

Home Visiting Policy



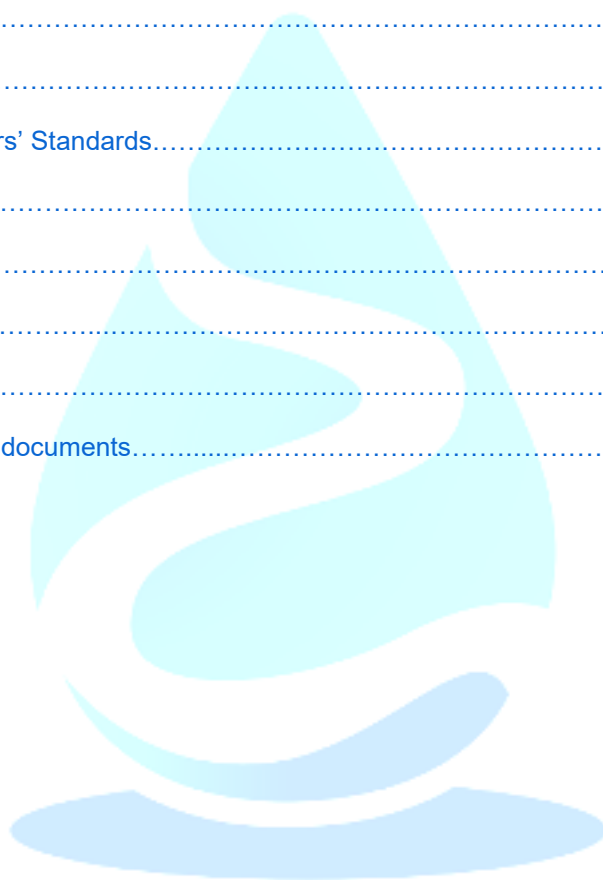
RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
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Partnership Learning

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1. Purpose

Riverside Bridge School recognises that effective safeguarding, attendance support, admissions planning, and family partnership working extend beyond the school site. Home visiting is a core element of the school's approach to early intervention, relationship building, and safeguarding oversight for pupils with complex special educational needs and disabilities.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, consistent and safe framework for undertaking home visits. It sets out expectations for professional conduct, staff safety, safeguarding practice, and accountability, ensuring that home visits are purposeful, proportionate, and aligned with statutory guidance and school values.

Home visits are undertaken to support families, promote pupil well-being, strengthen consistency between home and school, and remove barriers to learning and engagement. They are not enforcement-led and do not replace statutory safeguarding processes or external agency involvement where required.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff who may undertake, support, authorise or contribute to home visits on behalf of Riverside Bridge School. This includes senior leaders, teachers, support staff, family liaison support staff, attendance and pastoral staff, and therapists or other professionals when accompanying school staff.

The policy applies to all forms of home visiting activity undertaken on behalf of Riverside Bridge School, including pre-admission visits, attendance and welfare visits, safeguarding activity, family support interventions, visits linked to the Bridge for Families - Home Support Programme, multi-agency working, and wider family engagement activity where appropriate.

3. Underpinning Principles

All home visits undertaken by Riverside Bridge School are guided by safeguarding principles and professional standards. The welfare of the child remains paramount at all times, and visits are undertaken with the intention of supporting, not judging, families.

Home visits are conducted respectfully and collaboratively, recognising parents and carers as partners with valuable insight into their child's needs. Staff are expected to maintain clear professional boundaries, act with integrity, and communicate clearly and sensitively.

The school recognises that home visiting carries inherent risks. Staff safety is therefore prioritised through careful planning, risk assessment, clear staffing expectations, and escalation routes. No member of staff should feel pressured to undertake a visit if they have concerns about safety.

