



**Federation of
Westminster Special Schools
& Bi-Borough Inclusion Service**

Home Visit by Staff Policy

Reviewed & adopted by the PPP Committee: 1 Feb 16

Reviewed 29 January 2018

Next review due February 2020

Summary

Teachers and other school staff may need to visit pupils at home in response to requests from local authority, NHS or on school matters regarding attendance, behaviour or other pastoral matters. This guidance sets out advice about health and safety issues and child welfare issues that Headteachers need to consider before approving any visits

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers have a duty to safeguard the Health and Safety of their employees. This duty applies whether the employee is working at the usual workplace or off-site. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 require employers to assess the health and safety risks faced by employees and take appropriate preventative measures where necessary.

Staff visiting pupils and their families at home are vulnerable to violence and to an increased risk of allegations being made.

There is also a risk to children's welfare if the visit places undue or additional stress upon the family and/or child protection concerns are not recognised or responded to appropriately.

The following advice is offered to all Westminster Schools whose staff are deployed to visit pupils and their families at home.

1. Undertaking Home Visits

- 1.1 Teachers and other school staff must feel confident that they are not being placed at risk of either violence or allegations of abuse from pupils or their families.
- 1.2 Consideration should firstly be given to whether the visit could more appropriately be undertaken by another professional who is trained for and specialises in home visiting.
- 1.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should always be aware of, and have agreed to any visits by school based staff that are undertaken and the reason for it. In all but exceptional circumstances a senior member of school staff or an advisory teacher from the Training and Outreach Team should undertake the visit.
- 1.4 The senior member of staff or advisory teacher should be accompanied by another appropriate member of staff if this is practical. Initial visits should not be undertaken by lone staff or follow up visits if there are any questions about the safety of the member of staff. If at any time a member of staff feels unsafe the visit should be terminated.
- 1.5 All visits should be planned in advance and a prior appointment made with the family.
- 1.6 Staff should be clear about the purpose and intended outcome of the visit and this should be fully explained to the family when making the appointment.
- 1.7 Staff undertaking home visits should be fully briefed about any information known about the family, particularly any known aggression or history of violence. If there is no information available the visit should be undertaken with the team manager
- 1.8 At the discretion of the DSL enquiries can be made of the Localities team in order to check whether the family are known.
- 1.9 The time and expected length of the agreed visit should be notified to a member of the Senior Leadership team who is available to react if the member of staff does not return when expected.

- 1.10 A mobile phone should be carried by the visiting staff members.
- 1.11 The member of staff should not enter the house if the adult with whom the appointment has been made is not present and either the child is home alone or another adult is present.
- 1.12 The member of staff should be fully conversant with strategies for the prevention of violence and aware of the importance of leaving the home immediately if they feel uncomfortable in any way. They should ring a colleague to say they are entering the home and ring the same colleague when they leave.
- 1.13 Any incident should be reported verbally to the DSL immediately.
- 1.14 Incident reporting forms should be readily available in order that all details of an incident are recorded as soon as practicable after leaving the home.
- 1.15 Visits undertaken out of school hours should be avoided.
- 1.16 Staff identity badge should be carried.

2. Children must be safeguarded and their welfare promoted

- 2.1 Consideration should always be given to whether visiting the family could place the family under additional or undue stress that could impact adversely upon the child.
- 2.2 If the child is known to Children's Social Care a discussion about the intended visit should take place with the child's Social Worker or other allocated professional and agreement that the visit is in the child's best interest reached.
- 2.3 The member of staff should be fully trained in Child Protection and confident of the procedures that should be followed if any concerns arise during the course of the visit or after.
- 2.4 The member of staff should be fully conversant with the school and national policy on restraint.
- 2.5 The member of staff should be fully aware of what constitutes appropriate and safe practice and what actions would be considered inappropriate, harmful to child or illegal.