



**HOLY CHILD**  
Primary School | Dallas

# Enrolment Application - Home Visit Policy

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## Rationale

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## Vision Statement

As people of God, the community of Holy Child continually seeks wisdom, knowledge and grace. Our learners are empowered to create a just and caring world. We never see a need without doing something about it.

## All Home Visits Conducted by Staff *Must* be Authorised by **The Safeguarding Lead**

In addition, wherever possible Parent(s)/Guardian(s) 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/Guardians are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

## Home Visit Definition

A home visit requires a member(s) of staff to enter the home of a Parent/Guardian for the purposes of the student's wellbeing.

## Aims

At Holy Child School we recognise that Parents/Guardians are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. The aim of a home visit is to:

- establish a partnership between Parents/Guardians and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met
- develop and strengthen relationships with Parents/Guardians for the best interests, and wellbeing of the child.

## Reasons for home visits

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach Parents/Guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the Parents/Guardians to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used as follows:

- when students are refusing to come into school
- when there are attendance issues/concerns
- to work with and support Parents/Guardians in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue
- develop relationship with family
- when all other means of contact with a family has failed

- to meet with Parents/Guardians 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 Parents/Guardians 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 Parents/Guardians have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safety concerns for the student
- 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 visit a child who has been absent from 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, guardians, 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 members 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. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for Parents/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 the school's policy and practice.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both Parents/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 and Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment (Appendix 1), and inform student services 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 and 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 (Parents/Guardians) or another responsible adult whom a P/C/G has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their P/C/G 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 designated Wellbeing Officer, Leigh Mahady 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 000.
- Assure Parents/Guardians that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively 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 procedures safety you must mandatorily report disclosures or suspicions to the designated teacher for child protection.
- Be sensitive to the culture of the home.
- Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- Be empathetic, but remain neutral. Don't 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. Time allocation.
- Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.
- Complete Home Visit Form to evidence 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.
- Don't carry large sums of money.

#### *After the visit*

- Report back to the school; 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 the Designated Child Protection Officer on arrival back.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

#### *Home Visit Form (Appendix 2)*

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make.
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events fall from their memory.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice should be sought from the head teacher as soon as possible.

#### *Making Safe Home Visits: summary before*

- Complete/hand in, Lone Working and 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.

#### *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 to 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*

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.

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 and Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit.

## APPENDIX 1

### Lone Working and Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Matrix 1 - 6	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/student / family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low		Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit Two person visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out so others aware Take mobile phone for communication
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low		Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch, phone etc for emergency Advise team or partner where you are going Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas
Movement through public areas e.g.	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote	Low		Back down from confrontation Call for help
To/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed		Remote	Low		Be alert
Illness or injury/ accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote	Low		Alert Emergency services if appropriate Alert team members if able to Ensure access to phone Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed Complete injury at work protocol on return
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low		Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements

**APPENDIX 2**

**Home Visit Form**

<b>Person Visiting</b>	<b>Job Role</b>
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<b>Student Name</b>
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<b>Reason for Calling</b>
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<b>Visited Home Address</b>
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<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
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<b>Comments</b>
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<b>Signed</b>	<b>Staff Name</b>
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<b>Signed</b>	<b>Parent/Guardian Name</b>
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<b>Visit authorised by Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
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<b>Outcome of home visit</b>
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<b>Action required</b>
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The top copy of this **MUST** be left at the home.