

Poynton High School Home Visit Guidelines

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ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE DEPUTY HEAD OR ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER FOR STANDARDS AND STUDENT PROGRESS

In addition, 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 there has been no contact from home to the school, or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visit Definition:

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff/governor to enter the home of a parent, carer or guardian in the case of an emergency or a procedural visit.

Aims

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between parents/carers/guardians and staff/governor so that all parties share their knowledge about the child and to enable the individual needs of the child are met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents/carers/guardians for the best interests of the child.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are particularly useful as they enable the parents/carers/guardians to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visit 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 parents/carers/guardians 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 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.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents/carers/guardians have not been successful and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student

- To work with and 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 e.g. following a Suspension 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 where there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday, contrary to early indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for term time holiday had been refused)

Benefits

Home visit have many benefits. For parents/carers/guardians, a home visit gives the opportunity to meet a key person in a setting 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 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 policy and procedures 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 school)
- 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 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 and 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 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 prior to the home visit (if appropriate)
- Inform Reception/ Deputy Head or Assistant Head Teacher for Standards and Student Progress of your intended location before departing for a visit

During a 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 enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult
- Ensure you have a mobile phone with you
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child if they are 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 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 bedroom
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger, contact the school's designated 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 appropriate, the DSL will make a referral to Social Care/ contact the Police
- 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 in confidence. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise 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. Don't get personally involved
- 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 school; if possible, give written feedback to the appropriate staff in line with 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 safeguarding concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with the DSL on arrival back to school
- At school, do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children/young people

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 attending a visit as a pair, consider agreeing and using a code word or phrase to alert your colleague that you need assistance or need to go

If you are concerned about your safety, do not visit. It is strongly recommended that no one makes an evening visit.