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Home Visits

Contents

Home Visits.....	1
Contents.....	1
1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance.....	2
3. Definitions.....	2
4. Roles and responsibilities.....	2
4.1 Executive Team.....	2
4.2 The headteacher.....	3
4.3 Senior staff, including the headteacher and DSL, where appropriate.....	3
4.4 Staff.....	3
4.5 Parents/carers.....	3
5. Reasons for home visits.....	3
6. Procedures.....	4
6.1 Before the visit.....	4
6.2 During the visit.....	5
6.3 In the event an incident does occur.....	6
6.4 After the visit.....	6
6.5 Safeguarding.....	7
7. Monitoring arrangements.....	7
8. Links with other policies & documents.....	7
Appendix 1.....	8
Anthem Home Visit Risk Assessment Template.....	8
Appendix 2.....	10
Personal Safety Guidelines for Home visits.....	10
Appendix 3.....	11
Home Visit Staff Checklist.....	11

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

Staff, parents/carers and students understand:

- When and why our school conducts home visits
- How our school conducts home visits safely and effectively
- What we do after we've conducted a home visit
- Staff understand the importance of undertaking a risk assessment before conducting any home visit to identify and mitigate potential risks to both staff and families.
- If there are any concerns about a student'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:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)
- Health & Safety Policy

It also reflects general health and safety legislation.

3. Definitions

A home visit is a visit where a member(s) of staff enter the home of a parent or carer. There are different types and purpose of home visit:

- A procedural visit, e.g. to drop off work when a student is unable to attend school
- A safe and well check (or welfare check), e.g. if a student is absent without good reason and the school has concerns about their welfare
- Weekly welfare checks to carry out the school's safeguarding duty of care
- For Early years providers, it will be a visit that member(s) of staff will undertake before a child begins attending school, to get to know them and their family

A home visit risk assessment is a mandatory safety check to be completed before any home visit takes place. It identifies potential risks in the home environment, known behaviours, lone-working issues, and contextual safeguarding concerns. It also helps define clear protocols for communication, safety, and escalation.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Executive Team

The Executive Team is responsible for:

- Approving this policy

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher and DSL, where appropriate

All senior staff, including the Headteacher 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 school 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, including lone-working visits without appropriate mitigation. All home visits must be preceded by a completed risk assessment (see Appendix 2), reviewed by the DSL or nominated senior leader.
- If students/children are judged to be at risk: making sure staff follow school and/or local safeguarding procedures

4.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering 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 school 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 school

5. Reasons for home visits

We might conduct a home visit to:

- Build relationships with students and their parents or carers. This could include:
 - A visit before the child begins at the school (EYFS settings)
 - When families aren't engaging in other forms of contact
 - To work with and support parents/carers to develop strategies to improve a student's attendance
- Make sure we are fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities, including:

- To make a safe and well check (this may happen in conjunction with the local authority social care team)
- To investigate when a student is refusing to come into school
- Other procedural reasons:
 - When a student is being educated at home, including to drop off or collect work
 - If a student is late to a statutory examination and we can't contact them
 - To visit a student who has been off school for a period of time, e.g. due to a medical issue, so they don't feel isolated from the school community
 - In line with the school's Attendance Policy and the Anthem Attendance Ambitions guidance, a home visit will be carried out for any student with an unexplained absence by no later than the third day of absence.
 - We may also visit a student that is absent from school with a given reason to keep in contact and offer support where required.

6. Procedures

Oxford Spires Academy is committed to maintaining strong communication and safeguarding practices across its school community. As part of this commitment, the Academy may conduct home visits for a variety of reasons. These visits are typically arranged when a student is absent from school without a provided reason; however, they may also occur when a student is attending school but requires additional pastoral or welfare support. In some cases, even when a reason for absence has been communicated, a home visit may be undertaken to ensure ongoing engagement and to offer further assistance where needed. All visits will be carried out by authorised staff members following a clear and professional protocol, in line with safeguarding procedures. The purpose of these visits is to build positive relationships, identify any barriers to attendance or wellbeing, and provide appropriate support to students and their families.

