



Home visits policy

Forest Oak and Merstone Schools

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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
 - 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
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- A visit that member(s) of staff will undertake before a child begins attending school, to get to know them and their family

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Approving this policy

4.2 The Executive Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers, Lead DSL, Lead Family Support Workers

- Authorising any home visits, along with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) when the visit has a safeguarding focus
- Deciding which member(s) of staff should attend a home visit
- Overseeing risk assessments
- Not allowing any visits which place staff at risk (read more details about these risks later in this policy)
- 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, 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
- If pupils/children are judged to be at risk: ensure staff follow school and 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 Senior Leadership Team

5. Reasons for home visits

We might conduct a home visit to:

- Build relationships with pupils and their parents or carers. This could include:
 - A visit before the child begins at the school
 - When families are not engaging in other forms of contact
 - Where a mental health concern is identified, for key member(s) of staff such as Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Emotional Based School Avoidance), Learning Mentor, Key Person, to be actively involved in the planning and execution of a home visit
- 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 and/or Police, and can be unannounced)
 - To investigate when a pupil is refusing to come into school
 - To discuss a safeguarding concern
- Procedural - Attendance:
 - To work with and support parents/carers to develop strategies to improve a pupil's attendance to ensure their child attends school
 - When a pupil is being educated at home, drop off or collect work
 - If a pupil is late to an examination and we cannot contact them
 - If a pupil cannot get to or from school, or to or from an appointment, we may offer to assist. This is at our discretion
 - To visit a pupil who has been off school for a period of time, e.g. due to a medical issue, so they do not feel isolated from the school community
 - If a pupil has been absent from school, we will carry out a visit within two weeks of first absence, and weekly thereafter. Please see attendance policy.
 - Pupils with poor persistent attendance or who are a concern (CP, CiN, EH, LAC plans, etc.) will be prioritised
- Procedural – OT, Physio support, SALT
 - Where appropriate provide OT, Physio or SALT support in the home

Where necessary, outcome plans will be generated after a visit. For example, reduced timetable with set activities with favoured members of staff to encourage attendance with a view to returning to full time schooling.

6. Procedures



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 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 the Family Support Team, and / or DSLs if necessary
- › Undertake a risk assessment, (see appendix 2) and if necessary make sure they can be accompanied by a colleague
- › Unless unannounced, arrange the visit over the telephone, where appropriate, at a time when a parent/carer will be home
- › Use the call to give the parent/carer an opportunity to ask questions about the visit, confirm the home address and proposed length of visit
- › Log any home visits planned with the Family Support office, 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
- › Dress appropriately and act in a professional manner at all times
- › Identify themselves and show their identification badge
- › 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
- › 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
- › 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
- › 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
- For EYFS visits / visit before the child begins at the school:
 - Spend time with the parent/carer and the child
 - Bring activities to keep the child occupied

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:

- When returning to school, Let the office know you have returned
- 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
- Note all visits on MyConcern where necessary

ATTENDANCE FORM

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

7. Monitoring arrangements

Monitoring this policy:

- The school will review the policy every year.

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
- EYFS policy



Appendix 2: home visit risk assessment

Adapt this risk assessment template to suit your school. Any details filled in are suggestions only.

HAZARD	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?	ACTION: WHO?	ACTION: WHEN?	DONE
An aggressive or violent parent/carer, pupil or family member	Staff members undertaking a home visit	Procedures outlined in the home visits policy				
Car accident						
Use of illegal substances						
Attack by a dog or other animal						
False allegations						