



HOME VISIT POLICY & PROCEDURES

- **Name of School** Elm Tree Community Primary School
- **Category of School** Special Needs Primary (SEMH)
- **School Number** 08/138
- **School Address** Elmers Wood Road, Tanhouse, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6SA

Signed: <i>S Brown</i>	Signed: <i>D. Hodgson</i> On behalf of the Governing Body
DSL name: Harry Cartwright	Chair of Governors name: Dianne Hodgson
Date: January 2023	Proposed Review date: January 2024

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD/MEMBER OF THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Wherever possible parents/carers/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/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 Elm Tree Community Primary School we recognise that parents/carers/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/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/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/guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents/carers/guardians to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits could be 'proactive' and linked to a student's welfare, attendance and/or a safeguarding concern.

Home visits could be 'responsive' and linked to a student's SEN, examination provision, support from external agencies etc.

Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- There are attendance issues/concerns
- Students are being educated at home
- All other means of contact with a family has failed
- A meeting is required with parents/carers/guardians to discuss an issue regarding their child. Where it is in the best interest of the student to have that discussion in their own home rather than at school or where it would be difficult for a parents/carers/guardians to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner.
- There is a need to establish that a student is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents/carers/guardians have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- It is appropriate to support parents/carers/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 school work at home.
- A visit is required to a student 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.

- There may be a requirement to investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a student 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 students, 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 student.
- Meet family members that are important to the student.
- Talk about the student and their needs.

Procedures

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working and to provide guidelines in 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 parents/carers/guardians to come into the school at a pre-arranged time)
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved, place this on CPOMS.
- 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/guardians, with or without the student.
- 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.
- Refer to the '**Lone Working and Home Visits Risk Assessment**' (appendix 1)
- Sign out at main reception.

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.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit.
- 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/guardians 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 parents/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/in danger contact the schools DSL 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 you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure parents/carers/guardians that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only relay to 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 DSL.
- 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. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation.
- Do not stay too long.
- Depending on the nature of the visit, if there is no response at the property, a correspondence may be left to inform the parents/carers/guardians of the school visit.

After the visit

- Report back to the school; where appropriate, give feedback to the appropriate staff and write up notes of the visit onto CPOMS
- 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 on arrival back.

Making Safe Home Visits: summary

Before

- Read the '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 if needed.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- Sign out at main reception.

During

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit if appropriate.
- Carry identification.
- Do not stay too long.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be professional.

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.
- 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.
- Give feedback to the appropriate staff and write up notes of the visit onto CPOMS.

If you are concerned about your safety do not visit.

Appendix 1: Lone Working and Home Visits 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

Hazards	People	Severity	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit 2 person 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back down from confrontation/Call for help Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Post incident support
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert Emergency services if appropriate Alert team

					<p>members if able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid contact with animals • Seek local advice before entering premises with animals • Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements