



HOME VISIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Goodyers End Primary School

Statement of intent

What is the aim of this policy and procedure?

- 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/guardians in order to work together in the best interests of the child.***
- To ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines to reduce risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.***

Date Adopted by the Governing Body: Summer 2024

Date of next review: Summer 2027

Adopted by Governing Body	Summer 2024
Review date	Summer 2027

Relevant legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance

- Education Act 2002
- Working together to safeguard children 2023
- Keeping children safe in education 2023
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024
- Children missing education 2016
- Pupil registration regulations 2006
- Health and safety at work
- <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/>

Relevant members of staff and policy information

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Ms C Hall
Deputy designated safeguarding lead/s (DDSL/s)	Miss A Foster, Mrs A Gray, Mrs L Malkin
Designated Teacher for Children who are Looked After / were previously Looked After	Mrs A Gray
Family Learning Mentor	Mrs L Malkin
School Business Manager (SBM)	Mrs C Hollywood
Attendance lead	Miss A Foster
Chair of Governors	Mr M Lovick
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs D Moorey
Policy approved by the governing body	Date: July 2024
Date of policy review	July 2027

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Goodyers End Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Whilst the expectation is that all *learners* attend school regularly, we recognise that there may be occasions when they may be absent or need to be supported at home and this may require a home visit. Maintaining contact between home and school is an important mechanism for ensuring that a child is able to continue accessing their education and in supporting them to return to school. The safety of our children and our staff is paramount. This policy has been developed to ensure that home visits undertaken are both safe and effective.

A home visit is a visit that requires members of staff to visit the home address of a pupil/student to see the child (as part of absence management or in the case of the pupil being too unwell to attend school); or to speak to a parent, carer, or guardian in an emergency or as part of a plan.

Home visits are important in helping the school to contact new parents/carers/guardians or build relationships where children are finding it difficult to attend school. Home visits are also particularly useful in facilitating contact between some parents/carers/guardians and school staff in circumstances where those parents/carers/guardians are genuinely unable to come into school for health/medical or other reasons.

Home visits have many benefits. For parents/carers/guardians and children, a home visit provides an opportunity to meet a key professional from the school/setting who is able to provide support to the child and/or family in an environment that feels safe, familiar and comfortable for the child/family.

Reasons for home visits

Home visits may be undertaken for a variety of reasons. This could include:

- ***When all other means of contact with a family has failed.***
- ***Children refusing to come into school.***
- ***To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school; and/or attempts to contact parents/carers/guardians have not elicited a response; and/or the school/setting has any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the child.***
- ***To work with and support parents/carers/guardians in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.***

Home visit procedures

The purpose of a home visit is to see the child **and** to speak to the parent/carer/guardian. Good practice would dictate that parents are always aware of the visit; but there may be occasional circumstances when this is not in the best interests of the child or practicable. All home visits conducted by staff must be authorized by the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team prior to the visit taking place.

Before the Visit

- Be familiar with the school's procedures for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit and that it is absolutely necessary.
- 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. (In some circumstances the school staff may accompany a social worker visit).
 - Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation.
 - Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents/carers, with or without the child.

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- 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.

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 parents/carers or another responsible adult whom a parent/carer has delegated to be there in their absence and who has been given permission to speak 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
- Do not enter a child's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child is in the home inappropriately alone, unsupervised or in danger contact the school's designated teacher straight away to discuss your concerns
- If you feel that a child is in immediate danger contact emergency services on 999.
- Assure parents/carers that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell 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 under 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 prepared to remove footwear if asked.
- 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. After the visit
- Report back to the school; if possible, give written feedback to the appropriate staff in line with the 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 Teacher on arrival back at school.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with any staff who are not directly involved with those particular children.

Reports

- 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 the precise recollection of events fall from their memory.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visitor advice should be sought from the Head Teacher as soon as possible.

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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.
- Wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived.
- 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 the 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 the 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. No one should make a visit outside school hours, unless it is deemed an emergency and authorised by the Head Teacher.

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