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## SEN Trust Southend



# Home Visits Policy

### SEN TRUST SOUTHEND

KINGSDOWN SCHOOL

LANCASTER SCHOOL

ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL

THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

CREATED:	MARCH 2025
LATEST REVISION:	
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	MARCH 2028



# Home Visits Policy

(This policy has been adopted by all schools in SEN Trust Southend  
Lancaster School, St. Nicholas School, Kingsdown School, The St. Christopher School)

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## 1. Aims

This Policy aims to ensure that:

- Staff, parents/carers and pupils understand:
  - When and why our school conducts home visits
  - How our school conducts home visits safely and effectively
  - What we do after we've conducted a home visit
- If there are any concerns about a pupil's safety or wellbeing during a visit, appropriate action will be taken in line with our child protection and safeguarding policy

## 2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy takes into account the responsibilities as laid out in:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)

It also reflects general health and safety legislation.

## 3. Definitions

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of a parent or carer. There are different types of home visit:

- A procedural visit, e.g. to drop off work when a pupil is unable to attend school
- A safe and well check (or welfare check), e.g. if a pupil is absent without good reason and the school has concerns about their welfare

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1. The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Approving this policy

### 4.2. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Authorising any home visits, along with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), where appropriate
- Responding to any issues or concerns raised by parents or carers about home visits

### 4.3. Senior Staff, including the Headteacher and DSL (where appropriate)

All senior staff, including the Headteacher and DSL (where appropriate), are responsible for:

- Sharing this policy so staff know why, when and how to conduct a home visit

- Training staff in the school home visit procedures and conduct
- Overseeing risk assessments
- Deciding which members of staff should attend a home visit
- Not allowing any visits which place staff at risk (read more details about these risks later in this policy)
- If pupils/children are judged to be at risk: making sure staff follow school and/or local safeguarding procedures

#### **4.4. Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Keeping to the policy
- Following the correct procedures before, during and after a home visit, including reporting and recording any safeguarding issues
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure their own safety, as detailed later in this policy
- Informing the school of their movements and time of return
- Completing home visit report

#### **4.5. Parents/Carers**

Parents and Carers are responsible for:

- Communicating any issues or concerns about a home visit to the headteacher

### **5. Reasons for home visits**

We might conduct a home visit to:

Build relationships with pupils and their parents or carers. This could include:

- When families are not engaging in other forms of contact

Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled, including:

- To make a safe and well check (this may happen in conjunction with the local authority social care team)
- To investigate when a pupil is refusing to come into school

Improve a pupil's attendance;

- When a pupil is absent from the school for a week or more and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response
- By working with and supporting parent/carers to develop strategies.

Other procedural reasons:

- When a pupil is being educated at home, including to drop off or collect work
- To visit a pupil who has been off school for a period of time, e.g. due to a medical issue, so they don't feel isolated from the school community
- To collect from or drop off at home a pupil where there are concerns for that pupil if they were to travel by other means
- A visit before an EYFS pupil begins at the school

## **6. Procedures**

### **6.1. Before the Visit**

Staff will:

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy
- Ensure that a home visit is necessary. If possible and/or practical, arrange for the parent/carer to come into the school
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit
- Discuss with the Headteacher, DSL (where appropriate) and/or relevant Senior Leader whether the visit should be made by a single member of staff or if an additional person is required to protect professional integrity and ensure staff safety.
- Obtain formal approval from the relevant member of staff, usually the Headteacher but may be a member of SLT or DSL, where appropriate
- Undertake a risk assessment, (see appendix A)
- Arrange the visit over the telephone, when appropriate, at a time when a parent/carer and child (if applicable) will be home
- Use the call to give the parent/carer an opportunity to ask questions about the visit, confirm the home address and proposed length of visit
- Log any home visits planned with the office staff (via Inventory), with times and venues
- Familiarise themselves with the address they'll be visiting, including any transport or parking arrangements
- Be aware of any relevant background information, including who lives at the address and any safeguarding information, by checking pupil records and with the DSL/relevant Senior Leader if necessary

### **6.2. During the Visit**

Staff will:

- Be on time as agreed in advance with the parent/carer, and be able to let them know if they're running late
- Identify themselves and show their identification badge
- Consider the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures at all times
- If there are concerns that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the school safeguarding team immediately to discuss their observations or seek advice. If appropriate the safeguarding team will make a referral to social care
- Check with the parent/carer whether they understand the purpose of the visit
- Only enter the premises when invited in by a responsible adult. If no responsible adult with parental responsibility for the child is present, the staff member(s) will return to school and attempt a visit at another time
- Only speak to adults with day-to-day responsibility for the child
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parents/carers are available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises
- Request that all animals in the home should be kept in a separate room, and cancel the visit if the responsible adult refuses, or is unable to adhere to the request
- Behave with respect in the home, respecting the culture and customs of the family, and only using areas of the property with permissions and never entering bedrooms
- Explain that their phone will be on throughout the visit

- Take notes for ease of recording the content of the visit afterwards, and explain to the parent/carer that the notes will only be shared with the relevant senior leaders
- Leave the property immediately if they feel uncomfortable, or at any risk
- Dress appropriately and act in a professional manner at all times
- Give professional advice and information rather than personal opinions
- Be sympathetic but remain neutral and not become personally involved
- Be discreet but assertive about the direction of the conversation
- Not stay too long and keep to the point of the visit

### **6.3. In the event an incident does occur**

Staff will:

- Contact emergency services on 999 if they feel themselves or someone else is in immediate danger
- Leave the property swiftly and terminate the visit immediately in order to reach a place of safety
- Once in a place of safety, inform the headteacher and any other appropriate members of staff (e.g. the DSL) of the incident to agree appropriate next steps and obtain support
- Record full details of the visit as soon as possible after the incident so they don't forget any details

### **6.4. After the visit**

Staff will:

- Let the school know immediately that they have left the property
- Write up the outcome of the visit and file any notes made during the visit
- Report any concerns, including safeguarding incidents to the relevant members of staff
- Only discuss individual home visits with other staff members or other professional involved with pupil/family where relevant and/or necessary

## **7. Safeguarding**

- Any safeguarding concerns identified during the visit will be shared with the DSL immediately, in accordance with our child protection and safeguarding policy or the relevant local authorities if the child isn't a pupil at the school yet
- Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with our allegations against staff policy

## **8. Monitoring Arrangements**

Monitoring this policy:

- The headteacher will review the policy every three years
- The policy will be approved by the Trust Board

## **9. Links with other Policies**

This home visits policy is linked to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy

## Appendix A

### Community Lone Working Risk Assessment

#### WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT

All home visits conducted by staff **MUST** be authorised prior to the visit taking place.

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

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	Remote possibility	Low	Refer to home visit policy Risk reduced by reviewing pupil record prior to visit. 2 person visit if aware home circumstances require it. Inform office and sign out so others aware. Mobile phone to be carried
Requirement to enter a bedroom	Member of staff may be harmed Allegation may be made against member of staff	Reputational damage	Remote possibility	Low	Risk Assessment agreed Signed agreement from Parent/Carer agreeing to requirement to enter bedroom Accompanied by additional staff member or parent as agreed Door of bedroom kept open during visit
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low	If possible, use school transport. Ensure appropriate insurance is in place Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch, phone etc for emergency. Advise officer where visit is taking place. Call in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car. Avoid risky areas.
Transporting a pupil	Driver or passenger may be harmed.	Risk of accident Pupil may try to escape the vehicle	Remote possibility	Low	Pupils to sit in rear seats If necessary, two staff to accompany pupil. Risk Assessment of pupil

		Pupil may distract driver			Ensure appropriate insurance is in place
Movement through public area 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. Do not take large sums of money Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk. Use staff or public transport if available.
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed	Illness or injury	Remote	Low	Alert Emergency services if appropriate. Alert team members if able to. Ensure access to mobile phone. Take prescribed medication as directed or 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.