6.1 Before the visit

Staff will:

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy.
- Be clear about the purpose of their visit.
- Confirm that the visit is necessary and supportive in nature, with a clear rationale understood by all staff involved.
- Ensure any known risks from external agencies, family history, or safeguarding records have been reviewed in full.
- Ensure all staff involved are comfortable and confident to proceed; raise any concerns about safety or appropriateness with the DSL or senior leader.
- Be aware of any relevant background information, including who lives at the address and any safeguarding information, by checking Bromcom and with the DSL/Safeguarding team if necessary.

- Ensure the home visit risk assessment has been completed, including clear notes on any identified risks and mitigations.
- Arrange the first visit over the telephone, where appropriate, at a time when a parent/carer and child will be home.
- If appropriate, use the call 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 attendance/safeguarding staff, with times and venues.
- Familiarise themselves with the address they'll be visiting, including any transport or parking arrangements
- If the visit is to be conducted alone, ensure a lone-working safety plan is in place (see Appendix 2), including check-in times and designated contact staff.
- Plan for potential risks on-site (e.g. allergies, aggressive pets, known hazards in or around the property).
- Ensure that the school holds at least one emergency contact for all staff undertaking home visits, and that staff carry a mobile phone that is sufficiently charged to allow for communication throughout the visit.

6.2 During the visit

During the visit, staff must uphold the school's safeguarding duties and professional code of conduct. All visits should be dynamically risk assessed in real time, and staff should prioritise personal safety and child welfare.

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 (this applies only to when a scheduled appointment is set)
- 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
- Staff should only enter the home when invited in by a responsible adult with parental responsibility for the child. If such an adult is not present, staff should not enter the property unless they are accompanied by another member of staff and/or there are significant safeguarding concerns about the student's welfare that justify doing so.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times. Do not accept food, drink, or personal gifts. Avoid private areas of the home such as bedrooms where possible.
- 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
- 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
- Always position yourself where you can easily access the exit. Be alert to potential risks, including unrestrained animals, escalating behaviour, or environmental hazards.
- Consider the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, and call 999 if they feel a child is in immediate danger
- If conducting a lone visit, ensure that agreed check-in and check-out contact is made with the designated person.
- Dynamically risk assess the visit on arrival and throughout. If staff feel uncomfortable, they should leave immediately and inform the school.
- Ask who is present in the home and confirm their relationship to the child. Do not proceed with the visit unless a responsible adult is present or there are overriding safeguarding concerns.
- If the visit is unannounced, and there are concerns about welfare, make reasonable checks (e.g. visible signs of life, windows/doors) before deciding whether to escalate.

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
- Staff should be offered a debrief opportunity, wellbeing check-in, or access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if the incident was distressing.
- The risk assessment for the student/family should be updated following the incident, even if no formal concern is recorded.

6.4 After the visit

Staff will:

- Let the school know immediately that they have left the property
- If any issues arose during the visit (e.g. safeguarding concerns, environmental hazards, hostility), ensure these are clearly recorded on CPOMS, and escalated to the DSL and Headteacher as needed.
- Record a full and factual account of the visit on CPOMS or equivalent system, including the voice and views of the child (where appropriate), observations made, and any actions agreed.
- Where new risks have emerged, update the DSL.
- 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
- Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with our allegations against staff policy
- Where any Significant Safeguarding Incident (SSI) is identified during the home visit (e.g. high-risk behaviour, threats, or immediate safety concerns), this must be flagged on CPOMS using the SSI tag and immediately escalated to the Head of Safeguarding in accordance with the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy.

7. Monitoring arrangements

- The Head of Safeguarding will review the policy every 2 years.
- The policy will be approved by the Executive Team.

8. Links with other policies & documents

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Children missing education (CME) procedures
- Attendance policy
- Anthem Attendance Ambitions
- Anthem Safeguarding Handbook
- Allegations against staff policy
- Health and Safety policy
- EYFS policy

Appendix 1

Anthem Home Visit Risk Assessment Template

School:	
Date:	
Student Name & Address:	
Staff Name(s):	
Visit Approved by:	
Review Date:	

A risk assessment must be completed prior to any home visit to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, students, and families. It allows for the identification and mitigation of potential risks, including environmental hazards, known behaviours, and contextual safeguarding concerns. This proactive approach supports informed decision-making, promotes professional boundaries, and ensures that visits are carried out in line with safeguarding and lone working procedures.

