



St Christopher Primary School

Home Visits Policy

March 2022

HOME VISITS POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this home visit policy is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidance for members of the school community.

Reasons for home visits

Home visits are helpful and useful for a variety of reasons. At St Christopher, home visits may be used for one of the following:

1. For a new Early Years pupil who is about to join the school (This is the prime use of home visits).
2. For a pupil who is refusing to come into school.
3. For a new pupil where specific needs have been identified in prior contact.
4. When there is an attendance issue/safeguarding concern.
5. To confirm a family are living at a certain address.
6. To support a family who are unable to travel out of the house eg: are required to isolate
7. When all other means of contact with the family has failed.
8. When pupils are being educated at home.
9. To collect from or drop a child off at home where there are concerns for a child's welfare if they travelled by other means.
10. To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing school work at home e.g. following a fixed term exclusion or medical issue.
11. To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school.

Other than Early Years, a home visit will generally be a doorstep visit - staff will not enter the house unless the Head deems this necessary. Where possible parent meetings will take place in school.

Procedures

A home visit will not be undertaken by any member of staff without the permission of the Headteacher or most senior member of staff in her absence. Where contact can be made, Parents/Carers should be informed of the visit prior to arrival. If parents/carers are not responding, then attempts to call all contacts related to the pupil on the system should be made. If there is still no contact, then a voice message should be left on the phone of the first main contact explaining that a home visit will be taking place and the reason for it.

Preparation for a home visit:

- Staff should ensure that the Headteacher/senior member has agreed the visit can take place.
- Staff should ensure that (where possible) the home visit is made by prior arrangement. Parents should be informed by letter or by telephone clearly stating the date, time and purpose of visit.
- The home visit must be carried out in pairs. Staff are not permitted to visit a home alone unless it is to drop something off and there is no need to make contact.
- Staff should ensure that the office know of the visit and that they have the correct phone contact details for should school need to contact them.
- Staff should ensure that they are well informed about the family eg: who lives in the family household and are aware of personal circumstances. Cultural sensitivity/awareness should be observed during the home visit.
- Staff should be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Staff should make a note of the visit on cpoms.

Carrying out a home visit

Staff should:

- Park in a well-lit area and a position where there is no need to reverse on leaving.

- Dress appropriately, have phone available and wear ID badge.
- Introduce self, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit.
- Only enter the premises if agreed by the Head and invited/welcome in by the known parent/carer.
- Only speak to an adult regarding the child with adults who have parental responsibility.
- If entering the house, then request politely that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.
- Remain in the most appropriate room eg: living room
- Contact SG lead in school or MASH if there is a safeguarding concern.
- Contact emergency services 999 if they or someone else is at risk of harm.
- Staff should remember that they are visiting someone's home and so should be courteous at all times, be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home and recognise that the visit could be a shock.
- Show empathy, be non-judgemental and have an awareness of confidentiality.
- Keep focussed and keep to the point. Be professional; give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions.
- End the visit if feeling threatened.
- As soon as possible notify and record any incidences of any issue/abuse against a member of staff and discussed with the headteacher or a member of SLT. This must be recorded for future reference
- If threatened or prevented from leaving staff should stay calm and try to control the situation. Staff should try to appear confident, speak slowly and clearly and not be enticed into an argument. Staff should always seek to diffuse a situation and request help or advice if needed.

After the visit

- Report back to the Headteacher/Senior Member of staff.
- Record visit on cpoms.
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident, before precise recollection of events fall from memory.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice, should be sought from the head teacher as soon as possible.