



# Home Visit Procedures

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Review 1.0	Gulcin Sesli	July 2023

## **Home Visit Procedures**

### **Aim**

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all school staff carrying out home visits and the families that are visited.

Where home visits take place, a risk assessment should be completed in advance. This will identify any concerns about potential risks and appropriate measures to be taken. If specific information is known about families, this should be added to the risk assessment.

All home visits will always take place with staff in pairs.

Policy and procedures must be consistently applied by all staff.

### **Rationale**

We believe that the home visits which staff undertake as part of our induction process for our young people have huge benefits. The insights that staff have gained into each child's home and background greatly helps them to assess their level of need in school and prepare for the child's entry into the setting.

Another major benefit is that the home visits are the start, or the continued building, of the relationship with parents which is vital if we are to be successful in providing for the needs of the child. It also shows parents that the school respects them and wants to share their knowledge, which puts the relationship on a more equal footing.

Meeting each child in his or her home environment has proved invaluable in:

- gathering information that will enable the children to settle in.
- establishing positive links with families, especially those of vulnerable pupils.

For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet the teacher and staff in a safe environment, where they feel confident and at ease. For teachers and support staff, a visit provides the opportunity to:

- establish early, positive contact.
- see children in their own familiar settings
- meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children.
- understand the problems that children might encounter at school
- appreciate the wealth of learning that goes on in the home.

This all helps to get a fuller picture of the children. Professionals can gain much from observing a child where he or she feels settled and in control. For Nursery and Reception year home visits, this should happen before the child starts school, and should be arranged in the summer or autumn term.

It should be noted that for children that join the school as an in-year admission, where possible the home visit should take place after school to facilitate the child also being present. However, it is understood that it may not be possible for the child to be present for the home visit, as they will be at school. Schools should aim to make a home visit for a student who has joined as an in-year admission within the first 3 weeks of their arrival, or before their arrival if possible.

## **Strategies/Guidelines for Staff carrying out home visits**

### **EYFS & In-Year home visits**

- The class teacher and teaching assistant should make each visit together. As well as the obvious safety implications, this allows one to talk to the child's parents and the other to focus on the child. This can be the beginning of the relationship between the teacher and the child, especially as staff have been invited into the child's home. It also means that the parent has focused time with the Teacher or Teaching Assistant. Two staff must attend at all times, no home visits are to be made by one member of staff.
- Consider bringing toys from school to build familiarity, and help the child to feel excited about starting with you. If visuals/social stories have not already been sent home during stay and play, these should be considered to aid transition.
- Fifteen minutes is the standard period of time devoted to each home visit. Visits take place during the first two weeks of term when the reception intake have not yet started. Staff to group visits geographically to reduce travel time.
- If a visit is considered high risk, this should be discussed with the safeguarding team and it may be decided that a home visit should not take place. A more safe and secure area at the school should be used for the appointment.
- Parents are advised of the appointment time, how long the visit will be for, what will happen and what kinds of questions you will be asking.
- Staff will ascertain if there are any hazards they need to be aware of, eg aggressive pets. Staff may ask the family to place any untethered animals in a separate room.
- As a school we accept the right of a family not to want a home visit, this information should be passed to the safeguarding team.
- Staff will not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child. Staff will consider diversity of social, cultural, racial, religious and sexual orientation and show an awareness and respect for differing cultures, eg removing shoes etc.
- Staff will familiarise themselves with the route/location, parking restrictions etc before they leave.
- The admin team will be aware of the visiting schedule including family name, child's name, address, telephone number, and time due back at school. Staff will make them aware they have returned. Staff will maintain professional boundaries at all times, and consider confidentiality at all times. Other families that the family is in contact with will not be discussed.
- Staff will complete a home visit questionnaire during the visit and this will be uploaded to the child's Arbor file.
- Staff will consider safeguarding policies and procedures at all times, and maintain professional curiosity - considering poor home conditions that pose an immediate risk to the child's safety or wellbeing, marks or bruises on a child that give you cause for concern, information about sexual abuse or domestic abuse etc. Staff will not enter the home if an adult is not present. Staff will ensure they have their school ID with them.
- Should staff need to stop a visit over a threat to personal safety they will immediately move to a place of refuge and, if necessary, call the police. Confrontation should always

be avoided. At the first sign of potential threat, staff should make a swift exit from the home. If you have safeguarding concerns, and providing it is safe to do so, tell the family:

- What you are concerned about
- Who you will share the information with
- What is likely to happen next.

If you feel that raising concerns could compromise the child's safety and wellbeing, you must discuss the situation with the safeguarding team as soon as possible.

### **CME home visits**

If a child has not arrived at school and has not been reported as absent by phone or email, the following procedures will take place at school level.

- Admin Teams will pick up any absence messages from: the voicemail system; email; any given to class teachers; or messages left at the gate/office; and record the absence in Arbor.
- If no contact has been made by 9.15am, Admin Teams to send out the "First Day Absence" text message.
- Admin Teams to record any absence updates received from parents/carers into Arbor.
- If no contact has been made by 9.45am, Admin team (or Pupil Support Lead) to call parent/carer and record the absence in Arbor.
- If no response from Parents to the 9.45am call above, Admin Teams will advise the Pupil Support Lead, and send the "First Day Absence – Escalation" text.
- If by 11.30am no contact has been made (via all emergency contacts on file), staff will make a home visit, following home visit protocols stated above (two staff to attend, admin teams notified of timings, address etc and checking back in upon return to school).
- If an adult answers, staff must ensure the child is made visible to them, and not just told they are at home. Staff will consider safeguarding policies and procedures at all times, and maintain professional curiosity. Based on circumstance, staff to advise parents on the requirement to inform us of absence by 8.45am and the importance of strong attendance. Details of the visit should be logged on safeguard.
- A protocol letter should be sent by the designated person after the visit - if it is a case of parents failing to report the absence - and this should be logged along with the home visit on the attendance tracker.
- If there is no response, a letter should be posted through the door informing the family of the home visit. This should be reported immediately to the safeguarding team, who would report it immediately to the EWO. All details should be logged on safeguard.
- Please consider any other agencies already working with the family and make them aware of the concerns.