



# New Mills School

## HOME VISIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Revision	Authorised by	Date	Adopted by	Date
Draft	E Adrio	September 2023	FGB Min No. 17	14/12/2023

Revision	Date	Description of Changes
Draft	September 2023	New Issue

Signed: .....P Inmman..... Date: .....14/12/2023.....

Chair of Governors

## Home Visit Policy and Procedure

### Contents

Introduction .....	3
Definition: .....	3
Aims .....	3
Reasons for home visits: .....	3
Benefits: .....	4
Procedures: .....	4
<i>Before the Visit:</i> .....	4
<i>During the Visit:</i> .....	5
<i>After the visit:</i> .....	6
<i>Home Visit Form (see Appendix 1)</i> .....	6
<i>Making Safe Home Visits: summary</i> .....	6
<i>Action to take if you are threatened</i> .....	6
Appendix 1 - Community Lone Working Risk Assessment.....	8
Appendix 2 – Home visit form .....	10
Appendix 3 – Information to be logged onto CPOMS .....	11

## **Introduction**

**ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD (OR MEMBER OF THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM) PRIOR TO THE VISIT TAKING PLACE.**

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 telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

### **Definition:**

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.

### **Aims**

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between home and school 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 home 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 families. They are particularly useful as they enable home 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 students are being educated at home
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with families 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 families 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 home have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support families 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 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 families 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 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 for reducing risks to members 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 families to come into the school)
- Complete the Home Visit form ensuring it is signed by the Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL).
- Discuss with the Safeguarding Lead whether it is deemed appropriate for the visit to be made alone or whether an additional person is required to protect professional integrity and ensure staff safety.
- If required, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you; home visits should be conducted in pairs.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents, carers, guardians, with or without the child.
- Wherever possible make an appointment to establish a time convenient for 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 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment' (appendix 1) and inform the pastoral team AND reception 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 or another responsible adult whom a parent, carer, 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, 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 contact the schools safeguarding team 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 Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services on 999.
- Assure the family 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 child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 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 to the school and hand in the completed Home Visit Form to Reception.
- 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 Safeguarding team on arrival back to school and logged onto CPOMS.
- Record the home visit onto CPOMS.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

***Home Visit Form (see Appendix 1)***

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make – a copy of which should be recorded on CPOMS.
- 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.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice should be sought from the Headteacher as soon as possible.

***Making Safe Home Visits: summary***

Before

- ✓ Complete/hand in, 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment' to reception.
- ✓ Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- ✓ Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, if required.
- ✓ Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- ✓ Always make sure that the school knows where you are going, has your mobile telephone number and your safe word is recorded on the Community Lone Working Risk Assessment.

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 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.
- 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 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.**

**It is strongly recommended that no one makes an evening home visit.**

**Safe word:** To be agreed and recorded on the 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment'.

**Appendix 1 - Community Lone Working Risk Assessment**  
**WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT**

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 2 persons visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out so others aware Take mobile phone for communication
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
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	Remote	low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate Take mobile communications 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

I have read and understand the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

My mobile telephone number is:

My safe word is:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 2 – Home visit form**

<b><u>Staff member (s)</u></b>	<b><u>Job Role</u></b>
<b><u>Address visiting</u></b>	<b><u>Student Name</u></b>
<b><u>Reason for visit</u></b>	<b><u>Date and time of visit</u></b>
<b><u>Contact number (s) whilst out on visit</u></b>	<b><u>Expected length of visit</u></b>
<b><u>Expected return time</u></b>	<b><u>Other comments</u></b>

### **Appendix 3 – Information to be logged onto CPOMS**

Once returned from a home visit, the following information should be logged onto CPOMS

- Staff member
- Job role
- Visited Home Address
- Student Name
- Reason for calling
- Date
- Time
- Outcome of home visit
- Action required