



<b>Policy:</b>	Home Visits Policy
<b>Owner:</b>	
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<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Notes:</b>	

*As a Rights Respecting School we recognise Article 5 'to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up' and Article 16 'Every child has the right to privacy' from the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.*

All work undertaken with pupils and parents should, wherever possible and practicable, be undertaken in the school or other recognised workplace. There are however occasions, in response to a specific or emergency situation or in accordance with an individual's work role where it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits or to undertake a scheduled programme of work in the pupil's home.

The following points should be taken into account prior to a home visit being made:

### **Before you go**

- Is the visit really necessary? i.e. can the meeting take place at the school or other mutually convenient meeting place?
- Has the home visit been authorised e.g. by the Head Teacher?
- Carry out relevant research e.g. does the pupil/parent/guardian or other person in the household have any previous history of violence or aggressive behaviour?

### **Planning and Preparation**

- Make a prior appointment, avoiding evening visits where possible
- Make sure details of the visit e.g. name and address of visit, time of appointment, expected time of completion have been left with a responsible contact
- Make sure the action to be taken should you not return/report in by the stated time has been established

### **Consider what you may need to take with you**

- Some form of identification
- A mobile phone and contact phone numbers
- Necessary paperwork/report forms etc., but keep it to a minimum
- Torch
- Personal attack alarm

### **Getting there**

- Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy, properly maintained and insured for business use
- Be careful where you park i.e. in well-lit areas, avoiding cul-de-sacs/potential hiding places
- Park facing the direction in which you will drive away
- When walking, choose the safest route, which may not be the shortest route

### **When you arrive**

- Show your form of identification, where applicable



- Do not enter if the person you wish to see is not there
- Do not enter if the pupil is alone
- Do not enter if the person you wish to see is aggressive, drunk etc.
- Ask for any dogs or other animals to be put in another room, where necessary
- Check how the door has been locked behind you - you may wish to ask for it to be unlocked
- Try to keep yourself nearest the door - you may wish to leave in a hurry
- Be careful about spreading paperwork etc. around - you may wish to leave in a hurry

## **If faced with violent behaviour**

- Use interpersonal/counselling skills to identify early signs of tension/changes in behaviour
- Try to defuse the situation
- Communicate effectively and dispel any confusion
- Avoid confrontation or argument
- Keep calm and relaxed
- Speak gently, slowly and clearly
- Avoid an aggressive stance e.g. crossed arms, hands on hips, wagging/pointing fingers, raised arm, looking down on people
- Keep your distance - do not invade personal space
- Take action before the situation gets out of control

## **Know when to leave**

- use your instincts e.g. if you feel rising tension and the situation is getting out of control, make your excuse and leave
- get help if needed - use the mobile phone where appropriate
- leaving a potentially violent situation is not a reflection on abilities or skills

## **In the event of physical attack**

- If violence is imminent, avoid dangerous places such as the top of stairs or lifts etc.
- Look out for potential escape routes and keep between the assailant and the exit
- Use the personal attack alarm
- Contact the police where appropriate

## **At the end of the visit**

- Contact your responsible contact to 'close off' the visit

## **Reporting**

- Ensure incidents of violence or accidents are reported using appropriate report forms to the Headteacher or Line Manager immediately.

## **Key information for Home Visits**

- Let the Headteacher and/or the Deputy Headteacher and the School Office, know where you are visiting and leave details of the address, your mobile phone and expected time of return.
- Always do a joint visit with the school Learning Mentor, Attendance Manager, SENCO, Education Welfare Officer (EWO), appropriate member of support staff or a teacher.
- Staff should be fully acquainted with the location of the pupil's home and how to get there to avoid having to stop and ask for directions.
- All home visits should be recorded with the reason for the visit, points discussed, agreements reached and any concerns that the member of staff may have from the meeting however trivial these may appear at the time.



- Clear and detailed record keeping may well prevent problems in the future.
- Public transport must not be used.
- A note should be made of all people present at the meeting, dates and times etc

## **Risk Assessment**

- Where home visits take place it is useful that a risk assessment is taken into account. This will identify any concerns about potential violence or risk and appropriate measures to be taken.
- Check records as to what is known and information available
- Talk to other professionals who may have already had contact or involvement with the family
- Discuss with the Line Manager what strategies to adopt when working with a potentially difficult parent, carer or family
- Where there are deemed to be potential risks – contact the family by phone and invite them to come into school instead of an home visit
- Meet them in another public place

## **Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers**

- Show respect for parents/carers/families as equal partners in the relationship
- Make appointments in advance and offer a choice
- Accept families' right not to want a home visit
- Confirm parents/carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child
- Do not assume that all parents are literate. Other issues may prompt the visitor to contact bilingual support services for the family
- Consider issues of social, cultural and religious differences

## **Working in Partnership with Other Agencies**

- Communicate with other agencies already involved with the family
- There is a need to clarify the role of other professionals involved to avoid duplication and so that teacher is not working at cross purposes with other agencies
- Evidence of good practice is where the two services liaise and support each other with a clear common aim of assisting the pupil/family to overcome barriers to learning, where this involves attendance and punctuality etc.