



**Heath Lane Academy**

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Part of United Learning

# Home Visits Policy

REVIEWED BY: United Learning

DATE REVIEWED: May 2024

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: May 2025

# 1. Introduction

Home visiting that includes lone working is an essential part of support work. Heath Lane Academy (HLA) is committed to ensuring that it does not put any of its staff in a situation of unreasonable risk.

Often HLA staff will either visit homes with colleagues or work alone. This guidance covers those undertaking:

- Home visits
- Appointments with professionals or families at a venue away from HLA site

Working in such scenarios may place staff at risk from:

- Accidents where they are unable to attract help
- Aggressive and/or violent behaviour from another person or animal
- The subject of false allegations

This policy outlines the reasons, benefits and best practice procedures for home visits.

# 2. Responsibilities

HLA will ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for home visits and lone working.

HLA will ensure staff receive appropriate training and induction when prior to completing their first home visit.

HLA has undertaken a generic risk assessment to reduce risks as far as reasonably practicable.

HLA will not allow any visits which place the worker at unacceptable risk. Such unacceptable risks will be identified through prior knowledge of the domestic situation and previous perceived high risks during previous visits – these will be recorded on CPOMS and recorded as a pastoral note on the child's arbor front page.

All staff undertaking home visits must take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety. If at any time they feel unsafe they must remove themselves from the situation as soon as possible.

All staff undertaking home visits must inform an appropriate colleague of their intended place of visit and their expected arrival time back at the academy.

All staff must log their home visits upon return through the home visit spreadsheet link share with staff.

All staff must log the outcome of their home visits through CPOMS upon return.

### **3. Reasons and benefits for home visits**

Home visits are important in helping to establish contact with students and their families where other forms of contact have proved unsuccessful, if a student has not been seen for an extended period of time, or if there is a need for an appointment to be held away from HLA site due to extenuating circumstances.

An extended period of time is defined as 3 or more school days, though a home visit may be carried out before this threshold is met for any of the reasons outlined below. Where there are no safeguarding or attendance concerns, and contact has been made from parents/carers for each day of absence, a phone call home to address 3 days of absence will be suitable.

Home visits are used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- There are attendance issues/concerns
- When students are being educated at home
- When other means of contacting the family have failed
- To meet with families and/or professionals for a planned appointment away from HLA site
- To establish that a child is safe if other means of contact have been unsuccessful
- To visit a child that has been absent for an extended period of time due to illness or a medical issue, so they do not feel isolated from school
- To collect or drop a student where there are concerns for the child's wellbeing or welfare
- To investigate situations where there are suspicions that a child may be on holiday contrary to reasons given for absence i.e. patterns of absence similar to those in previous years, evidence that indicates a child may be on holiday.

Home visits have many benefits that include:

- Establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the child
- Enable staff to check that a child is safe and well
- Support families
- Identify the needs of a child

## 4. Procedures

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.

The attendance coordinator will identify the need for home visits based upon the following:

- Continuous absence
- School refusal
- Absence without reason where there are safeguarding concerns
- Regular planned visits for students waiting to be removed from roll as a result of exclusions or elective home education.

Other members of staff including welfare staff and VP resp. for attendance will identify the needs for home visits based upon:

- Serious safeguarding concerns
- Absence of vulnerable students

The Attendance Officer will conduct their processes daily and carry out visits as appropriate based upon **3. Reasons and benefits for home visits** and through discussion with the safeguarding manager.

### Before the visit

- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedures for home visits.
- Collect a PeopleSafe fob and be aware of how to function the device.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit, making sure that a home visit is necessary.
- Check CPOMS and liaise with Safeguarding Manager to check that it is appropriate for a person to visit alone or whether it is deemed necessary for an additional person to attend for safety reasons.
- If an additional person is required, clarify each person's role before attending the visit i.e. who is leading the visit? What is the role of the additional person?
- If possible make the home visit at an agreed time.
- Send a text notification to inform families of the intended home visit.
- Collect a school phone from the ICT helpdesk.

