

# **St Hugh's Catholic Primary School**

## **Home Visit Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

St Hugh's School provides a welcoming, safe and secure environment for all.

Our school aims to be a community which reflects real gospel values of love and forgiveness. A community in which each individual, child or adult, can work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding; so as to broaden their appreciation of the world, its cultures and its people.

**Every day ... Growing in God's Love**

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#### **Statement of intent**

Our school firmly believes that regular attendance is essential to the successful academic development of pupils.

The role of the attendance officer is crucial to the overall performance of the school. With this in mind, we have established this policy for attendance officers and other school staff who make home visits.

We believe that clear procedures must be in place to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

Home visits are a useful way of addressing the problems that lead to poor attendance; however, since school staff are entering private property, it is important that all parties are made aware of the rules and procedures. All school staff will maintain the highest professional standards at all times.

A copy of this policy will be made available to parents via the school website.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies such as the following:

- Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Lone Worker Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for home visits.

The executive headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff have the appropriate training to conduct home visits.
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

School staff will be responsible for:

- Following this policy at all times.
- Always acting in the best interests of pupils.

## 3. Personal safety

It is the responsibility of school staff to keep themselves safe at all times. They will avoid any situations that may risk their safety.

The school staff will carry out their work in line with the Lone Worker Policy in order to keep themselves safe from harm while working alone.

A lone worker risk assessment will be carried out prior to the commencement of any lone working and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

School staff will carry a mobile phone at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the school office.

Staff will 'check in' by calling the **school office** every **two hours** to update the school of their whereabouts.

A home visit risk assessment will be conducted prior to a home visit. If a particular home visit poses new risks, the risk assessment will be amended before the visit.

Staff will not enter the home of a pupil unless an appointment has been made and the parent is present. Written confirmation of the appointment will be recorded and held in the **school office**.

Appointment records will include the time and location, along with the name of the pupil.

If staff feels that they are in immediate danger, they will use the alarm system to notify the **school office** who will contact the police.

Details of the vehicles used by attendance officers, including make, model, registration number and colour, will be held by the school office. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date insurance.

#### **4. Home visits**

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.

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 families for the best interests of the child

#### **Reasons for home visits:**

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

- Students are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues/concerns
- When students are being educated at home
- 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.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact the family have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- 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 fixed term suspension or medical issue.
- 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.

If the pupil's parents are not present at the arranged time, the attendance officer will wait no longer than 10 minutes. If the pupil's parents do not arrive, the visit will be cancelled.

Identification cards will be worn at all times. They will be clearly displayed on the front and outside of the attendance officer's clothing.

School staff will not enter a pupil's home should they feel unsafe

Before and after the visit, staff will 'check in' by calling the **school office**.

## **5. After the visit**

Once a visit has ended, any agreements made between the school staff and parents will be recorded and kept in the pupil's record.

If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.

If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school after the visit to say you have left the home visit.

A note will be made in the pupil's attendance record if they fail to follow the agreement.

## **6. Child protection and safeguarding**

School staff will carry out their work in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.

School staff will not be put in a situation where they are alone with a pupil during a home visit – a parent will always be present.

Where required, physical intervention by staff will be enacted in accordance with the Physical Intervention Policy. Staff will only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it will be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

Any safeguarding concerns will be reported to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible.

Any allegations made against school staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Any complaints regarding the conduct of staff or the home visit will be raised in line with the Complaints Procedure Policy.

## **7. Home Visit Procedures**

- It is essential that staff write a short report on CPOMS 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 an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice should be sought from the executive head teacher as soon as possible.

### **Making Safe Home Visits: summary Before**

- Complete Risk Assessment'
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you, if required.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- Always make sure that the school knows where you are going, has your mobile telephone number and your safe word is recorded on the Risk Assessment.

### **During**

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit, if appropriate.

- Carry identification; do not wear it on a necklace lanyard.
- 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.
- The same code word should be used if you contact school to alert them that you are in danger and need support.
- 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 be agreed and recorded on the 'Community Lone Working Risk Assessment'.

#### **8. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed **every two years** by the executive headteacher.

The executive headteacher is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and will amend it accordingly following any incidents or concerns.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **date**.

Date of ratification		Date Reviewed		Date of next review	
Document control					
Issued		Changes from previous			

Lone Working Risk Assessment					
Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent parent/pupil/family member	Member of staff may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	Low	Risk reduced by informing school staff team prior to visit 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances Take mobile phone for communication
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 phone etc for emergency Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas
Movement through public areas 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 Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Use staff bus or 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	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	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. My mobile telephone number is: My safe word is: Signed: Date and time:					