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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Staff, parents/carers and pupils understand:
  - When and why our school conducts home visits
  - How our school conducts home visits safely and effectively
  - What we do after we've conducted a home visit
- If there are any concerns about a pupil's safety or wellbeing during a visit, appropriate action will be taken in line with our child protection and safeguarding policy

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy takes into account the responsibilities laid out in:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)

It also reflects general health and safety legislation.

## 3. Definitions

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent or carer. There are different types of home visit:

- A procedural visit, e.g. to drop off work when a pupil is unable to attend school for a medical reason
  - A safe and well check (or welfare check), e.g. if a pupil is absent without good reason and the school has concerns about their welfare
  - A home visit is a visit that requires school staff to enter the home of a parent or carer in the case of an emergency or procedural visit.
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## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Approving this policy

### 4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Authorising any home visits, along with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) when the visit has a safeguarding focus
- › Responding to any issues or concerns raised by parents or carers about home visits

### 4.3 Senior staff, including the headteacher and DSL, where appropriate

All senior staff, including the headteacher and DSL (where appropriate), are responsible for:

- › Sharing this policy so staff know why, when and how to conduct a home visit
- › Training staff in the school home visit procedures and conduct
- › Overseeing risk assessments
- › Deciding which members of staff should attend a home visit
- › Not allowing any visits which place staff at risk (read more details about these risks later in this policy)
- › If pupils/children are judged to be at risk: making sure staff follow school and/or local safeguarding procedures

### 4.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- › Keeping to the policy
- › Following the correct procedures before, during and after a home visit, including reporting and recording any safeguarding issues
- › Taking reasonable steps to ensure their own safety, as detailed later in this policy
- › Informing the school of their movements and time of return

### 4.5 Parents/carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- › Communicating any issues or concerns about a home visit to the headteacher

## 5. Reasons for home visits

We might conduct a home visit to:

- › Build relationships with pupils and their parents or carers. This could include:

- When families aren't engaging in other forms of contact
  - To work with and support parents/carers to develop strategies to improve a pupil's attendance
  - Students are refusing to come into school; this can be carried out by school staff when there are attendance issues/concerns
  - To try and establish 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.
- Make sure we are fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities, including:
- To make a safe and well check (this may happen in conjunction with the local authority social care team)
  - To investigate when a pupil is refusing to come into school
- Other procedural reasons:
- When a pupil is being educated at home for a medical reason which is supported by Consultant letter evidence, including to drop off or collect work
  - If a pupil is late to a statutory examination and we can't contact them
  - To visit a pupil who has been off school for a period of time, e.g. due to a medical issue, so they don't feel isolated from the school community

## 6. Procedures

***The aim of the home visit procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.***

### 6.1 Before the visit

Staff will:

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy
- Ensure that a home visit is necessary. If possible and/or practical, arrange for the parent/carer and child to come into the school
- Be clear about the purpose of their visit
- Be aware of any relevant background information, including who lives at the address and any safeguarding information, by checking school Management Information Systems and with the DSL if necessary
- Undertake a risk assessment, (see appendix 2) and make sure they can be accompanied by a colleague
- Arrange the first visit over the telephone, where appropriate, at a time when a parent/carer and child will be home
- Use the call to give the parent/guardian an opportunity to ask questions about the visit, confirm the home address and proposed length of visit
- Log any home visits planned with the office staff, with times and venues

- › Familiarise themselves with the address they'll be visiting, including any transport or parking arrangements

## **6.2 During the visit**

Staff will:

- › Be on time as agreed in advance with the parent/carer, and be able to let them know if they're running late
- › If driving park so that a prompt exit can be guaranteed
- › Dress appropriately and act in a professional manner at all times
- › Identify themselves and show their identification badge. Identity lanyards to be carried and not worn around the neck
- › Check with the parent/carer whether they understand the purpose of the visit
- › Only enter the premises when invited in by a responsible adult. If no responsible adult with parental responsibility for the child is present, the staff member(s) will return to school and attempt a visit at another time
- › Only speak to adults with day-to-day responsibility for the child. Do not discuss child with siblings.
- › Request that all animals in the home should be kept in a separate room, and cancel the visit if the responsible adult refuses, or is unable to adhere to the request
- › Behave with respect in the home, respecting the culture and customs of the family, and only using areas of the property with permissions and never entering bedrooms.
- › Explain that their phone will be on throughout the visit
- › Take notes for ease of recording the content of the visit afterwards, and explain to the parent/carer that the notes will only be shared with the relevant senior leaders
- › Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions. Be sympathetic but remain neutral. Do not 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 when making a home visit.
- › Leave the property immediately if they feel uncomfortable, or at any risk
- › Consider the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, and call 999 if they feel a child is in immediate danger

## **6.3 In the event an incident does occur**

Staff will:

- › Contact emergency services on 999 if they feel themselves or someone else is in immediate danger
- › Leave the property swiftly and terminate the visit immediately in order to reach a place of safety
- › Once in a place of safety, inform the headteacher and any other appropriate members of staff (e.g. the DSL) of the incident to agree appropriate next steps and obtain support
- › Record full details of the visit as soon as possible after the incident so they don't forget any details

## 6.4 After the visit

Staff will:

- › Let the school know immediately that they have left the property
- › Write up the outcome of the visit and file any notes made during the visit
- › Report any concerns, including safeguarding incidents to the relevant members of staff
- › Only discuss individual home visits with other staff members where relevant and/or necessary

## 6.5 Safeguarding

- › Any safeguarding concerns identified during the visit will be shared with the DSL immediately, in accordance with our child protection and safeguarding policy or the relevant local authorities if the child isn't a pupil at the school yet
- › Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with our allegations against staff policy

## 6.6 Parent's responsibilities

- › Any visit by members of staff to a family home will be carried out in a professional capacity. Staff will be polite and respectful when at the family home. We expect that parent/carer and children will also be polite and respectful to staff at all times.
- › If there is any instance of staff members being treated in an aggressive or confrontational manner by parent/carer or children in the family home, we reserve the right to immediately end the visit.
- › If there is any instance of staff members being subject to verbal abuse by parent/carer or children in the family home we reserve the right to immediately end the visit. In the event of a child being verbally abusive school sanctions such as a fixed term suspension may be applied.
- › We ask that any pets be placed in a separate room for the duration of the visit for everyone's comfort and in case of allergies.
- › The whole duration of the visit will be conducted at the entrance to the family home or in the main living area sitting room or kitchen. As the purpose of the visit is often to speak with the child, the child will have to be present in this meeting space for a period of time during the duration of the home visit.
- › Should a parent/carer have any queries about the nature of the home visit after the completion of the visit, they should contact the relevant staff members at school or ask to speak to the school designated safeguarding lead.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

Monitoring this policy:

- › The headteacher will review the policy every three years.
- › The policy will be approved by the governing board

## **8. Links with other policies**

This home visits policy is linked to the following policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Risk assessment policy
- Children missing education (CME) procedures and policies
- Attendance policy
- Allegations against staff policy
- Health and safety policy

**Appendix 1: Home visit form**

Staff Name & Contact No			
Visiting Name & Contact No			
Visiting Address			
Student name			
Date		Time Out	
Intended Return Time		Return Time	
Accompanied by Name & Organisation			
Transport Type	Own Car	Shared Car	Walk Bus M/C
Reason for Visit	(refer to table below)		
Visit authorised by:	Signature		* time and date: