CASTLE MEAD
ACADEMY

HOME VISIT POLICY

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Principal, along with the Executive Principal will take a key role in monitoring and evaluating the policy. The policy along with other academy policies will be available on the academy website. The Academy Council will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

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Author:	Miss N Murphy
Ratified by:	Miss N Murphy
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Review date:	September 2027

Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Author:	Summary of Changes:
1.0	07.04.22	Miss N Murphy	New Policy
2.0	11.01.23	Miss N Murphy	Addition of procedure for lone working; addition of when to call the police in risk assessment.
3.0	11.09.23	Miss N Murphy	Addition of doorstop visit definition. Addition to who can authorise a home visit.
4.0	31.10.24	Miss N Murphy	Amended procedure of logging HV forms
5.0	15.10.25	Miss N Murphy	Change from parents/carers/guardians to families where appropriate. Highlight safe phrase for staff to alert if need support.
6.0	23.09.26	Miss N Murphy	Reviewed no changes

Home Visit Policy and Procedure

ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF *MUST* BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEAD OF SAFEGUARDING, LEAD DSL OR A SENIOUR MEMBER OF STAFF.

In addition, wherever possible families 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 at home when Families 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.

Aims

- At Castle Mead Academy we recognise that Families are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between Families 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 Families for the best interests of the child.

Doorstop Visit Definition: A visit that does not require members of staff to enter the home of a parent, carer or guardian. Door stop visits can be conducted by one member of staff, but they must not enter the home.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with new or hard to reach families. They are particularly useful as they enable the families to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment. Home visits are to be used when:

- Scholars are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues/concerns
- When scholars are being educated at home, in very bespoke circumstances.
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with families to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child to have that discussion in their own home rather than at school *or* where it would be difficult for a families to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face to face meeting in a timely manner.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact families have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the scholar.

- To work with and support families in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- 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.
- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing school work at home e.g. following a suspension.
- 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.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).

Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For families and children, a home visit gives the opportunity to meet a key person in a setting that they are familiar and comfortable with. Other opportunities are to:

- Establish a positive contact with a key member of staff who is supporting the child.
- Meet family members that are important to the child.
- Talk about the child and their needs.

Procedures

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to member of staff when undertaking home visits.

Before the Visit

- ***Inform main reception when you leave that you are going out on home visits.***
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for families to come into the school)
- Complete the Home Visit form.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, **home visits should be conducted in pairs** where entry to the home is needed. Clarify each person's role.
- Lone working can be considered for **door stop visits only.**
- Make sure you are well informed about the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. Check on school's policy and practice.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parent/carer, with or without the child.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- 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 **'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment' (appendix 1)** and inform Office staff and your line manager of your intended location before departing for a home visit.

During the Visit

- Park in a well lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- Dress appropriately.
- Ensure that there are no animals in the room where a meeting takes place.
- 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 or another responsible adult whom a parent/carer has delegated to be there in their absence, and they have given us permission to speak to about the scholar for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parent or carer 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.
- 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 families that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively and will only tell the relevant staff. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise to relay information to school. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the designated person for child protection.
- Be sensitive to the culture, religion etc of the home.
- 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 Home Visit Form to evidence visit.

After the visit

- Report back to the school and hand in the completed Home Visit Form to the Main office**, these will then be scanned and logged on Bromcom.**
- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- 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.

Home Visit Form (see Appendix 2)

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make.
- 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 their memory.
- If any accusation is made against the visit/visitor, advice should be sought from the Principal as soon as possible.

Making Safe Home Visits:

- Complete/hand in, 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment'. Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- Always make sure that the school knows where you are going.

During

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit where possible
- Carry identification
- Do not stay too long.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be professional.
- Don't carry large sums of money.

Action to take if you are threatened

- 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. **CMA agreed code phrase "I need to call school and let them know I need cover for my duty"**
- The same code word should be used if you contact school to alert them that you are in danger and need support. **"I am on a home visit and I need cover for my duty"**
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform school immediately.

After

Report back in school or if you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the residence.

If you are concerned about your safety do not visit.
It is strongly recommended that no one makes an evening home visit.
Safe word: To alert colleague with you that you feel unsafe **phrase "I need to call school and let them know I need cover for my duty"**

- To alert school that you are on a home visit and feel unsafe**,** call school and tell reception "**I am on a home visit, and I need cover for my duty"** Staff to advise Head of Safeguarding or Principal in their absence.

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/scholar/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit. Home visit must be conducted in pairs and doorstep visit only. Inform reception and sign out so others aware. Take mobile phone for communication. Call Police if there are displays of aggressive or violent behaviour.
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).

Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks.	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote possibility	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 public transport if available Post incident support
Illness or injury/ accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote possibility	Low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate 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 possibility	Low	Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements

Appendix 2

CASTLE MEAD ACADEMY

Home Visit Form

Name (s) of staff visiting _____ Job Role _____

Visited Home Address_____

Scholar Name _____

Reason for calling _____

On (date) _____ at (time) _____

Comments _____

Signed _____ (Staff Name) _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian Name) _____

Visit authorised by Safeguarding Lead: Date: _____Time:_____

The top copy of this **MUST** be left at the home.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION

CASTLE MEAD ACADEMY

Person visiting _____ Job Role_____

Visited Home Address _____

Scholar Name _____

Reason for calling _____

On (date) _____ at (time) _____

Comments _____

Signed _____ (Staff Name) _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian Name) _____

Visit authorised by Safeguarding Lead: Date: _____Time:_____

The top copy of this **MUST** be left at the home.

Outcome of home visit

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Action required

_____

_____

_____

_____

Pink copy to parent at visit. White copy scanned, emailed to HoY and Head of Safeguarding. Copy attached to Bromcom file.