



HOME VISIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Statement of intent

What is the aim of this policy and procedure?

Examples:

- *To establish a partnership between parents/carers/guardians 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/guardians in order to work together in the best interests of the child.*
- *To ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines to reduce risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.*

Relevant legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance

(e.g. thresholds guidance issued by your local Safeguarding Partnership)

- Education Act 2002
- Working together to safeguard children 2023
- Keeping children safe in education 2024
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024
- Children missing education 2016
- Pupil registration regulations 2006
- Health and safety at work

Relevant members of staff and policy information

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Dawn Kelly
Deputy designated safeguarding lead/s (DDSL/s)	Rebecca Moorhouse
Designated Teacher for Children who are Looked After / were previously Looked After	Liz Sledge
Family support worker	Rebecca Moorhouse
Mental health lead	Rebecca Moorhouse/ Tom Andrews
Chair of Governors	Barry Dutton
Safeguarding Governor	Vicky Bessey
Policy approved by the governing body	November 2024
Date of policy review	December 2025

- *Child protection policy*
- *Attendance policy (including children missing/absent from education procedures)*
- *Staff behavior policy (staff code of conduct)*
- *Behavior and/or relationship policy including restrictive physical intervention policy*
- *Supporting children with medical conditions policy*
- *Anti-bullying and discrimination policy*
- *Drugs policy*
- *Data protection policy*
- *SEND policy*
- *Health and safety policy*
- *Online safety policy*
- *Management of allegations against staff policy*
- *Whistleblowing policy*
- *Equality and diversity policy*

Introduction and definition

Sandbank and Valley Nursery Schools Federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Whilst the expectation is that all *learners* attend school regularly, we recognise that there may be occasions when they may be absent or need to be supported at home and this may require a home visit. Maintaining contact between home and school is an important mechanism for ensuring that a child is able to continue accessing their education and in supporting them to return to school. The safety of our children and our staff is paramount. This policy has been developed to ensure that home visits undertaken are both safe and effective.

A home visit is a visit that requires members of staff to visit the home address of a pupil/student to see the child prior to attending, if they have been absent or unwell or to speak to a parent, carer, or guardian in an emergency or as part of a plan.

Home visits are important in helping the school to contact new parents/carers/guardians or build relationships. Home visits are also particularly useful in facilitating contact between some parents/carers/guardians and school staff in circumstances where those parents/carers/guardians are genuinely unable to come into school for health/medical or other reasons.

Home visits have many benefits. For parents/carers/guardians and children, a home visit provides an opportunity to meet a key professional from the school/setting who is able to provide support to the child and/or family in an environment that feels safe, familiar and comfortable for the child/family.

Reasons for home visits

Home visits may be undertaken for a variety of reasons. This could include:

- ***Prior to attending setting***
- ***If there is a significant special educational need and where a home visit would be supportive to the family and work with other professionals***
- ***If there is concern and all other means of contact with a family has failed.***
- ***Children refusing to come into school.***
- ***To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school; and/or attempts to contact parents/carers/guardians have not elicited a response; and/or the school/setting has any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the child.***
- ***To work with and support parents/carers/guardians in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.***

Home visit procedures

The purpose of a home visit is to see the child and to speak to the parent/carer/guardian. Good practice would dictate that parents are always aware of the visit; but there may be occasional circumstances when this is not in the best interests of the child or practicable. All home visits conducted by staff must be authorised by the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team prior to the visit taking place.

Before the Visit

Staff undertaking home visits should:

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Follow all health and safety procedures
- Assess risks to staff for each home visit. Points to consider include:
 - What is known about the child/family? What is unknown and how could this increase any possible risk?
 - Is this a 'doorstop' visit or will the member/s of staff enter the home? *
 - Is there an allocated social worker or other professionals working with the family?
 - Would it be helpful/appropriate/safer to consider a joint visit with another professional working with the family?

** N.B. It is recommended that schools consider **always** requiring two members of staff to undertake home visits in circumstances where visits will include entering the family home, particularly when the visit is to a family about whom little information is known; previous contact with the family has led to one or more family members becoming angry, aggressive or distressed; and/or the visit is likely to address or identify potentially contentious issues.*

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The final decision about a member of staff undertaking a home visit alone must be made by the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team.

- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parents/carers/guardians to come into the school).
- Ensure adequate insurance cover is in place for any off-site visits covering any vehicles used and whether staff are covered by their insurance.
- The parent/carer/guardian should be informed of the visit beforehand unless there is a valid reason to undertake an unannounced visit.
- Mobile phone taken with staff on the visit and someone in the office to know the visit times and location and time expected to conclude and return to school.
- Consider personal safety of all professionals conducting the visit, for example: valuables, parking.
- Consider what resources (e.g. leaflets, forms, signposting) staff need to have with them when undertaking a visit.

During the Visit

- Staff will have official ID available when introducing themselves.
- Being clear about and being able to explain the purpose of the visit to the parent/carer/guardian and only speaking to adults with parental responsibility.
- Not entering the premises if a child is found alone unless it is necessary to do so to safeguard a child in an emergency.
- ***Being clear about procedures for reporting any concerns, e.g. finding a child in the care of an inappropriate carer.***
- In the event that staff find a child not supervised by an appropriate adult or otherwise at risk of harm, they are expected to report to DSL.
- Being sensitive to and respectful of the culture and religious beliefs of the parent/carer/guardian.
- Conducting themselves in a professional manner at all times, acting in accordance with school policies with particular reference to the staff behaviour (code of conduct) and child protection policies.
- Remaining in shared areas of the household during visits, only going into a child's bedroom in exceptional circumstances such as the need to see a child who is too unwell to get out of bed and only when visiting in pairs and with the permission of the child and their parents/carers/guardians.
- Terminating the visit and leaving the household immediately if the member/s of staff consider themselves to be at risk or unsafe.

After the visit

- Report back to the relevant professional(s) in line with school policy DSL or deputy DSL.
- If not returning directly to school, the member/s of staff must telephone the school/setting as soon as they have left the household to confirm that the home visit has finished.
- The member/s of staff should follow up any required actions as soon as possible after the visit, e.g. updating key professionals, updating school records including the safeguarding file as appropriate, debrief with the DSL, a deputy DSL, SLT member or line manager as appropriate.

If a visiting member of staff does not contact the school within the agreed timeframe a phone call will be made to the member of staff and if continued lack of contact further member of staff will go to the address.