Home Visits Policy

2026-28

St Peter's CofE, Whetstone

Embrace Multi Academy Trust strives to maintain and improve good provision and outcomes at each of its member schools. Based upon our shared ethos and our values of wisdom, collaboration, respect, integrity, inclusivity, and compassion, we aim to support the learning and development of every person within the trust and our policies are written from this perspective.

Version	Approval Level	Document Status	Date Approved	Review Period	Next Review
V1	Trust Leader	Approved	28/08/2026	2 Yearly	Aug 2028

This policy was developed from the template policy on 'The Key'

Introduction

As part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, we have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality. The school will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact on students or staff with protected characteristics: race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

The following guidelines are important for all home visits:

- All home visits conducted by staff ***must*** be authorised by the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- All home visits conducted by senior leaders ***must*** be authorised by the headteacher.

This guidance is to be used for off-site meetings with students and or parents/carers.

In addition, 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 attempted contact or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visit Definition:

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.

Home visits form part of the school's safeguarding arrangements. All staff undertaking home visits must be aware that they may identify safeguarding, welfare, attendance, neglect, exploitation or child protection concerns during a visit. Any concerns identified must be acted upon immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

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1. Aims

The aim of a home visit is:

- 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.
- To understand and take account of the wishes, views and lived experiences of the child wherever appropriate.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school; this can be carried out by school staff when there are attendance issues/concerns
- When students are being educated at home
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- 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 parents/carers to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner

- To support Early Help assessments, plans or multi-agency interventions where engagement with the family in the home environment would support improved outcomes for the child
- 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 work with and support parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue
- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing schoolwork at home
- 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).

2. 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.

Before the Visit:

- Be familiar with the school's procedures for home visits
- Ensure mobile phones are fully charged and emergency contact numbers are readily available before leaving school
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit and that it is absolutely necessary
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you. Home visits should normally be conducted by two members of staff. Any exception must be authorised by the Headteacher following consideration of the risk assessment and additional safety arrangements
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation
- Consider who you need to see, eg one or both parents/carers, with or without the child
- Review all available records before the visit, including safeguarding information, attendance records, previous home visit reports and any known risks
- Consider whether there is any history of aggression, violence, threatening behaviour, substance misuse, dangerous animals or other circumstances that may increase risk to staff
- Where significant risks are identified, alternative arrangements should be considered, including meetings at school or attendance with another professional or agency
- Where there is known or suspected domestic abuse, coercive control, threatening behaviour or violence within the household, staff must consult with the DSL before the visit and additional safeguarding measures should be considered

- 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
- Complete, '**Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment**', **(appendix 1),** and hand in to Paul Bolstridge to inform them of your intended location before departing for a home visit (for repeated visits this only needs to be completed the first time or following any changes)
- If you are driving to the family home ensure you have business insurance on your car, if this is not the case speak to the HR/office manager in school.

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 any animals are appropriately secured before the visit proceeds. If staff have concerns about the safety of an animal on the premises, the visit should be postponed or discontinued
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit. Staff should continually assess risk throughout the visit. If circumstances differ from those anticipated or staff feel unsafe at any point, the visit should be terminated immediately, and the member of staff should leave the premises
- Staff should maintain professional curiosity throughout the visit and remain alert to indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, mental health concerns, substance misuse, non-attendance or other safeguarding concerns
- 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 parents/carers or another responsible adult whom a parent/carer has delegated to be there in their absence and who has been given permission to speak about the student 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 enter a child's bedroom
- Where possible, staff should position themselves near an exit and maintain awareness of exits at all times
- Staff should avoid situations where they may become isolated within the property
- If you are concerned that a child is in the home inappropriately alone, unsupervised or in danger contact the school's DSL straight away to discuss your concerns
- If you feel that a child is in immediate danger, contact emergency services on 999
- Assure parents/carers that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the headteacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. ***Do not promise not 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 prepared to remove footwear if asked
- 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.

After the visit:

- Report back to the school; if possible, give written feedback on CPOMs if relevant or to the appropriate staff in line with the school policy
- 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 DSL/deputy DSL on arrival back at school
- Any safeguarding concerns identified during the visit must be recorded immediately on CPOMS and referred to the DSL in line with the safeguarding policy. Where concerns indicate that additional support is required, staff must work with the DSL and other relevant professionals to ensure information is shared appropriately and timely referrals are made to Early Help, Children's Social Care or other partner agencies
- Information obtained during a home visit should be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding, data protection and information sharing procedures
- At school, do not discuss individual home visits with any staff who are not directly involved with those particular children.

Reports:

- It is essential that staff record every visit on CPOMS or the school's agreed recording system on the same day wherever possible. Records should include the purpose of the visit, outcome, any concerns identified and any actions agreed
- If an incident does occur during the visit, the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident before the precise recollection of events fall from their memory
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visitor, advice should be sought from the headteacher as soon as possible

3. Making Safe Home Visits: Summary

Before:

- Complete/hand in, '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 the time of the visit
- Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard
- Do not stay too long
- Introduce yourself
- Be professional
- Do not 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 the 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
- Wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived
- 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 the 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 the 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.
Home visits should normally take place during school hours. Visits outside these hours must be authorised by the headteacher and subject to an explicit risk assessment.

A **SAFE WORD** should be agreed and recorded on the 'Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit'.

Appendix 1:

Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit

Safeguarding considerations (tick as appropriate)	☐ Current Child Protection Plan ☐ Child in Need Plan ☐ Early Help involvement ☐ Attendance concern ☐ Domestic abuse concerns ☐ Previous aggression towards professionals, including external ☐ Known dangerous animals ☐ Other safeguarding concerns ☐ DSL consulted before visit					
Staff Name & Contact no						
Visiting Name & Contact no						
Visiting Address						
Student Name						
Date of Visit			Time Out:			
Intended Return time			Return Time:			
Accompanied? (Tick)	☐	Person / Organisation				
Transport Type	Own Car ☐	Shared Car ☐	Walk ☐	Bus ☐	Bike ☐	Motorcycle ☐
Reason for Visit	(refer to table below)					
Safe Word						
VISIT AUTHORISED BY:	Name:			Date:		
	Signature:			Time:		

This form should be completed immediately before a visit takes place. If a planned visit is postponed, then the re-arranged visit will require new authorisation.

Before undertaking a visit, a risk assessment should be completed. The purpose of the visit should be clearly identified, and an individual evaluation of each potential problem made.

Visiting members of staff must take a mobile phone with them.

Should the member of staff not return to school by the time given then contact should be attempted by phone by reception. If no answer can be obtained, then a member of SLT should be contacted.

A record of the visit should be recorded on CPOMs.