

The Oval School



Home Visits Policy

Date Ratified: 27. 3. 17

Signed by: *E.C. Hayes*
On behalf of School Governors

Signed by:
Headteacher *R.K. Chahal*

Review Date: *March 2019*

Home Visits Policy

Two Members Of Staff On Visits

Home visits must be carried out by two members of staff. Staff must arrive and leave a home together, for safety reasons. Staff may conduct visits alone if a risk assessment has been completed and if the worker has a good relationship with the family. Permission is needed by the headteacher for visits to the home with only one staff member.

Sign Out And Sign In

It is very important that staff members going off site, sign out on departure and sign in on return to school. They must complete a visit schedule and hand in to reception before leaving for a visit.

Mobile Telephone Taken On Visits

A mobile telephone is to be taken on all home visits, to be used for contacting school to report on their safety or for contacting the people being visited, if this is necessary. Before leaving school, staff should ensure that the phone ring tone is loud enough to hear whilst it is in a bag and that it has adequate battery power and monetary balance remaining.

Visit Schedule Left At Reception During Visits

A copy of the visits schedule taken out by staff members on visits must be kept at reception with a named person for the duration of the visit(s), as a record of the exact address(es) that staff members will visit. On the schedule, if there will be more than one home visited, addresses must be listed in the order that the visits will take place. Visits must occur in the order as listed. If there is a reason why this is not possible, staff on the visit must phone reception to explain the situation and the change in order of the visits must be marked clearly on the schedule at reception. If the estimated return time changes, staff on visits should telephone the nominated staff member in reception to inform of this and staff on reception should mark this change clearly on the visits schedule at reception.

Staff To Telephone School Between Visits

If staff are to visit more than one home before returning to school, a staff member on the visits must phone reception after each visit, to report that they are safe. If staff will not be returning to school before finishing work, they must phone school to inform reception staff when they finish. It is not adequate for staff on visits to text staff at school to report on their safety.

Staff Member On Reception To Telephone Staff On Visit

In the event of staff members on home visits not having telephoned, or returned to school after 30 minutes since their departure from school or a previous visit, the nominated staff member on reception should telephone staff on visit to check on their safety.

Reception

The reception and staff working on or covering reception is responsible for checking on staff who have left for a visit and not reported to school within the timeframe agreed. Reception should check the visit schedule every half an hour. Equally staff on the visit must check in with reception. Reception should not keep having to call staff and must make suitable safety arrangement over their lunchtime, breaktime or when leaving the office.

Raising A Concern And Contacting Police

In the event of staff on home visits not having telephoned or returned to school by the estimated time, and reception staff are unable to make contact with them, the person in charge at the time should be informed. If contact has not been made between staff on visit and staff at school by twenty minutes after the expected time of contact or return, staff at school should contact the police by dialling 999 or 112.

Codeword

In the event of staff being in danger and trapped on a home visit, if contact is made with school, they should use the codeword of '**can you cancel my appointment please**' in any sentence, to alert staff at school that they are in danger and need assistance.

Staff Safety

Staff should follow the Safe and Effective Home Visiting Guidance. Staff should be mindful of their personal safety and take precautionary measures to safeguard themselves against potential hazards.

Confidentiality

The safety, well-being and protection of children is paramount when making decisions about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between staff is an essential element ensuring well-being and safety of children. (See Confidentiality Policy and Child Protection Policy)

Inclusion

This school is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. The aim is to ensure that all children and those associated with the school receive fair and equal treatment. The school aims to promote equality of opportunities and freedom from discrimination on the grounds of cultural background, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability.

Timing

All home visits need to be completed by 4.30pm. On Fridays this time is 3pm. Staff do not have to return to school but they must call and notify staff of their whereabouts. If there has been no contact

received reception will call them. Still if it is not possible to make contact, management will take the matter further.

Who This Policy Applies To

This policy is applicable to all staff conducting home visits, including staff directly employed by The Oval School.

General Responsibilities Of Staff

- All staff members are to complete a visit schedule before leaving.
- Staff to ensure phones are charged, on loud and have the reception and management's phone numbers programmed in.
- Staff to inform school if there is a change to their contact details.

Safe and Effective Home Visiting Guidance

Communication

Introduction - on arrival at a home, it is key that a clear introduction of both staff on the visit is made. Photographic **ID** should be worn and shown to the family member. **Smile** and be friendly!

Ask/check whom you are talking to.

Clarify if they are expecting you to visit.

If the person you are expecting to visit is not there, do not go into the house, say you will arrange another appointment.

If there are **visitors in the home** and you do not know who they are or you feel threatened by their presence, do not go into the house/leave the house and arrange a visit time that will be more convenient for the family.

Be clear about - the **purpose** of the visit, what your **role** is and any **expectations** – yours and theirs.

Language - make sure that the language you use is easy to understand, **avoid jargon**, which may be everyday speak for you e.g. Every Child Matters outcomes, DCSF etc.

If parents/carers do not understand English, under no circumstances should you use children or relatives to act as your interpreter. Arrange to return with an appropriately qualified interpreter.

Be honest and be a good listener.

Be calm and non-threatening. Have a **confident** demeanour.

Avoid body language that could be misinterpreted - folded or raised arms, hands on hips or pointing finger.

If the client is aggressive, stay calm, speak gently, slowly and clearly.

Respect

Remember that you are a visitor and not a guest, wait to be told what room to enter and where to sit.

Respect people's personal space; be aware of the distance between you that they appear comfortable with.

Use appropriate eye contact.

Dress Appropriately and Professionally (no low tops etc.)

Safety

Phone school between visit - if you are off site to do more than one visit, phone the centre between visits to report that you are safe.

Parking - if driving to the property, park as near to it as possible. Park in a well lit area if it is dark. Park the car so that it is pointing in the direction that you will be driving when you leave the property so you do not need to turn the car around before leaving.

Exits - whilst in the property, be aware of the exits and if possible position yourself near to an exit, or in a place where you are not blocked from the exit by another person.

Animals - be aware of any animals at the property. If there is a dog in the room you are in, for example, it may be appropriate to ask the owner to shut the dog in another room.

Trust your intuition – if you feel scared or uneasy, act on it straightaway and make an excuse to leave and leave the home as soon as possible.

Other

If no one is at home, leave the 'sorry we missed you...' note.