



HSP

Home Visits Policy

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HSP Home Visits Policy

Home visits can be invaluable in involving parents in their child's education and therefore in raising achievement.

Visits may be made for a variety of reasons:

- Visits can be made to inform parents of meetings, parents' groups, special assemblies and other home-school liaison projects and to encourage them to attend.
- Visits can be made to inform parents both of their child's progress and of ways of supporting the child's learning at home.
- Visits can also be made for a variety of other reasons; some of which are sensitive and confidential.
- The following guidelines are important for all visits but should be particularly noted when going on a visit that may be sensitive.

Best practice states that HSP staff will visit in twos whenever possible

Before the visit

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedures for home visits - NOTE: ALL HOME VISITS MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEADTEACHER OR OTHER SENIOR MANAGER OF THE SCHOOL.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is necessary and that the reason cannot be dealt with by a parent coming into school.
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved.
- If necessary, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you. Clarify each person's role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. Check on school policy and practice.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents, with or without the child. Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances, spoken language, religion etc.
- Make an appointment to establish a time convenient for the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Either make a phone call or send a letter.

During the visit

- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit. Assure parents that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the headteacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to school. Remember that under the Child Protection Procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the headteacher.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc. 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 discrete and don't get caught up in gossip about the school, staff or other families.
- Be assertive about the direction of the conversation. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so, and say that you will refer back to the school or other agencies for further information, or refer the parents directly to other agencies.
- When the visit concerns how the parents can take a more active role in their child's learning or about an extended visit abroad, clarify if, when and how the visit will be followed up and where the parents can go for further information and support.
- Don't stay too long. Keep to the point.

After the visit

- Report back to the school. Log the visit on CPOMS with relevant information.
- At school, do not discuss individual home visits in the staff room or with staff who are not involved with those particular children (i.e. be professional, do not gossip at school or tell other families what you have learnt or been told on a visit)

Making safe home visits

- ALWAYS make sure the school office knows where you are going/how long you expect to be. If your visit takes longer than expected ring the school.
- ALWAYS log your visit to the school office.
- ALWAYS report back in.
- ALWAYS carry identification. Whenever possible make an appointment and know who you will be meeting.
- THINK about your own safety. Don't make a visit on your own if you are worried about your safety. Don't go into a home if you feel insecure.
- EVENING VISITS It is strongly recommended that no one should make an evening home visit on their own when there is no one at school to provide backup or to report back to. If parents are at work arrange to speak to them, if possible, just before or after school. Ask them to ring you at break or lunchtime if they can't get to school.

Guidelines on home visits for absence

- The Education Welfare Service has the overall responsibility for addressing the problem of pupils' absenteeism from schools.
- Where there is no answer from the 1st day absence call and the school have concerns a home visit will be carried out by the attendance lead and another member of school staff.
- When parents do not respond to such contacts it may be appropriate for a school staff member to accompany an Education Welfare Officer on a home visit to establish the reasons for the pupil's absenteeism, remind parents of the school's policy and briefly discuss the implications of absenteeism on pupils' achievement.