

CARR HILL HIGH SCHOOL HOME VISIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

We are proud to belong to the Carr Hill Community where we pursue excellence through commitment, aspiration, resilience and respect.

Home Visit Policy and Procedure

Aims

At Carr Hill High School we recognise that parents/carers/guardians (Ps/Cs/Gs) 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 Ps/Cs/Gs 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 Ps/Cs/Gs for the best interests of the child

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

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.

In addition, wherever possible Ps/Cs/Gs 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 Ps/Cs/Gs are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Reasons for home visits

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach Ps/Cs/Gs. They are particularly useful as they enable the Ps/Cs/Gs 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, which has been agreed for short periods of time
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with Ps/Cs/Gs 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 Ps/Cs/Gs 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 Ps/Cs/Gs have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student
- To work with and support Ps/Cs/Gs 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 school work at home e.g. following a fixed term exclusion 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 employees when undertaking home visits. This policy and procedure links to the school Home Visits Risk Assessment.

Before the Visit

- Any employees who undertake school visits must read and understand the school home visit policy, procedures and the school home visits risk assessment
- When driving your own vehicle for work purposes ensure that all documentation is current and has been passed through to the Finance Office. The certificate of insurance must specify the vehicle can be used for business purposes
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for Ps/Cs/Gs to come into the school)
- Sign in and out through the school system and complete the **Home Visit Log** form which is located in the Office Managers Office
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you as home visits must be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person's role
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. Check on school's policy and practice. Do not take sensitive, confidential student records with you e.g. attendance data is acceptable, information relating to abuse would not be acceptable. Ask the Safeguarding Lead or DPO for advice if required
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both Ps/Cs/Gs, 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

During the Visit

- Park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving
- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place, when appropriate
- 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 (Ps/Cs/Gs) or another responsible adult whom a P/C/G 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 P/C/G 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, unless appropriate for the circumstances, with Ps/Cs/Gs permission and with them where possible
- 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 999
- Assure P/C/G 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 not to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated person 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

After the visit

- Inform the Office Manager that you are back in school and add actual return time on the visits log
- Complete a CPOMS and or Synergy log to record home visit once back in school
- 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 recorded on 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
- 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 then advice should be sought from the head teacher as soon as possible

Making Safe Home Visits: Summary - Before

- 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
- 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
- Staff attending as a pair should wait outside the property, if travelling separately, until all staff involved have arrived
- If working as a pair use the code word (safe word) or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave
- The code word is detailed on the home visits log form and should be used if you contact school to alert them that you are in danger and need support
- If at all possible phone school with the reason that school will get anxious if you do not return and may phone the police. Use the code phrase in speaking to reception
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform school immediately. 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

The policy and procedure links to the schools [Home Visits Risk Assessment](#).

Date: June 2022

Date of Next Review: June 2025

Governors Resources June 2022

Key Personal Safety Guidelines for Home visits

- Always have a mobile phone charged and available
- Do not give your address or home/mobile phone numbers to pupils and/or parents and do not contact them on your home or mobile phone as they can then access your personal numbers
- Do not give your mobile phone to the young person to use for any reason
- Keep your personal items, purse/wallet, car keys, etc. safe and secure
- Ensure the venue is suitable for tuition and that there is table and chairs available – visit first
- Arrange regular contact with school/service i.e. a minimum of on arrival and departure from each session
- Give an emergency contact name and number to your school/service
- Keep a diary of each session – including brief notes of work covered, people present and any other appropriate information, e.g. issues with pupil and/or parent
- Ask for a copy of any individual pupil risk assessments for your information. Compile your own risk assessment of each venue you use
- Report any concerns to school/service as soon as possible
- Written guidelines / procedures for staff