

MAGHULL HIGH SCHOOL



Home Visit Policy

Home Visit Policy and Procedure

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF **MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEADTEACHER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER OR DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**. Home visits will normally be a last resort, after other methods of communication have failed. **In line with government guidance during the current Covid-19 pandemic, staff must adhere to social distancing rules when conducting home visits.**

Wherever possible, parents/carers 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 are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visit Definition:

A home visit requires member(s) of staff to visit the home of a parent/carer in the case of an emergency or procedural visit.

Aims

At Maghull High School, we recognise that parents/carers 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 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 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. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents/carers to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits may need to be used:

- to try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student
- when there are attendance issues/concerns or students are refusing to come into school
- to work with and support parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue
- when students are being educated at home
- when all other means of contact with a family have failed
- to meet with parents/carers 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 to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner
- to collect 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 fixed term exclusion 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

Benefits

Home visits can have many benefits. For parents/carers and children, 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 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 procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to member 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 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. Check on school's policy and practice
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents/carers, 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
- Refer to the '**Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment**' (appendix 2), and inform relevant colleagues of your intended location before departing for a home visit.

During the Visit

- Park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving
- Dress appropriately and carry a mobile phone
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification but do not use a necklace lanyard
- 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) or another responsible adult whom a parent/carer has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given permission to speak on their behalf
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parent/carer 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 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
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999

- Assure parent/carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively. Explain that you will need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection and safeguarding procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the DSL
- Be sensitive to the culture and/or religion of the home
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions
- Be sympathetic, but remain neutral. Don't get personally involved. Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation; do not gossip about the school or staff
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point
- Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit
- Complete Home Visit Form to evidence visit.

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 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
- Consider whether sending out two members of staff may escalate the difficulties
- 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 the visit

- Report back to the 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 DSL at your earliest opportunity on return to school. At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

Home Visit Form (see Appendix 1)

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make on the home visit form, which should be stored in the student file
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events fall from their memory
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor, advice should be sought from the Headteacher as soon as possible.

If you are concerned about your safety do not visit.

It is strongly recommended that no one makes an evening home visit.

Safe word: To be agreed and recorded on the 'Home Visits Risk Assessment Intent to Visit'. (see Appendix 2)

Maghull High School Home Visit Form



Person visiting _____ Job Role _____

Visited Home Address

Student Name

Reason for calling

On (date) _____ at (time) _____

Comments:

Signed _____ (Staff Name) _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Carer Name) _____

Visit authorised by: _____ Date: _____

Follow up actions:

Home Visits Risk Assessment Intent to Visit

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing Relevant senior colleagues prior to visit Two person visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out 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	Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch and phone 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
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote possibility	Low	Back down from confrontation Call for help Use attack alarm Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at

					<p>risk</p> <p>Use staff bus or public transport if available</p> <p>Post incident support</p>
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Illness or injury/ accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote possibility	Low	<p>Alert emergency services if appropriate</p> <p>Alert team members if able to</p> <p>Ensure access to phone</p> <p>Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed</p> <p>Complete injury at work form on return</p>
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	<p>Avoid contact with animals</p> <p>Seek local advice before entering premises with animals</p> <p>Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them e.g. sudden movements</p>

