



inspiring the journey for  
independence together

# Home Visit Procedures

Non Statutory

Reviewed every three years

Signed:  (Chair of the Trust)

Date: 13/3/2023

Review Date: March 2026

## 1. Introduction

This policy is designed to protect the safety of all School/Trust staff carrying out Residential / care home visits. Where staff are entering the Residential homes/ care home a risk assessment should be completed in advance. This will identify any concerns about potential risks and appropriate measures to be taken. If specific information is known about the families, this should be added to the risk assessment.

All homes/care home visits must always take place with staff in pairs. Homes/care home visits can only take place when the policy and protocols are fully met. Policy and procedures must be consistently applied.

## 2. Rationale for carrying out home visits

### 2.1 EYFS

The insights that staff gain into each child's home/care home and background greatly helps them to assess their level of need in school and prepare for the child's entry into the setting. Another major benefit is that the home visits are the start or the continued building of the relationship with parents which is vital if we are to be successful in providing for the needs of the child. It also shows parents that the school respects them and wants to share their knowledge, which puts the relationship on a more equal footing.

Meeting each child in his or her home environment can prove invaluable in:

- gathering information that will enable the children to settle into Nursery and Reception classes;
- establishing positive links with families, especially those of vulnerable pupils.

For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet the teacher and staff in a safe environment, where they feel confident and at ease.

For teachers and support staff, a visit provides the opportunity to:

- establish early, positive contact;
- see children in their own familiar settings;
- meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children;
- understand the problems that children might encounter at school;
- to appreciate the wealth of learning that goes on in the home.

This all helps to get a fuller picture of the children. Professionals can gain much from observing a child where he or she feels settled and in control.

## **2.2 Pastoral and Safeguarding Visits**

There may be times when a member of the pastoral staff and/or SLT needs to meet with parents/carers or pupils, and it may be most appropriate to visit the home/ care home. Staff may have concerns around attendance or safeguarding. Visits must be discussed with the Headteacher and should only be undertaken if safety measures are in place (see Risk assessment). Arrangements should always be made professionally and sensitively and staff should not visit family homes care home alone without taking careful precautions.

Meetings and meeting staff members can be a daunting prospect for some families, particularly if their own experiences of using outside agencies and education were less than positive. Parents or carers may feel more relaxed, secure and in control in their own homes and therefore able to talk more freely. In familiar surroundings, they may find it easier to ask for help, support and advice. Home visits provide an opportunity for one-to-one interaction with the family, at a time that suits them. A home care home visit provides an opportunity to talk about their child, their needs and to discuss any concerns they may have at school or at home care home. This should enable an exchange of information between parents/carers, school staff and children, so that staff and family can make informed decisions.

## **3. Guidelines for Staff**

### **3.1 Structure of EYFS home visits**

The class teacher and another member of staff (TA, SENDCo) make each visit together. As well as the obvious safety implications, this allows one to talk to the child's parents and the other to focus solely on the child. This can be the beginning of the relationship between the teacher and the child, especially as staff have been invited into the child's home. Visits take place either during the term before children are due to start attending Nursery or reception or at the beginning of their start term. Parents are always telephoned in advance to confirm the appointment.

### **3.2 Specific Protocols for All Home Visits**

Before the visit:

- Show respect for Parents/Carers as equal partners.
- Make appointments in advance and offer alternative dates/times.
- Ensure that parents know when you will arrive, how long you will stay, what will happen, what kinds of questions you will be asking and what information you will bring.
- Ask them to think about the information they need from you in advance of the meeting.
- Accept the right of a family not to want a home visit.

- Confirm Parents/Carers actual name and title and keep on record. Do not presume that there are two parents with the same surname as the child.
- Do not assume that all Parents/Carers are literate.
- Make sure you consider diversity of social, cultural, racial, religious and sexual orientation. Familiarise yourself with the route/ location, parking restrictions etc before you leave
- Leave details of your visiting schedule with another member of staff
- Text the school when you are going into a residential home/care home and when you have left the location.