4. Purposes of Home Visits

Home visits may be undertaken for a range of reasons linked to safeguarding, attendance, transition, and family support. These include supporting safe and well-planned admissions, particularly for pupils with

complex needs; checking on pupil welfare where attendance concerns or safeguarding indicators have emerged; strengthening attendance engagement through relationship-based support; and supporting families to embed communication, regulation, independence or behaviour strategies consistently at home. Within the Bridge for Families - Home Support Programme, home visits may also be used to support targeted or specialist intervention, enable modelling of strategies in the home environment, contribute to Early Help processes, or support multi-agency planning.

Home visits may also contribute to wider preventative, transitional, attendance, regulation, communication, or family support approaches where these support the pupil's well-being, engagement, and consistency between home and school.

In all cases, the purpose of the visit must be clearly identified in advance and recorded appropriately.

5. Authorisation and Planning

All home visits must be authorised in advance by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Visits are planned with a clear rationale, intended outcome, and understanding of any known risks.

Where safeguarding concerns are present or emerging, visits must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to the visit. Home visits must never delay safeguarding referrals or statutory action where a child may be at risk of harm.

6. Staffing and Professional Expectations

Riverside Bridge School operates on the principle that home visits should not be undertaken alone except in exceptional circumstances and only following explicit authorisation and risk assessment.

Typical staffing models include:

- pre-admission visits: Assistant Headteacher and a qualified teacher
- attendance and welfare visits: Family Liaison Officer or Attendance Lead with a second staff member
- targeted or specialist home support visits: Family Liaison Officer with a teacher, therapist or senior leader
- safeguarding or higher-risk visits: Senior leadership involvement required

Staff attending home visits are expected to be appropriately trained, familiar with the pupil's background information, and clear about their role during the visit.

During visits, staff must act professionally at all times, maintain appropriate boundaries, and ensure communication remains supportive and factual. Staff must not make promises, commitments or judgements beyond their professional role, and must not transport pupils or family members under any circumstances.

If staff feel unsafe at any point, they are expected to leave immediately and escalate concerns to senior leaders.

7. Risk Assessment and Staff Safety

Home visits are undertaken in line with the school's Generic Home Visit Risk Assessment, supported by a dynamic risk assessment completed prior to each visit. This ensures that known and emerging risks are considered and appropriate mitigations are put in place.

Risk considerations include safeguarding history, previous incidents of aggression or hostility, environmental factors, animals within the home, substance misuse, and levels of engagement with services.

Where risks are identified, the school may adapt arrangements. This may include additional staff attending, senior leader involvement, joint working with external agencies, rearranging the visit, or holding meetings at school or a neutral venue instead.

Staff must follow lone-working and check-in procedures, carry a school mobile phone, and ensure the school is aware of visit details and expected return times.

8. Consent and Communication

Planned home visits are normally arranged with the knowledge and consent of parents or carers. Clear communication is provided regarding the purpose of the visit and who will attend.

In exceptional circumstances, including safeguarding or welfare concerns, unannounced visits may be undertaken with appropriate senior leadership and safeguarding oversight.

9. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Any safeguarding concerns identified during a home visit must be recorded promptly and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL. Home visits form part of the school's wider safeguarding framework and do not replace formal referral pathways.

Staff must remain alert to changes in presentation, disclosure, environmental concerns or indicators of neglect or harm, and act in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. Recording and Confidentiality

All home visits must be recorded accurately and securely. Records must include the purpose of the visit, staff present, a factual summary of discussion, actions agreed, and any safeguarding concerns or follow-up required.

Information is stored securely and shared on a strict need-to-know basis in line with GDPR, data protection requirements, and safeguarding principles.

11. Training, Supervision and Support

Staff who undertake home visits must receive safeguarding training and guidance on professional boundaries, family work, and lone working. Where home visiting forms a regular part of a role, staff must have access to supervision, reflective practice and ongoing professional development.

The school recognises the emotional and professional demands of family-facing work and is committed to ensuring staff are supported appropriately.

12. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Bridge for Families – Home Support Programme Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Lone Working Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

