



*"Creating excellence, embracing all."*

## **Home Visits Policy and Procedures**

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**Botley School governing board**

### **Botley School Vision statement**

*A high-quality education in a positive and happy school, where everyone is included, celebrated and encouraged to be a creative lifelong learner.*

### **Botley School Values**

*Inclusivity Teamwork Kindness Respect Resilience Creativity*



## **Home Visits Policy and Procedures**

### **Context**

In accordance with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy, this policy and guidance is intended to ensure that all staff members undertaking home visits are safeguarded and necessary risk assessments are completed prior to undertaking visits.

All staff undertaking home visits will have had safeguarding training, signed the Trust's Code of Conduct and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

All home visits undertaken will be approved by the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to the visit taking place. A risk assessment will be completed before a visit takes place. Home visits can be necessary in order to develop and strengthen relationships for the best interests of children, to identify needs, provide support and to provide advice and signposting to relevant services.

Home visits will only be undertaken when it is considered necessary to do so. Home visits will generally be pre-planned and conducted in pairs.

Some home visits are unplanned welfare checks because there are safeguarding concerns for a child and parents/carers are not responding to communication from the school.

There are two types of visit:

- Home visit – the staff member enters the family home and can evaluate home conditions for safeguarding reasons
- Doorstep visit – the staff members will have 'eyes on the child' to ensure they are safe and well – more likely to be used for attendance visits than safeguarding visits.

Visiting staff must be clear on the purpose of the visit and which of these is most appropriate.

### **Reasons for Home Visits**

- To support engagement for children who are refusing to attend school.
- To provide support where there are attendance concerns.
- To support engagement for parents/carers when other means of communication have not been successful.
- To establish that a child is safe when they have not attended school and there are concerns for their safety and well-being.
- To maintain contact with a child who is unable to attend school due to a medical condition.
- To provide an alternative venue for parents who are unable to come into school.
- Where transporting a child to/from home has been agreed. Where a child is being transported, there must also be a second adult in the car acting as a chaperone.

## **Planning for the Home Visit**

- Ensure you have read and understood the Home Visits Policy and Guidance.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit and confident that the visit is essential.
- Prior to conducting a home visit, a risk assessment must be completed. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify whether it is safe to undertake a visit and to determine if additional members of staff are required for the visit. The risk assessment will also identify any concerns about the intended visit and ensure measures are put in place to minimise any risks identified.
- Any concerns identified should be discussed with a member of the Leadership Team to ensure a decision to proceed is based on additional measures being put in place to ensure the safeguarding of staff undertaking the visit when a meeting at an alternative venue is not considered an appropriate option. Ensure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Wherever possible, schedule the home visit during or immediately after the school day. Do not schedule visits during the evening.
- Write to parents/carers offering an appointment for a home visit, including the purpose of the visit.
- Accept the parents/carers right to decline a home visit. If you have any allergies you must check with the home before the visit to ensure it is safe for you to visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate member of staff to accompany you on the visit. Ensure the visit is recorded in your electronic diary with the time, approximate duration and address of the planned visit.
- On the day of the visit, you must ensure you sign in and out of the office and let the Office Staff know the details of your visit.
- Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged prior to undertaking the home visit

## **Undertaking the Home Visit**

- Ensure you wear your staff Identification throughout the visit.
- Carry a fully charged mobile phone to be contacted or make contact in the event of an emergency.
- Park in a well-lit area which does not require you to reverse on leaving.
- Ensure both staff are present before you enter the property.
- Agree a code word with your colleague to alert the colleague if you require assistance or should leave. The same code word could be used if you need to contact school to alert them that you are in danger.
- Do not enter the property unless invited to do so by a responsible adult.
- Do not enter the property if there is no adult present.
- Be sensitive to the culture and religion of the family.
- Only speak to an adult who has parental responsibility or who you have consent from the parents/carers to speak to.
- Do not go upstairs in a property and do not enter a child's bedroom

This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including, but not limited to:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEN policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy