Pinders Primary School



Home Visit Policy and Procedures

Pinders Primary School recognises the importance of establishing a close relationship with families. Home visits are an important part of the transition process into school and a positive way to create a welcoming and supportive learning relationship with families so that all children are able to get the very best from their time at school.

**Purpose:**

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all parties carrying out home visits. Where home visits take place, a risk assessment should be completed in advance. This will identify any concerns about potential risk and appropriate measures to be taken. If specific information is known about families, this should be added to the risk assessment

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is:

* To ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits.
* To ensure necessary information has been obtained prior to a home visit in order to carry out a risk assessment.

**Aims:**

At Pinders Primary school we recognise that parents/carers/guardians are children’s first educators and we value the contribution they make.

The aim of a home visit is:

* 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 for the best interests of the child.
* To ensure a child is safe if they have not attended school and we have been unable to contact parents/carers/guardians

All home visits conducted by staff **MUST** be authorised by the safeguarding Lead (or member of the safeguarding team) prior to the visit taking place.

In addition, wherever possible parents/carers/guardians 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 home when parents/carers/guardians 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.

**Reasons for home visits:**

Home visits are carried out by parties for a variety of reasons.

**Early Years transition home visits**:

* To meet the child and their family in their home environment and to establish a warm and caring relationship before the child starts school to ease the settling in period.
* To ensure that the child has met staff on familiar territory. This can help the child feel more confident about making the transition from home to school.
* To encourage families to share appropriate information about their child. This information will help us to get to know the child’s needs, answer any questions and to plan an appropriate transition.
* To share information about Pinders Primary School and how we can support families.

**Attendance and wellbeing visits:**

* The aim of the home visit is to offer support for the family
* If appropriate, take set work from the teacher for the child.
* To carry out safeguarding measures as per the attendance policy if a child has been absent from school for a consecutive period of 3 days. Or no contact has been made ofter first response.
* To carry out parental requests as agreed by the head teacher.
* Pupils are refusing to attend school
* When there are attendance issues/concerns
* When pupils are being educated at home for medical reasons
* When all means of contact with the family has failed
* To confirm a family are living at a certain address.

**Before a home visit:**

* Be familiar with the school’s policy and procedure for a home visit
* Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that the home visit is really necessary (if possible and/or practical, arrange for parents/carers/guardians to come into the school)
* Complete the home visit log/form ensuring it is signed by the Safeguarding Lead (or member of the Safeguarding team)
* Discuss with the Safeguarding Lead whether it is deemed appropriate for the visit to be made alone or whether an additional person is required to protect professional integrity and to ensure staff safety.
* If required, arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you; if 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.
* Consider what you need to see, e.g one or both parents/carers/guardians, 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.
* Refer to the ‘ *Community Lone Working Risk Assessment’* (Appendix 1) , and inform member of DSL team of your intended location before departing for a home visit & upon return.

**During the Visit:**

* Park in a well lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
* Dress appropriately.
* Staff to be aware of pets and other family members that may be in the home
* Sit near a door or exit and if worried, leave the property together
* Staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures
* Staff to comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing appropriate / professional clothing (refer to Code of Conduct policy)
* Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification.
* 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 (Ps/Cs/Gs) or another responsible adult whom a P/C/G 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 P/C/G 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 unless accompanied by the parent/ carer.
* If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the schools safeguarding team 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 Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to social care.
* If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
* Assure P/C/G 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 Safeguarding Lead.
* 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.
* Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.
* Complete log on CPOMS to verify visit.

**After the visit:**

* Report back to school
* If you are not returning directly to school, telephone after the visit to say that you have left the residence.
* Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with the 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.

**Action to take if you are threatened Dealing with difficulties and boundaries**

* 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.
* If staff attend as a pair wait outside the property until all staff involved have arrived. Consider whether sending out two members of staff may escalate the difficulties.
* 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 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 school immediately

**Appendix 1**

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Community Lone Working Risk Assessment Appendix 1 WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT

Task being undertaken: -Lone Working Risk Assessment – out of office Occupations:-

 All Staff Any vulnerable persons particularly at risk:-

Safeguarding team aware of named visit Date of assessment:- Any

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hazards** | **People** | **Severity of harm** | **Likelihood** | **Risk Level** | **Controls** |
| Aggressive or violent parent/student/family member | Member of staff may be harmed | Major injury may occur R | Remote possibility | Low | Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances Inform reception and sign out so others aware Take mobile phone for communication |
| Driving | Member of staff may be harmed  | Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue | Remote possibility | Low | Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch, phone etc for emergency Advise team or partner where you are going Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas |
| Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks  | Member of staff may be harmed  | Attack Theft of property  | remote | Low | Back down from confrontation Call for help Use attack alarm Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Use staff bus or public transport if available Post incident support |
| Illness or injury/ accident  | Member of staff may be harmed or injured  | Illness or injury  | Remote  | low | Alert Emergency services if appropriate Take mobile communications Alert team members if able to Ensure access to phone Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed Complete injury at work protocol on return |
| Attack by dog or other animal  | Member of staff may be harmed or injured  | Major injury may occur  | Remote  | Low | Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements |

I have read and understand the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_