Key Risk Screening Questions (Complete before every visit)

<u>Risk Assessment</u>		
Risk	Yes	No
<p>Are 2 members of staff attending?</p> <p><small>If only 1 staff attending, please provide details of mitigations and rationale for proceeding:</small></p>		
Do members of staff at school have the contact details of the member(s) of staff attending?		
Has a specific time been agreed to check in and confirm the home visit has been completed?		
Are there any known risks or hazards at the student's home?		
Is there a history of the student displaying aggressive, threatening, or disruptive behaviour towards staff or adults?		
<p>Is there a current risk assessment in place for the student?</p> <p><small>Please provide details:</small></p>		
Have parents or carers shown any aggressive or confrontational behaviour towards staff or other adults?		

Are there any known risks flagged by external agencies that should be considered before the visit?		
Are there any pets at the home that pose a potential risk (e.g. aggressive behaviour, not securely contained)?		
Details/Notes/Rationale & Mitigations:		
Signature:	Date:	

Appendix 2

Personal Safety Guidelines for Home visits

These personal safety guidelines must be followed by all staff when conducting a home visit. They apply equally to procedural, safeguarding, and attendance visits.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the school's Health & Safety Policy and any local lone-working procedures. Staff must sign to confirm they have read and understood these protocols prior to undertaking home visits.

- Always have a mobile phone charged and available
- Do not give your address or phone numbers to students and/or parents and avoid contacting them on your personal device as they can then access your personal number(s).
- 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
- Arrange regular contact with school i.e. a minimum of on arrival and departure from each session
- Give an emergency contact name and number to your school/service
- Always record each visit on CPOMS – including brief notes of work covered, people present and any other appropriate information, e.g. issues with student and/or parent
- Ask for a copy of any individual risk assessment(s) for your information.
- Report any concerns to school as soon as possible.
- Trust your instincts. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, terminate the visit immediately and inform the school. Your personal safety must come first.
- Avoid entering a home alone, where possible. Where risk are known or cannot be fully assessed in advance, attend visits in pairs or ask to meet at a neutral location (where possible).
- Maintain professional boundaries. Do not accept food, drink or personal gifts. Politely decline any offers to go into private areas of the home (e.g. bedrooms).
- Position yourself strategically. If entering the home, sit closest to an exit where possible. Be aware of escape routes and avoid situations where you may become cornered.
- Always wear your school lanyard.
- Do not offer or agree to transport students or family members in your vehicle. This must be pre-authorised and risk-assessed by the Headteacher in exceptional cases only.
- Ensure all conversations and behaviour during the visit remain professional, appropriate, and aligned with safer working practice.
- Do not allow students to use your mobile phone.

Appendix 3

Home Visit Staff Checklist

This checklist is designed to support staff in preparing for, conducting and following up on home visits. It should be used alongside the Home Visit Risk Assessment (appendix 1) and relevant safeguarding procedures

<u>Before the Visit</u>	<u>During the Visit</u>	<u>After the Visit</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Assessment Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> Lanyard worn and shown	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform school of visit completion
<input type="checkbox"/> Background Information Reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm who is present in the home	<input type="checkbox"/> Log visit details on CPOMS
<input type="checkbox"/> Lone Working plan in place and agreed	<input type="checkbox"/> Position near an exit	<input type="checkbox"/> Record the student's voice, key observations and actions
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contact details provided to school	<input type="checkbox"/> Remain alert – dynamically assess the risk throughout	<input type="checkbox"/> Raise any concerns with the DSL
<input type="checkbox"/> Visit logged with leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain professional boundaries and code of conduct	<input type="checkbox"/> Update risk assessment in new risks identified
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile phone sufficiently charged and on person	<input type="checkbox"/> Record observations as appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Log home visit intervention on CPOMS