



B4L HOME VISITS POLICY

Weston Point College

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Home Visits Policy and Procedure

All home visits conducted by staff MUST be authorised by the Safeguarding Lead or the Head Teacher.

In addition, wherever possible parents/carers/guardians 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/guardians are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

Home Visits Definition

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent, carer, or guardian in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

Aims

At Weston Point College we recognise that parents/carers and guardians are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

The aim of a home visit is to:

- 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 and guardians for the best interests of the child.

Reasons for Home Visits

Home visits are important in helping the school contact new or hard to reach parents/carers and guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents/carers and guardians 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 or following an “Outreach Programme”.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with Ps/Cs/Gs 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 Ps/Cs/Gs 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 Ps/Cs/Gs have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support Ps/Cs/Gs 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 have 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 long period, for example due to a medical issue, so 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.
- To collect a child who has failed to arrive in school to take a public examination.

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 necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parents/carers/guardians to come into the school)
- 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/guardians 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 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment' (Appendix 1) - inform the Safeguarding Lead and/or the Head Teacher 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.
- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification 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 (parent/carer/guardian) or another responsible adult whom a parent/carer/guardian has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the child for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parent/carer/guardian 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 Safeguarding Lead 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 Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure the parent/carer/guardian that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only the Head Teacher 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 un the Child Protection Procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- 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. **DO NOT** 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.

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 Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with Designated Child Protection Officer on arrival back.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those children.

Summary for making safe Home Visits

Before the visit:

- Complete/hand in, 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment'
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- Always make sure that the school knows where you are going.

During the visit:

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit.
- Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard.
- Do not stay too long.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be professional.
- Do not carry large sums of money.

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 in school. or
- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the residence.

Additional Precautions:

- 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" – see Appendix 2.

Home Visits during Covid-19

- Staff will not undertake any home visits unless they are deemed to be essential.
- Staff will not enter students' homes under any circumstances, essential meetings will be carried out on the doorstep ensuring social distancing is maintained and minimising the risk of exposure to Covid-19.
- Staff travelling in the same vehicle will ensure adequate PPE is worn.
- The interior of the vehicle's surfaces will be thoroughly cleaned after use.
- Staff who carry out visits to students living in care settings will follow the care settings guidance/restrictions for maintaining social distancing and minimising the risk of being exposed to Covid-19. They will wear adequate PPE.
- All procedures for arranging, conducting, and following the meeting will be adhered to as set down in this policy.

Home Visit Risk Assessment

Address:	Date:		
	Yes	No	Unknown
Is this the first time of visiting this property?			
Is this visit unannounced?			
Is the information being provided during the visit likely to be met with an emotional reaction?			
Is the property known for having harmful/illegal substances present?			
Are there any animals known to be at the property which would be considered dangerous?			
Are there any known previous or current violent/difficult relationships within the property?			
Is the property in an area which is known for criminal activity?			
Are there any restrictions on being able to access the property easily?			
Is there likely to be any unknown adults present during the visit to the property?			
Has there been any police involvement at the property?			
Score: 3 marks per 'Yes' response 2 marks per 'Unknown' response 1 mark per 'No' response			
			Total:

<p>Total marks:</p> <p>10 or less: Proceed with usual caution 11-20: Take steps to reduce the risk; proceed only with maximum caution 21+: Consider hosting the meeting at an alternative venue, such as a local school or other meeting place</p>
<p>Other comments or reasoning for different measures being taken:</p>

10.Home Visit Form – Parent/Carer Copy

STUDENT NAME		ADDRESS	
PARENT/CARER'S NAME			
PARENT/CARER TELEPHONE NUMBERS			
EMAIL ADDRESS			
DATE OF VISIT			REASON FOR VISIT
STAFF NAME VISITING 1			
STAFF NAME VISITING 2			
TIME OF ARRIVAL			
TIME OF DEPARTURE			
DATE VISIT AUTHORISED			
VISIT AUTHORISED BY			
OFFICE USE			

11.Home Visit Form – School Copy

STUDENT NAME		ADDRESS	
PARENT/CARER'S NAME			
PARENT/CARER TELEPHONE NUMBERS			
EMAIL ADDRESS			
DATE OF VISIT			REASON FOR VISIT
STAFF NAME VISITING 1			
STAFF NAME VISITING 2			
TIME OF ARRIVAL			
TIME OF DEPARTURE			
DATE VISIT AUTHORISED			
VISIT AUTHORISED BY			
COMMENTS			

12. Review

This policy is reviewed every year by the Head Teacher

Issue Date: 01/11/2020

The next review date for this policy is October 2021.

NB During the Covid-19 Pandemic – this policy will be reviewed and updated in keeping with local restrictions and regulations whenever necessary.