



Saint Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy Home Visits Policy

Home Visit Policy and Procedure

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEADTEACHER (OR MEMBER OF THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM) PRIOR TO THE VISIT TAKING PLACE.

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

Home Visit 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 St Joseph's Catholic Academy we recognise that Parents/Carers 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/Carers 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 for the best interests 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/Carers. They are particularly useful as they enable the Parents/Carers 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.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.
- To meet with Parents/Carers 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 Parent/Carer 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/Carers have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support Parents/Carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- To visit a child who has been off 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).

Nursery Home/School Partnerships

A home visit will take place at the start of a child's Nursery journey. We understand that parents know their children best. The aim of the visit is to begin to build a positive, collaborative relationship between parents and teachers. This will also be a time for children to become familiar with the Nursery staff in their home setting.

- Visits are not a judgement of parenting skills but to offer parents an opportunity to ask questions, share any concerns and gather information from staff to support their child's transition to nursery in the best way possible. An example of topics that may be discussed are the child's play preferences, medical history, their speech and language journey and relationship with food.
- The Nursery teacher will contact you, before your child starts nursery, to arrange a suitable date and time for the visit. The visit will last around 30 minutes.

Benefits

- Home visits have many benefits. For Parents/Carers 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.

Before the Visit

- If you are concerned about your safety do not 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/Carers to come into the school).
- Complete the Home Visit form ensuring it is signed by the Headteacher (or member of the Safeguarding Team).
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you; home visits should always be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person's role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both Parents/Carers, with or without the child.
- 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.

During the Visit

- Carry a mobile phone.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit.
- 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/Carers) or another responsible adult whom a Parent/Carer 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 Parent/Carer 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 contact the Headteacher straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised. If appropriate the Head/Safeguarding Team will make a referral to social care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure Parent/Carer 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- 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 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.
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform school immediately.
- **If there is no answer at the home, a Home Visit Slip must be delivered to the household.**

After the visit

- Report back to the school and hand in the completed Home Visit Form to the Headteacher.
- 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 Headteacher/Safeguarding Team on arrival back to school.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.
- **If there is no response from the household by the time stipulated on the Home Visit Slip, take the necessary course for action, e.g contact police and/or social services.**

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and the Safeguarding Team on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body.

Approved: June 2024

Next Review Due: June 2025

Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding
- Attendance



Home Visit Form

Staff Name(s) _____

Job Role(s) _____

Student Name _____

Visited Home Address _____

Reason for calling _____

On (date) _____ at (time) _____

Signed _____ (Staff Name)

Signed _____ (Staff Name)

Visit authorised by: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Outcome of Home Visit

Action Required



Home Visit Slip

Staff Name(s) _____

Job Role(s) _____

Student Name _____

Visited Home Address _____

Reason for calling _____

On (date) _____ at (time) _____

Signed _____ (Staff Name)

Signed _____ (Staff Name)

**THE HOME VISIT WAS MADE TODAY AS YOUR CHILD HAS FAILED TO ARRIVE AT SCHOOL
AND WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH ANY OF THE EMERGENCY
CONTACTS RELATED TO YOUR CHILD.**

IF WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM AN ADULT IN POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR

_____ **(child's name)**

BEFORE _____ **(time)**

**WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO CONFIRM THE CHILD'S SAFETY
WHICH WILL INCLUDE CONTACTING THE POLICE AND/OR SOCIAL SERVICES.**