



# **HILBRE HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COLLEGE**

## **HOME VISITS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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This document has been developed in line with the following documentation;

- Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance 2019
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Hilbre High School Safeguarding policy
- Hilbre High School Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct policy

**ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEADTEACHER OR OTHER SENIOR LEADER.**

**ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY SENIOR LEADERS MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEADTEACHER.**

In addition, wherever possible, parents or carers should be informed of the home visit prior to arrival.

#### **HOME VISIT DEFINITION:**

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent or carer in the case of an emergency visit or a procedural visit.

#### **REASONS FOR HOME VISITS:**

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach parents or carers. They are particularly useful as they enable the parent or carer 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; this can be carried out by school staff.
- When there are attendance issues or concerns.
- When students are being educated at home.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school.
- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing school work at home, eg. following a fixed term exclusion or medical issue.
- To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, eg. due to a medical issue.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

The aim of the Home Visit policy and 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.
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff member(s) involved. Record this on MyConcern.
- 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 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.
- Complete 'Lone Working and Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit' (Appendix 1) and hand in to Dave White, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), to inform him of your intended location before departing for a home visit.
- Ensure you take a mobile of which the office has the phone number.

#### **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 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 an adult with parental responsibility (parent or carer) or another responsible adult whom a parent or carer has delegated to be there in their absence and 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 or 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/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone, unsupervised or in danger, contact the DSL straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone, unsupervised or in danger. If appropriate, the DSL will make a referral to Social Care.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger, contact emergency services on 999.
- Assure the parent or carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only inform 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 to the DSL for child protection.
- 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. Do not get personally involved and be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation; do not gossip about the school or staff.
- Do not stay too long and keep to the point.
- Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.

#### **AFTER THE VISIT:**

- Report back to the school and, if possible, give written feedback to the appropriate staff in line with school policy.
- Record your observations on MyConcern upon your return to school.
- 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 the home visit should be discussed with the DSL on arrival back at school.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

#### **REPORTS:**

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make by completing the 'Lone Working and Home Visits Post Visit report' (Appendix 2) and hand in to the DSL.
- 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 Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible.

#### **MAKING SAFE HOME VISITS - SUMMARY**

##### **Before:**

- Complete/hand in 'Lone Working and Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit'.
- 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.

##### **During:**

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit.
- Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard.
- Do not stay too long.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be professional.
- Do not carry large sums of money.

##### **Actions 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 do not be enticed into an argument. Try to diffuse the 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 working as a pair, agree a code (safe word or phrase) to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave.
- The same code 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 concerns about personal safety and inform school immediately.

**After:**

- Report back in school or if you are not returning directly to school, telephone your line manager at school after the visit to say you have left the residence.

*If you are concerned about your safety, do not 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 INTENT TO VISIT**

Staff name and contact number:		
Visiting name and contact number:		
Visiting address:		
Student name:		
Date:	Time out:	
Intended return time:	Return time:	
Signature: .....		
Accompanied: Yes/No	Persons/organisation:	
Transport type:	Own car <input type="checkbox"/> Shared car <input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Bus <input type="checkbox"/> M/c <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason for visit: (refer to table below)		
Visit authorised by:	Signature: ..... *time and date authorised	

\*This form should be completed immediately before a visit takes place. If a planned visit is postponed, then the re-arranged visit will require new authorisation. Before undertaking a visit the following "Step Analysis" risk assessment should be completed. The purpose of the visit should be clearly identified and an individual evaluation of each potential problem made.

Potential problem		Please tick	Explanation of problem, if required
Task	Enforcement/school policy		
	Giving bad news		
	Sensitive discussion		
	Prevent strategy and/or supporting British Values		
	Safeguarding/welfare concern		
	Attendance concern/investigation/support		
Self	Stress		
	Lack of information		
	Recent incidents or history		
Environment	Unknown person present		
	Unfamiliar area		
	Isolation		
	Dog/animals		
	Paths/stairwells/balconies		
	Exit difficulties		
Person visited	Previous incidents/history		
	Alcohol/drug misuse		
	History of mental health issues		
	Likely anger/history of violence		
Should the visit take place at all?		Yes/No	
Action plan:			
Safe word:			

On completing this form, it should be handed into reception. Should the member of staff not return to school by the time given, then contact should be attempted by phone by reception. If no answer can be obtained, then a member of SLT should be contacted. Visiting members of staff must take a mobile phone, first aid kit and a personal attack alarm on every visit.

**Appendix 2  
LONE WORKING AND HOME VISITS POST VISIT REPORT**

Use this form for all visits apart from either a visit to drop work off only or a visit to drop a student off/or collect a student (for drop-offs and collections it will be sufficient to log the event on SIMS or intervention logs unless a further concern or action arises out of this visit, then revert to the form).

Staff name:		
Visiting name:		
Student name/passenger:		
Date:	Time out:	Time in:
Mileage start:	Mileage end:	
Short report on visit (to be retained in appropriate student file, eg. general, welfare or CP):		
The objective of the visit was achieved: Yes/No		
If no, what further action needs to be taken?		
A follow up to the visit is required: Yes/No		
If yes, what needs to be done?		
<b>Post visit</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>Action taken</b>
<b>Potential concern(s) arising from visit</b>	Child protection/safeguarding concern (must be discussed with DSL on arrival back)	
	Concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger (contact the school's DSL 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).	
	Student missing from home (must be discussed with designated DSL on arrival back in school)	
	Other	