



## Home Visits & Reasonable Enquiries

### Contents

#### Introduction

1. Legal framework
2. Personal Safety
3. Home Visits
4. After an attendance visit
5. If a pupil is considered to be missing education
6. Child protection and safeguarding
7. Monitoring and Review

## **Introduction**

Oak Green School believes that honest, good home : school relationships are essential to the successful academic development of pupils.

The purpose of a home visit might be to get to know children better, prevent them from missing education or to safeguard children against harm. Home visits are an increasingly common part of school life, often with the purpose of:

- Meeting parents of Early Years children to learn about them before starting school and assess needs
- Making reasonable enquiries to ensure regular attendance or address concerns for poor attendance
- Establishing whereabouts of children when this cannot be reliably established by contact with families
- Checking on children's welfare

Clear procedures must be in place to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about the purpose of a home visit carried out by school staff.

Since a staff member might be entering onto or into private property, it is important that all parties are made aware of the rules and procedures. The staff member monitoring attendance will maintain the highest professional standards at all times. A copy of this policy will be made available to parents/carers on request.

## **Aims and Expectations for a Home Visit in Early Years**

- To build a relationship with the child and parent/carer before a child starts the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nursery / Preschool and in some cases Reception (Owls classes).
- To encourage parents to share as much information as possible about their child with school. This information helps OGS staff to get to know the child's needs and plan an appropriate settling-in programme.
- To allow parents/carers to share things in private and without interruption. Confidentiality should be respected.
- To meet a child in their home environment and establish a friendship to ease the settling-in period.
- To ensure children have met staff on familiar territory and help children feel more confident about making the transition from home to Owls.
- To get a picture of what a child likes to do at home.
- To share information about EYFS and what happens there.

Home visits will not be done uninvited for Early Years. Staff will have arranged a date and time well in advance of the visit. Parents/carers do not have to have a home visit for Early Years if they do not wish to. They will be offered the option when they enrol their child or attend the settling in meeting.

During the visit, it is suggested that one adult focuses primarily on the child and the other adult gathers information about the child from the parent/carer. The purpose is to build a relationship with the family; it is important that the parent/carer has time and opportunity to ask questions about the setting and that it does not become a question and answer session.

## **Aim of a Home Visit for attendance**

The aim is to check that children are safe and well. Visits might take place for vulnerable children and families if children are expected in school and cannot be reached, or when contact has been tried over a period of time and no response has been received or satisfactory reason given. A home visit for attendance will be in liaison with BC Attendance.

## **Aim of a Home Visit for welfare or CME**

A home visit for attendance would liaison with BC Children's Services if appropriate.

If a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, expected routes for safeguarding and child protection **MUST** be followed. A Designated/ Deputy Safeguarding Lead (D/DSL) must be informed as soon as possible and social care informed (and, if appropriate, the police) immediately.

Several agencies make these visits more regularly than schools. They can be called 'welfare checks' or 'safe and well' checks, when local authority social care teams or police visit pupils' homes, e.g. when a child returns home after being reported missing, to see if the child has suffered harm, where and with whom they've been, and if they've committed a crime or had one committed against them.

### **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to the: Education Act 1996. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

1.2. This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other school policies such as: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **2. Personal safety**

2.1. It is the responsibility of staff members to keep themselves safe at all times. They must avoid any situations that may risk their safety.

2.9. No staff members will attend any member in a private home alone. There must always be two members of staff. One of these **MUST** be a D/DSL if any safeguarding concern, CME, has been raised or is considered to be likely. If an Early Years visit, then an experienced member of staff must be present and one of the staff should be the key worker for the child being visited.

2.2. Staff members must carry a mobile phone at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the School Business Manager/DSL.

2.3. Staff members will leave a list of where they are going and 'check in' by calling the school office min. every two hours to update the school office of their whereabouts.

2.4. A risk assessment will be carried out prior to a home visit. If a particular home visit poses new risks, the risk assessment will be amended before the visit.

2.5. Staff members must never enter the home of a pupil unless an appointment has been made and the parent/carer is present, unless this is for safeguarding, including attendance. Written confirmation of the appointment must be recorded on CPOMs.

The only exception might be in the case of a potential CME, when a visit may not be able to be arranged with a parent / carer.

2.6. Appointment records must include the time and location along with the name of the pupil.

2.7. If the staff members feels that they are in immediate danger, they must contact the police immediately and then notify the school office as soon as possible after this.

2.8. Details of the vehicles used by staff members, including make, model, registration number and colour, must be held by the School Business Manager. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date insurance for business use.

### **3. Home visits**

3.1. The positive purpose of a home visit must be clear and explained to parents/ household members, e.g. to allow the school to learn reasons behind poor attendance and by opening a dialogue with parents/carers, staff can offer support.

3.2. A list of visits will be compiled. This list will include the name and address of the pupil, the name and contact details of the parent/carers, along with the attendance record of the pupil.

- 3.3. The list must be approved and signed by the Co-Headteacher/s before any visits occur.
- 3.4. If the parents/carers are not present at the arranged time, the staff member should wait no longer than 10 minutes. If the parent/carer does not arrive the visit will be cancelled.
- 3.5. If the parents/carers have given prior notice that they are running late, the staff member must not enter the grounds/house until they arrive, even if welcomed by other family members. The visit is to be with only the arranged parties. If parents/ carers are over 15 minutes late the visit will be cancelled.
- 3.6. Once in place, appointment arrangements must be adhered to. Notification will be given to the Co-Headteacher if any changes are made.
- 3.7. Identification cards will be worn at all times. They will be clearly displayed on the front and outside of clothing.
- 3.8. A house should not be entered if the staff feel unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit must be communicated in writing to the Co-Headteachers.
- 3.9. Parents/Carers to ensure all pets are put in a separate room or the garden during the visit. If there are potentially dangerous animals in the house, staff will request that they are kept in a separate room. If the parent/carer refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled. The reason for the cancellation will be communicated to the Co-Headteacher in writing.
- 3.10. Staff are expected not to have any food or drink during the visit.
- 3.11. Before and after the visit staff will 'check in' by calling the school office.

#### **4. After an attendance visit**

- 4.1. Once a visit has ended, any agreements made between staff and parents/carers will be recorded on CPOMs
- 4.2. Reminder letters will be sent to the parents/carers if the pupil fails to adhere to the agreements made during the home visit.
- 4.3. A note will be made in the pupil's CPOMs record if they fail to follow the agreement.
- 4.4. Continued failure to adhere to the agreement will result in a follow-up visit.
- 4.5. If the pupil's attendance falls below 90 per cent over the course of three months, the appropriate authorities will be notified in order for legal proceedings to be considered.

#### **5. If a pupil is considered to be a child missing education (CME)**

5.1 On the first day that a pupil misses school without explanation or authorisation, a trained member of staff should contact that pupil's parents/carers to make sure they're safe at home. If you have concerns, D/DSLs should make a prompt referral to either the child's social worker or safeguarding partners.

5.2 Both Oak Green and the LA must conduct 'reasonable enquiries' before removing pupils from roll. This is in situations where the pupil:

- Was granted leave of absence and failed to return to school within 10 days immediately following the period for which the absence was authorised (unless due to illness or other unavoidable cause)
- Has been continuously absent from the school for a period of 20 days or more (unless due to illness or other unavoidable cause)
- Failed to attend school on the date that the school was notified the pupil would attend school

5.3 Agree roles and responsibilities with the LA. As a school we must complete and record the following on CPOMs when making 'reasonable enquiries':

- Make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases within the LA, or the Department for Education (DfE)'s Key to Success or school2school systems
- Follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies, including any agencies known to be involved with the family such as Social Care

- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with the LA and school from which the child moved originally, or any LAs or schools to which the child may have moved
- Check with the LA where the child lives, if different from where the school is
- Conduct home visit(s) (made by the appropriate team), following local guidance concerning risk assessment, and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives
- Consult government policies and procedures for Children missing education.

## **6. Child protection and safeguarding**

6.1. Before school staff are appointed, appropriate background checks must be obtained. This must include an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and barred list check.

6.2. It is NOT permitted for a staff member to ever transport a pupil in a private vehicle.

6.3. The school acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

6.4. Oak Green School is clear that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

6.5. Any allegations made against staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Allegation against Staff or Whistle Blowing Policy.

## **7. Review and monitoring**

7.1. The Co-Headteachers are responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and amending it accordingly following any incidents or concerns.