

Home visit Policy and Procedure

BCHS is a school where:

- Where aspiration, knowledge and kindness are at the heart of all that we do.
- Where every child is respected, valued and supported to achieve their very best.
- Where high expectations, engaging learning and a culture of respect enable every child to succeed.
- Where children feel safe, happy and encouraged to grow into independent and responsible young people.
- Where achievement, character, leadership and personal development are recognised and celebrated.
- Where strong partnerships between staff, students, parents and governors support a thriving school community.

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This policy is for the whole school and The Credo School, our designated provision at Birchwood Community High School.

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF *MUST* BE AUTHORISED BY THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD OR A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM.

In addition, 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 is a visit that requires members of staff to visit the home of a parent, carer, or guardian in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parent/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 are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues/concerns
- When students are being educated at home
- When all other means of contact with a family has 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 Parent/carers to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact Parent/carers have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support Parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- To collect from 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.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused.

Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents, carers, guardians 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 sure that a home visit is really necessary.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances, obtain any background information prior to visiting the family.
- If there are any concerns relating to the family you are visiting, go in with another member of staff.
- Inform your line manager of the address you are visiting and the reason for the visit, give an approximate time of when you will return to school.
- Ensure at least one member of staff completing the visit has a mobile phone with them.
- If you have any concerns regarding a home visit ask your line manager to complete a risk assessment with you prior to the visit.

During the Visit

- Park in a well-lit area
- Dress appropriately.
- Introduce yourself, wear your school ID badge, explain the purpose of the visit.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
- Only speak to an adult with parental responsibility or another responsible adult whom Parent/carer has authorised to be present at the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their Parent/carer is available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with any person other than Parent/carer
- 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 unless accompanied by a parent/carer.
- If you are concerned regarding the welfare of a child within the home, contact your DSL immediately, if not available contact a member of SLT.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point of the meeting.

After the visit

- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit
- Any concerns should be discussed with your line manager on your return to school
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with DSL in school, immediately on arrival back to school.
- Log the home visit with a detailed report on CPOMS, in a timely manner

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.
- Wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived.
- 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.
- 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 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit.

Final note:

Above all else the safety of a member of staff is of the utmost importance, if there are any undue concerns that cannot be mitigated, then a solo home visit should not be undertaken.

Home Visit Policy – Appendices

Appendix 1: Home visit Risk Assessment

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Harm	Control Measures	Risk Rating
Aggressive/abusive or violent Parent/carer/student/family member	Member of staff	Risk of injury or emotional distress	<p>Refer to Home visit Policy</p> <p>Risk will be reduced by talking to Safeguarding team prior to visit to gain any background information</p> <p>If staff are aware of any previous challenging behaviour or concerns, visit to be completed with another person</p> <p>Sign out using Inventry and let safeguarding staff know you are leaving site</p> <p>Ensure you have completed paperwork indicating which property you are visiting and an estimated time of return.</p> <p>Take a mobile phone with you on visits</p>	L
Driving	Member of staff	<p>Vehicle breakdown</p> <p>Accident</p> <p>Use of mobile phone whilst driving</p> <p>Fatigue</p>	<p>Maintain vehicle</p> <p>Take a mobile phone with you on visits</p> <p>Use systems above to inform staff where you are going</p> <p>Phone school if your plan changes</p> <p>Do not leave valuables on show in the car</p> <p>Park in well lit areas</p>	L
Movement through public areas eg car parks	Member of staff	<p>Attack</p> <p>Theft of Property</p>	<p>Alert emergency services</p> <p>Keep valuables out of sight</p> <p>Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk</p> <p>Access support from line manager post incident</p>	L
Illness or injury	Member of staff	Illness or injury	<p>Alert emergency services</p> <p>Alert line manager if able to</p> <p>Take prescribed medication as directed</p> <p>Access support from line manager post incident</p>	L
Injury caused by dog or other animal within the home	Member of staff	Injury	<p>Avoid contact with animals</p> <p>Ask adult to remove the animal from the area you are in</p> <p>Behave appropriately around animal eg no sudden movements or loud noises</p>	

