a responsibility to follow safe working practices within the School and the community.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.5 The School is committed to leading a healthy organisation, which includes a commitment to and promotion of emotional wellbeing and mental health. Therefore, all School policies and procedures ensure this commitment is incorporated to support all staff and students. Members of staff are encouraged to speak to their line managers, and students are encouraged to speak to any member of staff if they feel any part of this policy would affect their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

2. Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- 2.1 This policy will be reviewed by SLT every year.
- 2.2 The Headteacher will have the responsibility to ensure all staff in schools comply with the requirements of this policy. They will also oversee the fair application of this policy, and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
- 2.3 The assessment of need for a home visit will be in line with this policy and will be done with the knowledge and agreement of the Headteacher.
- 2.4 Staff must not be made to do a home visit if there are significant concerns or reasonable grounds to refuse.

3. Aims

- 3.1 To set out the procedures for School staff to carry out a home visit safely.

4. Purpose of a home visit

- 4.1 To provide an effective, reliable service for families and students, e.g. to meet with a family to discuss a concern, to discuss or collect a non-attender, to deliver work to a student who is absent from school. There may be times when it is most appropriate to visit the home to meet with parents/carers and/or the student.
- 4.2 To build, develop and strengthen a relationship with the family in a familiar setting for the child.

- 4.3 For hard-to-reach families, home visits provide an opportunity for parents/carers to express their opinions in an environment in which they are confident.
- 4.4 For members of staff on long-term sickness, the aim of the visit is to check their welfare. These visits will be conducted by the named appropriate role as designated by the Headteacher in agreement with the adult who is on long term sickness. This will be in line with the management of Absence Policy.
- 4.5 Where a discussion may be required with a member of staff and the home environment is more appropriate to the place of work.

5. Employee Safety

- 5.1 The School has a duty of care to staff to maintain their safety throughout the home visit. As such, the following must be adhered to:
- A member of staff should never carry out a home visit without informing anybody at the school.
 - Ideally, home visits should not be arranged during school 'out of hours' time. If a visit has to take place out of hours, then this must be agreed with the Line Manager.
 - For visits within working hours, staff must inform their Line Manager of the expected time to return to site, and call and inform the office should the time of return change.
 - For visits out of hours, staff should notify their Line Manager either by telephone or text message that they have returned home safely after the visit.
 - Staff should take a mobile phone with them and ensure it is switched on throughout the visit.
 - Staff must not go to the family home to meet alone (one-to-one) with a student.

6. Data Protection

- 6.1 Staff may be required to carry student or staff data when going on a home visit; this will include names, phone numbers, addresses, any case details, etc. Staff must ensure that this data is protected whilst away from the school setting. It is imperative that data is not stored in a car that is unattended and staff must ensure the data remains with them throughout the visit. For more information, please refer to the School's Data Protection Policy.
- 6.2 If you believe there may have been a data breach, please refer to the School's Data Protection Policy.

7. Risk Assessment

- 7.1 The Risk Assessment Matrix at the end of this policy should be used to plan and mitigate risk either for a single or a series of home visits.
- 7.2 In the case of an emergency where a home visit is needed but not scheduled, leaders will support staff to make an ongoing dynamic risk assessment. This must be recorded and stored on the school's MIS when completed (i.e. CPoms).

- 7.3 Prior to a visit being undertaken, the member(s) of staff involved must read the risk assessment and make any amendments necessary to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 7.4 In the event that, following a home visit, staff become aware of a change in circumstances that impacts on the risk assessment, they must ensure that the risk assessment is updated to reflect this.
- 7.5 If multiple home visits are planned in one trip, then the staff member should check in with school after each visit so their progress and position can be mapped. A member of staff at school needs to know where those staff are at all times.

8. Procedures for a home visit to parents/carers and families

8.1 Pre-visit

- Identify the purpose for the visit and what the visit aims to achieve.
- Where appropriate, consent must be sought from the parent/carer prior to any visit being undertaken.
- In situations where a visit is deemed necessary for a student's welfare, parental or carer consent is not mandatory before the visit takes place.
- Where a visit is pre-arranged, agree a date and time for the home visit. If appropriate, remind the family on the day of the visit by telephone.
- Appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed.
- Home visits to families who have been referred from other services are to be coordinated with the external service involved.
- Ensure all information on the family is obtained prior to the visit, including if a home visit has taken place before and any services the family have used. It may be appropriate to speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) about the family.
- Agree upon a suitable plan of action with the Line Manager/appropriate member of staff if you do not return to site at the expected time and you have not rung to inform them of a delay.
- Plan your route – considering how you will travel to the home, how long the journey will take and any safety precautions you might need to take (which should be included in the risk assessment).
- Where there is an assessed or perceived risk of harm identified before the home visit, it should not take place. In this case, alternative measures to make contact should be explored.

8.2 The visit

- Staff should keep their mobile phone on their person at all times – and easily accessible.
- When attending a home visit, stand clear of the door and ask for the person you have arranged to visit and show your identification badge to the person who has answered the door.
- If there are loose dogs or animals in the house, the occupants should be asked to put them away before you enter. If they refuse, staff should not enter.
- Staff must not enter a home if there are any doubts concerning safety, e.g. if residents appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, if the person with whom the visit has been arranged is not in.
- Staff must always follow occupants into the room, not the other way around.
- Staff should remove themselves from danger as quickly as possible.

- For Data Protection purposes, take only documentation that is needed for the visit. Laptops ideally should not be taken on home visits unless absolutely necessary (for example for teaching purposes).
- Information and action points from the home visit, where appropriate and necessary, should be documented and agreed by all parties.
- Any issues raised by parents/carers at the meeting outside of the scope of the initial reason should be noted and forwarded to the relevant member of staff on return to the setting.

9. Procedures for a home visit to members of staff

9.1 Pre-visit

- Consent must be sought from the member of staff being visited prior to any visit being undertaken. Ensure the member of staff knows why the visit is being undertaken.
- Ensure a date and time for the home visit are agreed. If necessary, confirm the arrangement of the home visit via letter. If appropriate, remind the member of staff on the day of the visit by telephone.
- The member of staff must be informed who is undertaking the visit.
- The member of staff has the right to invite an appropriate individual of their choosing to attend the meeting as a supportive measure.
- Appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed.
- Agree upon a suitable plan of action with the Line Manager/appropriate member of staff in the event that you do not return to site at the expected time and you have not rung to inform them of a delay.
- Plan your route – considering how you will travel to the home, how long the journey will take and any safety precautions you might need to take (which should be included in the risk assessment).

9.2 The Visit

- Staff undertaking the home visit should keep their mobile phone on their person at all times – and easily accessible.
- When attending a home visit, stand clear of the door and ask for the person you have arranged to visit and show your identification badge to the person who has answered the door.
- If there are loose dogs or animals in the house, the occupants should be asked to put them away before you enter. If they refuse, staff should not enter.
- Staff must not enter a home if there are any doubts concerning safety, e.g. if residents appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, if the person with whom the visit has been arranged is not in.
- Staff must always follow occupants into the room.
- Staff should remove themselves from danger as quickly as possible.
- For Data Protection purposes, take only documentation which is needed for the visit.
- Information and action points from the home visit should be documented and agreed by all parties.
- Any issues raised by the member of staff at the meeting outside of the scope of the initial reason should be noted and forwarded to the relevant member of staff on return to the setting.

10. Safeguarding

- 10.1 Staff undertaking a home visit need to be doing an ongoing dynamic risk assessment of their own personal safety. The visit can be stopped and abandoned at any time that concerns arise. Safeguarding of the staff member undertaking the visit is a priority.
- 10.2 If, during a home visit, a member of staff has any safeguarding concerns (about a child or an adult), they must report this immediately in line with the School's safeguarding procedures.
- 10.2 If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately. The school's DSL should be notified of this as soon as possible if they are not involved in the initial report.
- 10.3 If an adult is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to the Police immediately. The school's DSL should be notified of this as soon as possible if they are not involved in the initial report.

11. Reporting and Recording Incidents

- 11.1 All home visits must be logged and recorded on the school MIS system (i.e. CPoms) with all subsequent actions recorded as part of a detailed and accurate chronology. This includes the reason and rationale for the home visit.
- 11.2 All staff must report every incident of violence or abuse, including verbal abuse, when it occurs or as soon as possible after the incident to their Line Manager or Headteacher.
- 11.3 If, during the visit, a member of staff uses positive handling techniques on a student, this should be reported on CPOMs.
- 11.4 Any accident, incident or near miss should be reported to the DSL and recorded appropriately on the school MIS (i.e. CPoms).
- 11.5 All incidents should be investigated and, if necessary, relevant agencies notified.
- 11.6 Following an incident, safety measures will be reviewed and amended if appropriate and, if necessary, further training will be available for the employee(s).

12. Policy Change

- 12.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by SLT.

Appendix 1 WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT – for Home Visits

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 team 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
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	remote	Low	Back down from confrontation Call for help Use attack alarm Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Use staff bus or public transport if available Post incident support
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury	Remote	low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate
		Take mobile communications			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
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements

