

Governing Body of the Wallisdean Federated Schools

Early Years Home Visits Policy

Statement of intent

At Wallisdean Infant School our Early Years staff arrange home visits before children join the school in Year R. The purpose of the visit is to help build positive relationships and ease any transition anxiety. It is an opportunity for staff to speak with children and families in a relaxed setting allowing parents to ask questions and share information in an informal way and to support children's confidence by meeting staff in a familiar environment.

The school is committed to ensuring all home visits are effective and procedures are in place to minimise potential risks to staff and pupils.

This policy sets out how home visits will be conducted in order to ensure:

- Visits always have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place for all visits.
- The health and safety of staff is prioritised.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are adhered to at all times.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for home visits.
- Ensuring staff conducting home visits have received appropriate training, where necessary.
- Ensuring the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures during home visits.
- Ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements are in place to cover staff undertaking home visits.

The Executive Head Teacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Approving all home visits and ensuring they only take place where necessary and appropriate.
- Ensuring staff understand and follow the school's home visit arrangements, have read and signed the risk assessment.
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Ensuring staff conducting home visits are provided with relevant background information and circumstances to inform the risks that may be present.

Staff conducting home visits will be responsible for:

- Following this policy for all home visits.
- Acting professionally and sensitively, with due regard to all relevant school policies and procedures.

- Seeking authorisation for all home visits and ensuring the school has all the relevant details of the visit.
- Prioritising their own health and safety during visits.
- Keeping secure, factual records of all visits.
- Ensuring all information received will be used confidentially and will help staff to learn more about the educational, social, emotional and development needs of the children.

Visits are not expected to last more than 20 minutes.

Staff will introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the visit, which is to familiarise the family with Wallisdean Infant School and learn more about the child and family.

Staff will encourage families to share information about their child which can be used to help with the transition process. This includes finding out about children's interests at home and personal skills, such as getting changed and using cutlery.

Assure the parent/carer that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the Executive Head Teacher or other appropriate staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the visit. Do not promise not to relay information to the school. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Be professional: give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.

Home visits will take place in term time, during school hours.

Staff should not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult (parent/carer) and then ONLY if you deem it completely safe and necessary to do so.

Do not enter a child's bedroom, unless accompanied by a responsible adult (parent/carer) and then ONLY if you deem it completely safe and necessary to do so.

Staff will carry their school identity card which is shown upon arrival for a first visit at a home – the card will not be worn around the neck.

Staff will not enter a child's home if they feel unsafe and will terminate a visit and leave the property if they subsequently feel unsafe.

Staff should have a code word to indicate to each other if they do not feel safe and need to leave immediately. Staff may need to use the agreed code word when contacting the school.

If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit will be discussed with Executive Head Teacher.

If there are potentially dangerous animals in the residence, staff must request that they are kept in a separate room or placed outside for the duration of the visit. If the parent refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled.

Staff should feedback appropriate information to relevant staff regarding each home visit, eg any child protection concerns arising from a home visit must be discussed with the DSL upon return to school – use CPOMS to record the information.

Where a staff member cannot be contacted or located during or after a home visit, the Executive Head Teacher will be notified as soon as possible to decide on the appropriate

response. The police will be contacted where there are concerns for a staff member's welfare.

Personal Safety

Lone working for Home Visits will not be permitted. At least two staff members will conduct home visits together, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the Executive Head Teacher decides it is safe and appropriate for a home visit to be conducted alone. All lone visits will follow procedures outlined in the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

A unique risk assessment for an instance of lone working will be carried out prior to the commencement of any home visit undertaken by a single staff member and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

The Executive Head Teacher will ensure staff are aware of the following before a home visit:

- The findings of the relevant risk assessment, ie the risks and how to minimise them
- The area they will be visiting and any relevant information
- Relevant background information and family circumstances, eg aggressive tendencies, cultural sensitivities
- The potential presence of any aggressive pets
- The need to leave details of the visit with the school Admin Office, eg an itinerary with expected departure and arrival times
- The need to always carry identification and a charged mobile phone that is always switched on.
- To never enter a home without an appropriate adult present
- To prioritise their health and safety and leave if at any point they feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- The importance of reporting any incidents to the Executive Head Teacher as soon as possible
- All staff will have access to a debrief in the event of a difficult home visit.

A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be agreed by the Executive Head Teacher. If a particular home visit poses new or additional risks, the risk assessment will be updated before the visit.

It is the responsibility of staff conducting home visits to keep themselves safe at all times. Staff will be instructed to avoid any situations that may risk their safety. Before entering the home and once inside, staff will identify possible exit routes and ensure they always have access to escape quickly in the event of an emergency.

Staff conducting home visits will carry a mobile phone, which will remain switched on at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the school office. During visits, staff will avoid carrying large amounts of cash or valuable personal possessions. Where a staff member feels uncomfortable or unsafe at any point, they will end the visit immediately. The police will be contacted where there is a threat or use of violence.

Staff will notify the school office of any changes to the schedule of a home visit, eg a delay due to traffic, as soon as possible.

Staff driving to and from the home will follow the Hampshire's Driving for Work Procedure.

Training

Before performing their duties, staff conducting home visits will undergo the appropriate training in strategies for the prevention of violence, and other training deemed relevant by the Executive Head Teacher, eg cultural awareness, e-learning Keeping Yourself Safe.

Staff undertaking home visits must have appropriate skills, ie empathy, be non-judgemental and have good awareness of confidentiality. If necessary, training can be arranged.

The Executive Head Teacher will ensure staff understand the Staff Code of Conduct continues to apply during home visits.

Staff will never enter a home or stay inside without an appropriate adult present.

Staff will not hold conversations with siblings or other children in the home without an appropriate adult present.

Staff must remember they are visiting someone's home and so must be courteous at all times. Be respectful, sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.

Staff conducting home visits will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible. Serious concerns about a pupil's immediate welfare will be reported to the police and any relevant agencies.

Any allegations made against staff conducting home visits will be dealt with in accordance with the Low-level Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Monitoring and Review

The Executive Head Teacher will be responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and will amend it accordingly following any incidents or concerns. Feedback from staff who have conducted home visits will be used to inform the review process.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Executive Head Teacher and the governing body

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Concerns Policy
- Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy
- Lone Worker Risk Assessment
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- HCC Driving for Work Procedure

FGB Ratified: Summer 2026

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Summer Term 2029