



Home Visits Policy

Adopted on:

Review date:

Durrington Infant and Junior Federated Schools

Home Visits Policy

Statement of disability awareness: We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, medical condition, attainment and background. The school will ensure that all children have access to a balanced and broadly based curriculum, which is flexible enough to ensure that every child's needs are met, so that they can be fully included in all aspects of school life. We will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop an environment where all members of the school community can flourish and feel safe.

Values

Together we...

Love learning
Have fun
Care and respect
Never give up
Succeed

Vision

Working together to succeed.

Mission Statement

At Durrington Infant and Junior School we promise to create a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment in which all members of the school are encouraged and supported to succeed.

We will develop a love of learning in children and adults which is inspired by a creative curriculum and quality teaching.

We will work together to challenge, inspire and motivate all children to become independent, confident and caring citizens.

Introduction

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all school staff carrying out home visits. Where home visits take place, a risk assessment should be completed in advance. This will identify any concerns about potential risks and appropriate measures to be taken. If specific information is known about families, this should be added to the risk assessment.

EYFS home visits will always take place with staff in pairs. Home visits can only take place when the policy and protocols are fully met. Policy and procedures must be consistently applied.

Rationale for carrying out home visits

There is a unanimous feeling in our school that the home visits which staff undertake have huge benefits. The insights that staff have gained into each child's home and background greatly helps them to assess their level of need in school and prepare for the child's entry into the setting. Another major benefit is that the home visits are the start or the continued building of the relationship with parents which is vital if we are to be successful in providing for the needs of the child. It also shows parents that the school respects them and wants to share their knowledge, which puts the relationship on a more equal footing.

Meeting each child in his or her home environment has proved invaluable in:

- gathering information that will enable the children to settle into Nursery and Reception classes;
- establishing positive links with families, especially those of vulnerable pupils.

For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet the teacher and staff in a safe environment, where they feel confident and at ease.

For teachers and support staff, a visit provides the opportunity to:

- establish early, positive contact;
- see children in their own familiar settings;
- meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children;
- understand the problems that children might encounter at school, and also to appreciate the wealth of learning that goes on in the home.

This all helps to get a fuller picture of the children. Professionals can gain much from observing a child where he or she feels settled and in control.

Guidelines for Staff

Structure of EYFS home visits

The class teacher and a Learning Support Assistant make each visit together. As well as the obvious safety implications, this allows one to talk to the child's parents and the other to focus solely on the child. This can be the beginning of the relationship between the teacher and the child, especially as staff have been invited into the child's home. It also means that the parent has focused time with the Teacher or Learning Support Assistant. Thirty minutes is the standard period of time devoted to each home visit. Visits take place either during the term before children are due to start attending Nursery or reception or at the beginning of their start term. Parents are always telephoned in advance to confirm the appointment.

Equipment needed

All visits need careful structuring and prepared resources. Visiting staff members will take an information pack with them when visiting a pupil and their parents in their home. This would usually contain photographs of staff and the kinds of activities the children will be doing inside and outside of the school, crayons, paper and story book along with the standard forms that would need to be filled in by the parents. Either the teacher or the Learning Support Assistant will read stories to the child and the other adult will engage with the parent/carer.

Staff should also take a mobile phone for safety reasons, a map to locate addresses, a camera to take a photograph of the child and a range of toys and books for the child to play with.

Before the visit

- Show respect for Parents/Carers as equal partners.
- Be a good listener.
- Make appointments in advance and offer alternative dates/times.
- Ensure that parents know when you will arrive, how long you will stay, what will happen, what kinds of questions you will be asking and what information you will bring (Appendix 2 – parents' information sheet).
- Ask them to think about the information they need from you in advance of the meeting.
- Accept the right of a family not to want a home visit.
- Confirm Parents/Carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child.
- Do not assume that all Parents/Carers are literate.
- Make sure you consider diversity of social, cultural, racial, religious and sexual orientation.
- Familiarise yourself with the route/ location, parking restrictions etc before you leave
- Leave details of your visiting schedule with another member of staff

During the visit

- Be aware of pets and other adults who may be in the home.
- Sit near a door or exit and if you feel uneasy or worried at any time, make an excuse and leave.
- Staff should avoid commenting on a child's home or provision so that parents do not feel that any judgement is being made on their home or lifestyle.
- Staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures.
- They should comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing modest clothing etc.
- Staff should remain aware of time constraints on both themselves and parents.

- Return to the school or phone in when you have completed visits and are back at home.

Specific Protocols for All Home Visits

Risk Assessment:

- Check records to see what is known and information available.
- Talk to other professionals who may already have had contact or involvement with the family.
- Obtain information about the location of the home visit. For example, does the area have a reputation for being unsafe, isolated or poorly lit?
- Discuss strategies to adopt when working with a potentially challenging Parent/Carer/Family with your line manager.
- Where potential risks are identified, arrange an alternative meeting environment

ALWAYS COMPLETE THE RISK ASSESSMENT BEFORE A VISIT TAKES PLACE – Appendix 1

Health and Safety:

- Inform a nominated member of staff when you are leaving for a home visit.
- Leave the details of the home visit schedule with a senior member of staff. Include a list of visit addresses and times including family name, child's name, address, telephone number, purpose of visit, and time due back at base.
- You must inform the nominated person if there is a cancellation or alteration to the time.
- Carry with you and show the parent some form of identification.
- Demonstrate normal courtesy – wait to be invited into the home.
- If a child answers the door, ask if an adult is present in the house before entering. Do not enter if an adult is not present.
- If the Parent/Carer appears at all uncomfortable about the visit continuing, staff should offer to leave, offer to continue the contact with a telephone call and give the Parent/Carer the telephone number of the school.

- Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels dangerous or threatening – leave, saying for example that you need to get something from your car.
- All Home Visits must finish by 16.30.
- Contact the nominated person immediately after the visit is finished informing them that you are safe. The nominated person must advise the Head Teacher if staff carrying out a home visit has not made contact by the appointed time and locally agreed actions must be followed.



Risk Assessment for:		EYFS Home Visits				
Establishment: Durrington Infant and Junior School		Assessment by:		Date:		
1st Review date:		Risk assessment approved by:		Date:		
Description of activities: Please attach a schedule of your home visits on a separate sheet.						
Contact telephone number:						
1. Hazards What could cause harm?	2. People Who might be harmed?	3. Severity of harm How badly could they be harmed? (Choose one only assuming a worst case scenario)	4. Likelihood Of harm occurring with present controls	5. Risk level Please refer to key indicator on last page	6. Controls What controls are currently in place?	7. Further action Are the present controls adequate? If not, what else needs to be done, by whom and by what date?
EXAMPLES Electricity Equipment/Machinery Harmful Chemicals Infectious Material Manual Handling Minibus/Car crash Poor Food Hygiene Slips, Trips, Falls Violence/ Abduction	EXAMPLES Children/ Young Persons New or Expectant Mothers Staff The Public Visitors Volunteers	EXAMPLES Death Major Injury or Illness (Fracture, dislocation, amputation, hospital treatment, asphyxiation, unconsciousness) Minor Injury or Illness (First-aid needed/time off work) Superficial Injury or discomfort (No first-aid treatment needed)	CHOOSE FROM Very Likely Likely Remote	CHOOSE FROM High Medium Low Insignificant	EXAMPLES Health and Safety Signs Information Instruction/Training Local Safety Rules Personal Protective Equipment Adequate Supervision Following Safety Team Guidance Written Procedures	EXAMPLES Following Safety Team Guidance Health and Safety Signs Increased Supervision More Information Additional Instruction/Training Updated Local Safety Rules Personal Protective Equipment Written Procedures
Aggressive or violent parents/student/family member	Members of staff undertaking the home visit.	Major injury or illness	Remote	Insignificant risk	Home visiting policy adhered to. Mobile phone taken and number recorded of risk assessment. 2 person visit. Family information reviewed before visit.	Controls are adequate

					<p>Time of visit recorded on risk assessment.</p> <p>Address of home noted on risk assessment.</p> <p>Agreed time for visit to end and check in with senior staff member at the end of the visit.</p> <p>If member/s of staff hasn't checked, phone call to mobile to check status.</p> <p>If contact is not made and concerns remain, senior staff notified and liaison with police as necessary.</p>	
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SEVERITY OF HARM	SUPERFICIAL	MINOR	MAJOR	DEATH	RISK INDICATOR KEY This indicator is to help and guide your assessment of risk. You should use your discretion to adjust the result of using the guide where appropriate. It is important that the level of risk sets your priorities and timescale for action. For example, tackle high level risks first and obviously do so immediately.
LIKELIHOOD					
VERY LIKELY	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High risk	High risk	
LIKELY	Low Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High risk	
REMOTE	Insignificant Risk	Insignificant Risk	Insignificant Risk	Insignificant Risk	

Appendix 2

Parents' information sheet

Home visits – Your questions answered

What is a home visit?

As the name suggests a home visit is an informal visit to your home by school staff. It is usually carried out when your child has been offered a place at the setting but before they actually start.

Why do home visits?

Home visits are a really good way for staff to begin to get to know both you and your child and vice versa.

It is a great opportunity to spend some time in a relaxed atmosphere, exchanging information and planning your child's start at the setting. You will also have the chance to ask questions and express any concerns you may have.

It is not an inspection of you or your home!

You are under no obligation to accept a home visit and a meeting can be arranged at the setting if you prefer.

All information is considered confidential and will not be shared without your permission.

Practicalities

Who will do the home visit?

This is often but not always the teacher and a learning support assistant.

How long will it take?

The length of the visit can vary; it is usually between 30 – 45 minutes but no longer than an hour.

What will happen at the home visit?

We know that children like to be busy and active!

One member of staff will usually get to know your child by playing with them and showing them books or photos of the setting. Your child may also like to share some of their favourite toys or activities with the practitioner.

The other member of staff will complete some basic information forms with you, give you a welcome pack and go through some details about the setting.

You will also have the opportunity to pass on the 'Getting to know you' booklet and anything else you would like the setting to know about your child. Any questions or concerns can be answered and discussed.

How should I prepare for a home visit?

- Have some basic information to hand such as your doctor's name and address, your emergency contact details etc in order to speed up the form filling process.
- Try to remove any distractions, for example family pets. It is also helpful if the television has been turned off.
- Have some of your child's favourite toys or playthings available, as these can help the practitioner to engage with your child.
- Prepare a list of questions you may want to ask just so you don't forget!
- If you have any questions, worries or concerns about your home visit or would like any further information please contact us at the setting.