



Sheep Dip Lane
Academy



Exceed Learning Partnership
• EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

Home Visits inc Dogs in the home Sheep Dip Lane Academy



Responsible Governing Board	Local Governing Board
Responsible Persons	Principal
Date of last review	28th September 2021
Review Date	November 2024

1. Purpose

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent/carer, in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

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.

2. Scope

This policy relates to all employees, agency workers, trainees, governors and those in voluntary positions within the Academy

3. Relationship with other policies

This policy operates in conjunction with all other policies and procedures, for example:

- Health & Safety
- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Lone Working Policy

4. Aims

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

- 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
Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parents/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:
 - When there are attendance issues/concerns and/or a child is refusing to come into school. To work with and support parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school
 - 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
 - To meet with parents/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

- To collect from or drop a child off at home where there are concerns for a child's welfare if they travelled by other means.
- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing school work at home e.g. following a fixed term exclusion or medical issue.
- To visit 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
- To investigate 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)
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed

5. Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents, carers and children, 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

6. Procedure

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE PRINCIPAL

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.

Before the Visit:

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parent/carer to come into the school)
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, home visits should be conducted in pairs where possible. Clarify each person's role. Home visits must take place in pairs if there is a known risk of violence. The Academy may choose to prohibit the visit entirely
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit
- 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
- 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

During the Visit

- Park in a well lit area
- Dress appropriately
- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place. See Appendix 1 below, visiting homes with dogs
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, ensure your identification lanyard is an easy release 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 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 is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the Principal straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate the Principal will action a referral to social care
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999
- Assure parent/carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the Principal or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to school
- 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 when making a home visit

After the visit

- Report back to the Principal
- 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 Principal on arrival back to school
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children
- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events fall from their memory

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 not be enticed into an argument. Try to diffuse 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
- Agree 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

Following the visit

- 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

Review: This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Date of Policy 28th September 2021 To be reviewed November 2024

Signed: Principal



F Parish

Signed: Governor



K Holland
Chair

Appendix 1

Visiting homes with dogs

It is estimated that about 250,000 people are bitten by a dog each year and more than 7,000 admitted to hospital. Simple precautions can help reduce these numbers.

At the property:

Remember, if you can avoid the situation, do so. This may mean coming back another time.

- Ask the parent/carer to keep the dog in another room during your visit. If the parent/carer refuses, do not enter the home, remain in a safe place, at the gate or door step

Should a dog enter the room once you have accessed the home:

- Stay still and calm. If a dog approaches you, stand perfectly still and let him sniff you. If he looks happy and friendly, greet him slowly and gently but do not be too forward or overbearing, however it is generally recommend you do not reach down to pet it – simply ignore it
- Give him space. If he shows fear in his body language, remember not to corner him. Give him room to keep you at a distance from him
- Avoid showing fear, walk steadily and slowly, act as relaxed as possible. Never run or make any quick, sudden movements. Try to keep the dog in your peripheral vision
- Talking to the dog may help, use a confident but soothing voice as you would when talking to a young child
- Don't turn your back. If you feel that a dog is likely to bite or attack, walk slowly backwards so that you are still facing the dog, but without staring. Many bites occur when people turn to leave the house
- Use a barrier. If you feel you are in danger, try to put something between you and the dog. A fence, gate, door or car door, maybe even a bicycle, will make a good barrier

If a dog bites:

- If a dog lunges at you and gets hold of a piece of clothing, try to calmly remove it. Ask the parent/carer for their support to remove the dog from the room as quickly as possible
- If bitten, don't struggle and try to pull away as this could tear the wound resulting in a more serious injury
- Exit the home as quickly and safely as possible
- Do not remain in the home to treat any wound
- Return to school asking your colleague to drive if necessary
- Upon return to school seek urgent medical attention:
- Encourage the wound to bleed by gently squeezing it, unless it is already bleeding freely
- Clean the wound promptly by running it under warm water for 10 minutes It is essential that the wound is correctly cleaned to prevent infection. A tetanus booster may be needed In cases of serious bites
- Ask your colleague to inform your Principal. Record the incident. Review your procedures to ensure that further visits are not made to this particular home. Report the incident to your local authority dog warden service. If an injury requires you to have time off work employers may need to report the accident to health and safety professionals.