### **During the visit**

- Park in a well lit area where you are able to drive away easily if needed i.e. you don't have to reverse.
- Dress appropriately i.e. sensible shoes, and have academy ID visible.
- Ensure that there are no animals in or around the property that pose a risk to your safety
- Where possible conduct any conversations at the front door of the property.
- If alone on a home visit do not enter the property.
- Where visiting a property where there has been reports of absence due to infectious disease or illness, do not enter the property and remain a safe distance from those present.
- If entering the property with a colleague do not be in a room alone with a child unless part of an agreed meeting where the parent is aware of this and there are at least two professionals present, and you can be seen and heard.
- Only speak with adults that have parental responsibility about the child – check the identity of the person before engaging in conversation
- Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with anyone other than the person with parental responsibility or the child when adult with PR is present.
- If you are concerned that the child is home alone or their welfare is at risk, contact the safeguarding team immediately.
- If you feel a child is in immediate danger contact 999.
- Remain professional and respect the culture, religion etc of the home.
- It is advisable to not accept food or drink during the visit.
- Stay no longer than the time needed.
- If you feel any level of concern or threat for your own safety end the meeting in a calm fashion and leave the property i.e. say that you are needed at another meeting or that you need to collect something from your car.

### **After the visit**

- Log the home visit upon return to school on the home visit spreadsheet.
- Log the home and details of the visit on CPOMS.
- Inform the safeguarding manager and attendance line manager of any incidents of aggression, violence or threat during the visit.

## *Risk Assessment – Home Visits*

Department	Attendance
Assessors	Umar Wazir
Date	May 2024
Signed	U.Wazir

Hazards	<p>New to home visits Violent person Slips, trips, falls Dangerous areas Pets Working in isolation</p>	
Persons who might be harmed	Home Welfare / Attendance Team	
Risk identified	Risk controls	Further action necessary to control risk and action plan – name employee responsible, target date and completion date
<p><b><u>New to home visits</u></b> Carrying out home visits for the first time</p> <p><b><u>Violent person</u></b> Visiting the home of anyone with a history of violence. Even if there is no history staff must be aware of risk control measures procedures.</p> <p><b><u>Slips, trips, falls</u></b> Coming into contact with object or uneven floor.</p>	<p>Liaise with PCu to ensure you are aware of required practice.</p> <p>Attend first home visit accompanied by experienced member of staff.</p> <p>Records must be kept on all dangerous people or houses that have known to hold dangerous persons – logged on CPOMS and as a pastoral note on Arbor front page of student.</p> <p>If there are minor concerns about a home visit, it should be carried out with two persons present.</p> <p>If there are major concerns a home visit should not be conducted.</p> <p>When making a home visit staff must make themselves familiar with all escape routes.</p> <p>Collect and keep a school phone on person.</p> <p>Please be careful when visiting homes which can be cluttered or have uneven flooring, staff must wear appropriate footwear.</p>	

<p><b><u>Dangerous areas</u></b>  Heroin users where needle maybe present.  House which may be unsafe for human habitation.  New locations with potential unknown hazards.</p>	<p>Staff must be mindful of the environment they're about to enter, if staff don't feel comfortable then they must leave immediately.  If staff are not comfortable visiting a new location on their own, an additional person should support the visit.</p>	
<p><b><u>Pets</u></b>  Dangerous or out of control animals present at the address.</p>	<p>Please be mindful of any animals, warnings of animals or previous experience of animals at the address.   Where there are any concerns, do not enter the home or remain behind a gate.</p>	
<p><b><u>Working in isolation</u></b>  Visiting an address on your own.</p>	<p>Do not enter the home of a student if on your own.   Liaise with safeguarding manager and check CPOMS prior to attending to check for any current or previous concerns.   If visiting on your own ensure that line manager or relevant colleague is informed.</p>	

Signed:



Date: May 2024