



Harton
Academy



Home Visits Policy

February 2024

Home Visits Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance covers those undertaking home visits.
- 1.2 Working in such a situation may place staff at risk from:
 - Having an accident and being unable to obtain help;
 - Aggressive/violent behaviour of another person;
 - The subject of false allegations
- 1.3 This policy outlines the procedures for undertaking home visits based on best practice.
- 1.4 This policy applies equally to parents, carers and guardians (“the parents”) of children and young people attending the Academy.
- 1.5 This policy should be read alongside the Academy’s Lone Working and Home Visits risk assessment. Changes required as a result of visits made should be reflected in both documents.

2 Home Visit Policy and Procedure

- 2.1 All home visits must take place with 2 members of staff.
- 2.2 Where possible parents 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 parents are not responding to telephone calls/text messages, or emergency safeguarding visits.

3 Home Visit Definition

- 3.1 A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to attend and/or enter the home of a child. It can be for a reason relating to tuition, a routine procedure of the Academy or in the case of an emergency.

4 Aims

- 4.1 At Harton Academy we recognise that parents are child’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 parents and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.

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- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents for the best interests of the child.

4.2 Reasons for home visits

Home visits are important in helping the Academy to make contact with new or hard to reach parents. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents to still have contact with the Academy, but in their own environment.

Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into the Academy
- 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 parents to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child.
- To have a discussion with parents in their own home, rather than at the Academy, or where it would be difficult for a parent to attend the Academy 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 parents have not elicited a response and if the Academy has any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support parents in developing strategies to help their child attend the Academy where attendance is an issue.
- To visit a child who has not attended the Academy for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from the Academy.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications. An example of this is when a child is reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused.

5 Benefits of Home visits

5.1 For parents 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.

6 Procedures

6.1 The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff when undertaking home visits. A risk assessment is available (“Lone Working and Home Visits”) which should be read and reviewed by staff undertaking home visits.

The Academy requires these steps to be considered and acted upon appropriately by staff visiting for a meeting or for reasons relating to tuition.

6.2 Before the Visit

- Be familiar with the Academy’s policy and procedure for home visits.
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit. Make sure that a home visit is really necessary. (If possible and/or practical, arrange for parents to come into the Academy)
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you; home visits should be conducted in pairs. Clarify each person’s role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents with or without the child.
- Ensure that you sign out of Harton Academy before you leave the Academy to undertake the home visit.
- Ensure that you have placed your appointments in a calendar so that the Academy know your whereabouts and the approximate time you will be off site conducting home visits.
- Have a contingency plan if things go wrong, e.g. if the car breaks down or you get lost, or if working as a pair, agree a code word (safe word) or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave.
- If applicable make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present.

6.3 During the visit

- Park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- During the home visit you must be contactable by the Academy in case of emergency.
- Make sure you make contact with the Academy via phone (email/text/phone call) every 30 minutes/at the end of the home visit(s).
- 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
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.

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- 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 has delegated to be there in their absence. Ensure permission has been given to speak to the appropriate person about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
 - If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised contact the Academy's 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 a member of the safeguarding team will make a referral to social care.
 - If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
 - Assure parent that you will treat any information received sensitively and will only inform the safeguarding team or other appropriate staff if necessary. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information to the Academy. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or members of the safeguarding team.
 - 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 stay too long. Keep to the point.
 - Complete a home visit card if no contact has been made with the relevant parent and leave at the address so the parent has a record of your visit.

6.4 After a home visit

- When returning to the Academy, please make sure you sign back in properly. Please also inform your line manager/office staff upon your return.
- If you are not returning directly to the Academy after your home visit(s), telephone the Academy or the appropriate member of staff after the visit to say you have left the home visit in order to ensure the safety of all staff.
- Clear records of the meeting/home visit must be logged on the CPOMS record for each student.
- Report any concerns or incidents – including trips, falls and accidents as well as any abusive or threatening behaviours.
- Staff must not arrange another appointment with any abusive or aggressive person until the case has been reviewed.
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits must be discussed with the safeguarding team on arrival back to the Academy.

7 Action to take if you are threatened

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- 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 drawn 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.
 - Be attentive to your colleague who may alert you (by using the code word or phrase) that they need assistance or should leave.
 - Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform school immediately.

8 Action the Academy will take if employee(s) do not return as expected

- Office staff/line manager should attempt to make contact with employees via phone to establish contact.
- If contact is not forthcoming, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be made aware and contact with the police should be considered.

If you are concerned about your safety - do not visit.