

Home visits policy



POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX

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Policy owner (including job title)	Kim Anderson, Head of Centre
Approving Body	Red Balloon Worthing Governing Body
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Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Definitions	3
4. Roles and responsibilities	3
4.1 The governing board/board of trustees	3
4.2 The Head of Centre	3
4.3 Senior staff, including the Head of Centre and DSL, where appropriate	3
4.4 Staff	4
4.5 Parents/carers	4
5. Reasons for home visits.....	4
6. Procedures	5
6.1 Before the visit	5
6.2 During the visit	5
6.3 In the event an incident does occur	5
6.4 After the visit	6
6.5 Safeguarding.....	6
7. Monitoring arrangements	6
8. Links with other policies.....	6

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

Staff, parents/carers and learners understand:

- When and why our Centre conducts home visits
- How our Centre conducts home visits safely and effectively
- What we do after we've conducted a home visit

If there are any concerns about a learner's safety or wellbeing during a visit, appropriate action will be taken in line with our child protection and safeguarding policy

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy takes into account the responsibilities laid out in:

[Children missing education](#)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend Centre](#) It also reflects general health and safety legislation.

3. Definitions

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent or carer. There are different types of home visit:

- A procedural visit, e.g. to drop off work when a learner is unable to attend Centre
- A safe and well check (or welfare check), e.g. if a learner is absent without good reason and the Centre has concerns about their welfare
- A visit for a new learner before they attend the Centre for the first time

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board/board of trustees

The Board of trustees is responsible for:

- Approving this policy

4.2 The Head of Centre

The Head of Centre is responsible for:

- Authorising any home visits, along with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) when the visit has a safeguarding focus
- Responding to any issues or concerns raised by parents or carers about home visits

4.3 Senior staff, including the Head of Centre and DSL, where appropriate

All senior staff, including the Head of Centre and DSL (where appropriate), are responsible for:

- Sharing this policy so staff know why, when and how to conduct a home visit
- Training staff in the Centre home visit procedures and conduct
- Overseeing risk assessments
- Deciding which members of staff should attend a home visit

- Not allowing any visits which place staff at risk (read more details about these risks later in this policy)
- If learners/children are judged to be at risk: making sure staff follow Centre and/or local safeguarding procedures

4.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Keeping to the policy Following the correct procedures before, during and after a home visit, including reporting and recording any safeguarding issues
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure their own safety, as detailed later in this policy
- Informing the Centre of their movements and time of return

4.5 Parents/carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Communicating any issues or concerns about a home visit to the Head of Centre

5. Reasons for home visits

We might conduct a home visit to:

- Build relationships with learners and their parents or carers. This could include:
 - A visit before the learner starts at the Centre
 - When families aren't engaging in other forms of contact
 - To work with and support parents/carers to develop strategies to improve a learner's attendance
- Make sure we are fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities, including:
 - To make a safe and welfare check
- To investigate when a learner is refusing to come into Centre

Other procedural reasons:

- When a learner is being educated at home, including to drop off or collect work
- If a learner is late to a statutory examination and we can't contact them
- To visit a learner who has been off Centre for a period of time, e.g. due to a medical issue, so they don't feel isolated from the Centre community

6. Procedures

6.1 Before the visit

Staff will:

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy
- Ensure that a home visit is necessary. If possible and/or practical, arrange for the parent/carer to come into the Centre
- Be clear about the purpose of their visit
- Be aware of any relevant background information, including who lives at the address and any safeguarding information, by checking Arbor and with the DSL if necessary
- Undertake a risk assessment, (see appendix 2) and make sure they can be accompanied by a colleague. Arrange the first visit by email or by telephone, where appropriate, at a time when a parent/carer will be home
- Use the preliminary communications to give the parent/carer an opportunity to ask questions about the visit, confirm the home address and proposed length of visit
- Log any home visits planned with the office staff, with times and venues
- Familiarise themselves with the address they'll be visiting, including any transport or parking arrangements

6.2 During the visit

Staff will:

- Be on time as agreed in advance with the parent/carer, and be able to let them know if they're running late
- Dress appropriately and act in a professional manner at all times
- Identify themselves and show their identification badge
- Check with the parent/carer whether they understand the purpose of the visit
- Only enter the premises when invited in by a responsible adult. If no responsible adult with parental responsibility for the child is present, the staff member(s) will return to Centre and attempt a visit at another time
- Only speak to adults with day-to-day responsibility for the child
- Request that all animals in the home should be kept in a separate room, and cancel the visit if the responsible adult refuses, or is unable to adhere to the request
- Behave with respect in the home, respecting the culture and customs of the family, and only using areas of the property with permissions and never entering bedrooms
- Explain that their phone will be on throughout the visit
- Take notes for ease of recording the content of the visit afterwards, and explain to the parent/carer that the notes will only be shared with the relevant senior leaders
- Leave the property immediately if they feel uncomfortable, or at any risk
- Consider the Centre's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, and call 999 if they feel a child is in immediate danger

6.3 In the event an incident does occur

Staff will:

- Contact emergency services on 999 if they feel themselves or someone else is in immediate danger
- Leave the property swiftly and terminate the visit immediately in order to reach a place of safety
- Once in a place of safety, inform the headteacher and any other appropriate members of staff (e.g. the DSL) of the incident to agree appropriate next steps and obtain support
- Record full details of the visit as soon as possible after the incident so they don't forget any details

6.4 After the visit

Staff will:

- Let the Centre know immediately that they have left the property
- Write up the outcome of the visit and file any notes made during the visit
- Report any concerns, including safeguarding incidents to the relevant members of staff
- Only discuss individual home visits with other staff members where relevant and/or necessary

6.5 Safeguarding

- Any safeguarding concerns identified during the visit will be shared with the DSL immediately, in accordance with our child protection and safeguarding policy or the relevant local authorities if the child isn't a learner at the Centre yet
- Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with our allegations against staff policy

7. Monitoring arrangements

Monitoring this policy:

- The headteacher will review the policy every 2 years.
- The policy will be approved by the board of trustees

8. Links with other policies

This home visits policy is linked to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Risk assessment policy
- Children missing education (CME) procedures
- Attendance policy
- Allegations against staff policy
- Health and safety policy

Appendix 1: Home Visit form

[illegible]

Appendix 2: Home Visit risk assessment

HAZARD	WH O M I G H T B E H A P P E N	WHA T ARE YOU DOI NG	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHIN G ELSE TO CONTROL	ACTION: WHO?	ACTION: WHEN?	DON E
An aggressive or violent parent/ carer, learner	Staff mem bers under taking	Procedur es outline d in the home				
Car accident						
Use of illeg						
Attack by a dog or other animal						
False allegations						