During and after the visit:

- Be aware of pets and other adults who may be in the home.( ask before in case you are allergic around animal fur etc )
- Sit near a door or exit and if you feel uneasy or worried at any time, make an excuse and leave. Staff should avoid commenting on a child's home or provision so that parents do not feel that any judgement is being made on their home or lifestyle.
- Staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures.
- They should comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing modest clothing etc. Staff should remain aware of time constraints on both themselves and parents.
- Return to the school or phone in when you have completed the visit

## 4. Risk Assessment

**ALWAYS COMPLETE THE RISK ASSESSMENT BEFORE A VISIT TAKES PLACE**

- Check records to see what is known and information available.
- Talk to other professionals who may already have had contact or involvement with the family. Obtain information about the location of the home care home visit. For example, does the area have a reputation for being unsafe, isolated or poorly lit?
- Discuss strategies to adopt when working with a potentially challenging Parent/Carer/Family with your line manager.
- Where potential risks are identified, arrange an alternative meeting environment

## 5. Health and Safety

When making home visits you must keep your personal safety in mind at all times.

- Inform a nominated member of SLT/school office when you are leaving for a home visit.

- Leave the details of the home care home visit schedule with the school office. Include a list of visit addresses and times including family name, child's name, address, telephone number, purpose of visit, and time due back at base.
- Contact them on arrival and departure from the house.
- You must inform the nominated person/school office if there is a cancellation or alteration to the time.
- Carry with you and show the parent some form of identification.
- Always have a mobile phone charged and available.
- Keep your personal items, purse/wallet, car keys, etc. safe and secure.
- Make your own dynamic risk assessment of each venue as you arrive – do not go near if you have any concerns. Report any concerns to school/service as soon as possible.
- If a child answers the door, ask if an adult is present in the house before entering. Do not enter if an adult is not present. Then call school and ask for advice with regards to a minor being left alone in a property
- If the Parent/Carer appears at all uncomfortable about the visit continuing, staff should offer to leave, offer to continue the contact with a telephone call and give the Parent/Carer the telephone number of the school.
- Keep a record of each session – including brief notes of work covered, people present and any other appropriate information, e.g. issues with pupil and/or parent.

## 6. Emergency procedure

This procedure will come in to action when:

- A panic call is received. (Alert will be a call to school with password/message agreed before home visit).
- The member of staff has not returned or one hour after estimated arrival and has made no contact.

## 7. Organisational Procedure in Emergency

Try to contact the member of staff on the numbers given. Phone 999 giving as much detail as possible. Inform the line manager/Headteacher. The line manager will remain in the building, take advice from the police and keep the police informed of any changes. If in doubt at all about your personal safety- **DO NOT visit**. Refer to appropriate authorities.

## 8. Home Tutors

Home Tutors due to the nature of their roles are permitted to share their phone numbers to allow parents / Carers to contact them at last minute if they need to cancel or make last minute alterations etc. Furthermore, due to the nature of their work, home tutors do go to the houses alone due to it not being feasible to go in pairs. This is covered under the lone working policy which all home tutors must be familiar with and adhere to. Good practice also dictates that they should be making clear to their line manager where they are at all times and should follow all guidelines, where possible, within this set of procedures.

Home Tutors are advised to report any safeguarding concerns immediately to DSLs at Triple R. Learners and their families have also been informed by Triple R of the same DSLs and the procedure for reporting to the LA Social Care for if they have any safeguarding concerns themselves.

# APPENDIX 1 – RISK ASSESSMENT



## RIVERMEAD INCLUSIVE TRUST RISK ASSESSMENT

**ACTIVITY and/or ENVIRONMENT TO BE ASSESSED: Home Visit**

**NB: Staff to read Home Visit Policy before undertaking any visit**

| KEY (People at risk)                                                                                          | Likelihood (L)                                                                                                                                                          | Severity (S)                                                                                                                                                    | Risk Calculation                     | Risk Rating                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| E = Employee<br>YP = Young Persons<br>P = Public<br>C = Contractors<br>V = Visitors<br>EM = Expectant Mothers | 1. Very Low (rare/very unlikely)<br>2. Low (unlikely)<br>3. Medium (could occur/possible)<br>4. High (likely to occur/probable)<br>5. Very High (near certain to occur) | 1. Insignificant (nuisance/discomfort)<br>2. Minor (no lost time)<br>3. Moderate (time loss)<br>4. Significant (serious/incapacity to work)<br>5. Major (Death) | Likelihood x Severity<br>=<br>Rating | 1- 6 <b>LOW RISK</b> Monitor<br>8-12 <b>MEDIUM RISK</b> Monitor, review & reduce risk where possible<br>14-25 <b>HIGH RISK</b> Further Action Required |

