



Heather Avenue Infant School Home Visit Policy

Rationale

At Heather Avenue Infant School, we feel that home visits are an important way to build positive relationships between home and school. Home visits occur in the term prior to a child starting their first term in Reception.

Home visits are for both home and school to share information, which is in the best interests of the child and for support to be offered, if needed. Visits also allow parents/carers to share sensitive information without fear of being interrupted or overheard and for the child to feel relaxed in their home setting.

Families should feel empowered after a home visit and feel that their views have been listened to.

Procedure Prior to Visit

- Staff must attend home visits in pairs for their own security. The pairing will usually consist of the child's class teacher for the following September and another member of staff – either the SENCO, another member of the Senior Leadership Team or a classroom teaching assistant.
- Staff attending home visits must leave a copy of their planned visits with the Head teacher and School Office. This plan should contain dates, times and locations of all planned visits.
- Parents and carers should be informed in advance of the date and time of the proposed home visit. This will usually be in the form of a letter given at the Parent-Carer induction meeting in early June.
- A brief risk assessment should be carried out before the first home visit takes place and referred to for subsequent visits.
- The office should be aware of the vehicle and registration number of the car attending the home visit, in case of an emergency.
- A code word should be set up between the member of staff and the school office in case of emergencies. The agreed code phrase is '**the red file**'. If a member of staff needs to contact the office in an emergency, they should telephone immediately and ask the office to "**look something up in the red file**". See Emergency Procedures below for more information.

Procedure During Visit

- Members of staff should park close by and in a place near the road and/or reverse into a space for quick exit if necessary.
- Members of staff should introduce themselves and the purpose of the visit should be explained.
- The home visit should only go ahead if the parent/carer is present.
- One staff member should lead the visit to avoid the parent/carer feeling overwhelmed. The second staff member will engage with the child during the visit, introducing themselves and asking the child about favourite toys etc.
- Notes should be taken to inform future planning for the family. These should be kept in the child's blue folder in the classroom.
- Staff should constantly read the mood of the visit to ensure that they do not put themselves in danger and immediately end the visit if they feel it appropriate.
- Staff must assess any potential dangers posed by pets during the visit and must terminate the visit if they feel to be in danger from an animal in the house.
- Staff must take a fully charged mobile phone and keep this on their person at all times during the visit.
- Confidentiality should be respected at all times, unless there is a Child Protection concern which should be reported immediately to one of the school Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Procedure After Visit

- All notes should be written up and shared appropriately.
- Referrals to be made if necessary.
- Dates for a further home visit could be set.
- Home visits should always be discussed with a member of SLT.

In Case of Emergencies

- The school office must be aware of who is making a home visit and to which family.
- Mobile telephone numbers for all staff involved in the home visit to be easily accessible in the school office and head teacher's office.
- If members of staff does not return at the agreed time with no prior notification, then the school office will ring the mobile phone of the staff member involved.
- The police must be called if there is no answer and there is reasonable cause for concern.
- If the school office receives a call from the member of staff and the code word is used, then the police are to be called immediately on 999. The police should be provided with the names and last known locations of the members of staff as well as vehicle registration and any other relevant information. The Head teacher should be informed immediately.

Policy Written: June 2018

Policy Updated: March 2020 or as needed