



Home Visit Policy

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Document Control

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Owner:	Wirksworth Junior School
Author:	Isabel Webb
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Home Visit Policy

This policy uses the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board's guidance on home visits which is in Appendix 3.

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD.

In addition, wherever possible parents, carers and guardians 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 and guardians are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visit Definition:

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

Aims

- At Wirksworth Junior School we recognise that parents, carers and guardians are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between parents, carers and guardians 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 and guardians for the best interests of the child.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parents, carers and guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents, carers and guardians to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment.

Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school.
- When there are attendance issues/concerns.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.
- To meet with parents, carers and guardians 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 or guardian to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents, carers and guardians have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support parents, carers and guardians in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- 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 schoolwork at home e.g., following a fixed term **suspension** 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).

Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents, carers, guardians 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.

Procedures

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 visit.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parents, carers and guardians to come into the school)
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved on *My Concern*.
- If possible, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, home visits should be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person's role. On some occasions this may not be possible, and lone visits will need to be agreed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. Check on school's policy and practice.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g., one or both parents, carers or guardians, 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.
- Refer to the 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment' (appendix 1), and inform the DSL and School Office of your intended location before departing for a home visit.

During the Visit

- Park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- Dress appropriately.

- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification do not use a necklace 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 (parents, carers or guardians) or another responsible adult whom a parent, carer or guardian has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parent, carer or guardian 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/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger, contact the schools designated safeguarding lead straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised/in danger. If appropriate the Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger, contact emergency services 999.
- Assure parent, carer or guardian that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the head teacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated teacher for child protection.
- 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.
- Complete Home Visit Form to evidence visit.

After the visit

- Report back by writing up observations, and actions onto My Concern.
- 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead on arrival back in school.
- At school, do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

Home Visit Form (see Appendix 2)

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make, stating reason for visit, outcomes and actions which is recorded on My Concern.
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events falls from their memory.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice should be sought from the head teacher as soon as possible.

- All recorded should be typed onto My Concern. Using the questions in Appendix 2.

Making Safe Home Visits: summary

Before

- Complete/discuss/hand in, 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment'
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- Always make sure that the school knows where you are going.

During

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit.
- Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard.
- Do not stay too long.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be professional.
- Don't carry large sums of money.

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.
- If staff attend as a pair wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived.
- Consider whether sending out two members of staff may escalate the difficulties.
- If working as a pair 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.

After

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.

Safe word: To be agreed and recorded on the 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit'.

COVID 19 or during contagious infections/diseases

During COVID 19 or a contagious disease/infection no school staff should be entering homes. If on arrival at the home you are concerned about the immediate welfare of a child, we will contact Call Derbyshire immediately on 01629 533190. The reason for making a visit during COVID 19

pandemic or a contagious outbreak which requires isolation, is because we have been unable to make contact with parents or carers and we have concerns about the welfare of the child. Staff members will follow the same normal procedures as above to ensure the safety of themselves; however, they should also ensure they are maintaining a two-metre distance at all times and should not enter the home. Making a home visit must be discussed with someone on the SLT. On arrival, talking to parents/carers should be on the door-step and explaining the reasoning for the visit as they are unable to make contact with them and there are concerns about the welfare of their child. From this point we will check contact details and how we can support. The conversation could then continue via phone or email.

Any visits must be recorded on My Concern.

Appendix 1

**Community Lone Working Risk Assessment
WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT**

Task being undertaken: - Lone Working Risk Assessment – out of office

Occupations: - All Staff

Any vulnerable persons particularly at risk: - Safeguarding team aware of named visit

Date of assessment: - Any

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	Refer to home visit policy. Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit. Read the Derby/Derbyshire guidance on Home Visits. 2 people visit if aware of home circumstances. Inform school office and sign out so others aware. Take mobile phone for communication. Take no money. Know the safe word to call school if Police are needed.
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low	Maintain vehicle properly. Belong to a breakdown organisation. Carry torch, phone etc. for emergency. Advise team or partner where you are going. Phone in if plan changes.

					Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop). Avoid risky areas where possible.
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote	Low	Back down from confrontation. Call for help. Use attack alarm. Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised. Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk. Use staff bus or public transport if available. Post incident support.
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote	Low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate. Alert team members if able to. Ensure access to phone. Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed. Complete injury at work protocol on return.
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	Avoid contact with animals. Seek local advice before entering premises with animals. Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements. Do not enter building if feel unsafe and contact DSL immediately.

<p>The family has COVID 19 or a contagious disease</p>	<p>Member of staff is at risk of catching COVID 19</p>	<p>Catching COVID 19</p>	<p>Remote possibility</p>	<p>Remote possibility</p>	<p>Do not enter the home. Stand back from the door at least 2 metres. Wear gloves to knock the door and use hand sanitiser immediately afterwards. When it is possible to do so wash hands with soap and water afterwards. Use remote contact, if possible, such as online video calls- Teams, phone calls.</p>
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Appendix 2



WIRKSWORTH JUNIOR SCHOOL
HOME VISIT FORM

This should be recorded on My Concern. Only use the form if no access to My Concern. Permission to make a home visit must always be granted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Person Visiting

Job Role _____

Visited Home Address _____

Student Name _____

Reason for calling _____

On (date) _____ **at (time)** _____

Visit authorised by Safeguarding Lead:

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Outcome of home visit:

Action Required:

Appendix 3

Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Boards' Multi Agency Guidance on Home Visits:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/DSCBs%20Home%20Visits%20Guidance%20FINAL%20April%202017.pdf