| 1.Hazards Identified and potential harm it could cause                           | 2. People At Risk | 3. Controls in Place                                                                                                                            | 4.Risk Rating |   |       |      | 5. Further Action Required/ Recommendations                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---|-------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                  |                   |                                                                                                                                                 | L             | S | Score | Risk |                                                                                                                                            |
| No adult present                                                                 |                   | Staff not to stay if appropriate adult not present                                                                                              |               |   |       |      | Ensure visits are prearranged<br>Record visit in log<br>Report to SLT /manager<br>Telephone beforehand                                     |
| Aggressive Pet                                                                   |                   | Ask for animal to be in alternate room or outside during tuition                                                                                |               |   |       |      | Report to police<br>Letter to parent<br>Use of alternative premises                                                                        |
| Aggressive Pupil including physical assault                                      |                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid confrontation</li> <li>Inform SLT &amp; complete relevant reporting forms</li> </ul>               |               |   |       |      | Report to police<br><br>Appropriate training where necessary e.g. dealing with difficult customers                                         |
| Staff threatened by parent/adult on door step/in home including physical assault |                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to leave</li> <li>Report to SLT/line manager</li> <li>Seek medical advice if needed</li> </ul>     |               |   |       |      | Report to police<br>Use of alternative premises or adult<br><br>Appropriate training where necessary e.g. dealing with difficult customers |
| Staff 'tricked' into entering house and detained                                 |                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact school if possible</li> <li>School routine to contact staff at set times each session</li> </ul> |               |   |       |      | Report to police<br><br>Personal panic alarm<br><br>Signing in-out procedures including details of visit and return time                   |

|                                                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                          |  | with agreed message to confirm safety.                                                                                                                                                         |  |  |  |  | Buddy system' for out of hours<br><br>Appropriate training where necessary e.g. dealing with difficult customers |
| Unacceptable behaviour to/by members of family witnessed |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave premises</li> <li>• Contact school/safeguarding</li> </ul>                                                                                      |  |  |  |  | Report to appropriate service, e.g. police, social services                                                      |
| Illegal substances visible                               |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain situation to parent</li> <li>• Leave premises</li> <li>• Inform SLT/line manager</li> </ul>                                                   |  |  |  |  | Letter to parent before next session                                                                             |
| Theft of items from staff                                |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not take valuable items or large amounts of money to tuition.</li> <li>• Explain situation to parent</li> <li>• Inform SLT/line manager</li> </ul> |  |  |  |  | Report to police                                                                                                 |
| Staff involved in accident on route to/from venue        |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff to phone school on arrival and departure at each venue</li> <li>• Emergency contact details for home tutor to be held in school</li> </ul>      |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                  |
| Accidents on premises e.g. slips, trips or falls         |  | Reporting / recording procedures for visits including feedback                                                                                                                                 |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                  |
| Vehicle Position                                         |  | Car parking in a safe well-lit area away from property with car facing in the opposite direction                                                                                               |  |  |  |  |                                                                                                                  |

## Personal Safety Guidelines for Care Home visits

- Always have a mobile phone charged and available
- Always inform school where you are going and give time scales
- Do not give your address or home/mobile phone numbers to pupils and/or parents and do not contact them on your home or mobile phone as they can then access your personal numbers.
- Do not give your mobile phone to the young person to use for any reason
- Keep your personal items, purse/wallet, car keys, etc. safe and secure

- Arrange regular contact with school/service i.e. a minimum of on arrival and departure from each session
- Keep a record of each session – including brief notes of work covered, people present and any other appropriate information, e.g. issues with pupil and/or parent
- Make your own dynamic risk assessment of each venue as you arrive – do not go near if you have any concerns
- Report any concerns to school/service as soon as possible.
- Always feel safe and secure and don't enter if you don't feel safe at any point.