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# Home Visit Policy & Procedure Proforma

Blue Coat CE Secondary School

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**Policy Date:** January 2025

**Review Date:** January 2026

## Document History

Version	Status	Date	Author	Summary Changes
V1		January 2022	C Milbourne & K Arnold	Page 3 – brackets re. sharing information with parents. Page 4 – 2 members of staff to be present when travelling with student. Grammar and formatting,
V2		January 2023	C Milbourne & K Arnold	Page 3 – added child to the sentence. Edited third bullet point 'educated at home' Page 5 - Fourth bullet point, removal of 'lanyard' Page 5 – bullet point added 'let DSL know immediately if any safeguarding concerns' Page 5 – added two bullet points in 'during the visit' Page 6 – removal of 'lanyard' Appendix 1 – added data line
V3		January 2024	C Milbourne & K Arnold	Page 4 – Term changed to 'suspension' Page 4 – Add DSL Page 5 – bullet point 4 moved up to bullet point 3 Page 5 – rewording of bullet point 4 and 5
V4		January 2025	C Milbourne & K Routley	Page 4 – Final bullet point of visits due to new CME guidelines

# Introduction

At Blue Coat Church of England School, our vision is "Living life in all its fullness". We exist to equip our students to 'live life in all its fullness' by providing excellent education, which is distinctively Christian and inclusive of all. At the heart of this education are the values of Care, Hard Work, Respect, Integrity and Servanthood, working Together for the good of all individuals, the school and wider communities. The conviction that we are created and sustained by God for living together in families and communities is at the root of our dedication to educating for life together.

**ALL HOME VISITS CONDUCTED BY STAFF *MUST* BE AUTHORISED BY THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD/SLT.**

In addition, wherever possible parents/carers/guardians 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/carers/guardians are not responding to telephone calls/text messages or emergency safeguarding visits.

## Home Visit Definition:

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.

## Aims

- At Blue Coat School we recognise that parents/carers/guardians are children'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/carers/guardians and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met, [The exception to this is by sharing knowledge it would put the child at serious risk of harm, contact DSL.]
- To develop and strengthen relationships with child/parents/carers/guardians for the best interests of the child.

## Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to contact new or hard to reach parents/carers/guardians. They are particularly useful as they enable the parents/carers/guardians 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 not attending full time education
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with child/parents/carers/guardians 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 rather than at school *or* where it would be difficult for a parents/carers/guardians to attend school 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/carers/guardians have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.

- To work with and support parents/carers/guardians in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- 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. For safeguarding reasons two staff members must be present and the driver must have Business insurance.
- 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 (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).
- To investigate situations where a child may have moved city/county/country as per the new CME guidelines.

## Benefits

Home visits have many benefits. For parents, carers, guardians 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.

## Procedures

The aim of the home visit policy procedure is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to member of staff when undertaking home visits.

### Before the Visit

- Obtain authorisation from DSL/SLT.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and procedure for home visits.
- Complete the first part of the visit form and risk assessment for the visit (Appendix 1 & 2).
- 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/carers/guardians to come into the school)
- Make a written record of the purpose of the visit and the staff members involved.
- 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 subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation.
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents/carers/guardians, with or without the child.
- Make sure you are well informed about the family and are aware of personal circumstances.
- Wherever possible make an appointment to establish a time convenient to the family and to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Either make a phone call or send a letter.

- Before leaving, tell DSL/SLT and reception you are leaving, who you are going to see and your expected time of return. Ensure you have left your mobile number with the above named persons.
- Before leaving agree the safe word or phrase you will use if you need help with the DSL/SLT and the reception staff.

### During the Visit

- Park in a well-lit area and in a position where you do not need to reverse on leaving.
- Dress appropriately.
- Introduce yourself, have identification available and explain again the purpose of the visit, carry your identification.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a parent/carer/guardian/responsible adult with authorisation of the parent.
- Ensure that any pets are out of the room when you are meeting.
- 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 (parents/carers/guardians) or another responsible adult whom a parents/carers/guardians has delegated to be there in their absence and they have given us permission to speak to about the student for whom we are making the home visit.
- Do not speak to siblings other than to ask if their parents/carers/guardians available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with siblings or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless accompanied by a responsible adult and then **ONLY** if you deem it completely safe to do so and necessary.
- Do not enter a child's/young person's bedroom.
- If you are concerned that a child/young person is in the home inappropriately alone/unsupervised/in danger contact the schools designated DSL straight away to discuss your observations or to seek immediate advice from them if you are uncertain whether the child is alone/unsupervised/in danger. If appropriate the Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to outside agencies.
- If you feel that a child/young person is in immediate danger contact emergency services 999.
- Assure parents/carers/guardians that you will treat anything they tell you sensitively. Explain that you may need to take notes during the meeting. Do not promise not to relay information. Remember that under the child protection procedures you must report disclosures or suspicions to the DSL.
- 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 gossip about the school or staff.
- If at any time during the visit you, the child or any other adult in the house is at significant risk of harm, leave the property and contact the police and DSL immediately
- Do not stay too long. Keep to the point.
- Do not carry large sums of money when making a home visit.
- If someone in the household is contagious or presents in a way that makes you feel

uncomfortable, then a doorstep visit is appropriate.

- Complete Home Visit write up on CPOMS on your return.

#### **After the visit**

- Let DSL/SLT and reception know you have returned back to school.
- Let the DSL know immediately if there are any concerns
- If you are not returning directly to school, telephone the school, DSL/SLT after the visit to say you have left the home visit.
- Any Child Protection concerns arising from home visits should be discussed with DSL immediately.
- At school do not discuss individual home visits with staff who are not involved with those particular children.

#### **Home Visit Form (see Appendix 1)**

- It is essential that staff write a short report on every visit they make.
- If an incident does occur the visitor should record all details as soon as possible after the incident.
- If an accusation of abuse is made against the visit/visitor advice should be sought from the Headteacher as soon as possible.

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

- Complete/hand in, 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment' (Appendix 1)
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you.
- Be well informed about the subject of the visit.
- Always make sure that the school knows where you are going.
- Always make sure the school knows your estimated time of return.
- Always make sure key staff have been given your contact number.
- Leave the safe word or phrase you will use if you need help with the DSL/SLT and the reception staff.

#### **During**

- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Consider who you need to see.
- Make a prior appointment to establish a time of visit.
- Carry identification.
- 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 the 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.
- 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 'Lone Working & Home Visits Step Analysis of Risk Assessment Intent to Visit'.

## Appendix 1

### Community Lone Working Risk Assessment

#### WORK ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT

Task being undertaken: - Lone Working Risk Assessment – out of office Occupations: -. All Staff

Any vulnerable persons particularly at risk: - Safeguarding team aware of named visit Date of assessment: - Any

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to home visit policy</li> <li>Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit</li> <li>2 people visit if aware of home circumstances</li> <li>Inform reception and sign out so others aware</li> <li>Take mobile phone for communication</li> </ul>
Driving	Member of staff may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain vehicle properly</li> <li>Belong to a breakdown organisation</li> <li>Carry torch, phone etc for emergency</li> <li>Advise team or partner where you are going</li> <li>Phone in if plan changes</li> <li>Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop)</li> <li>Avoid risky areas</li> </ul>
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Member of staff may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	remote	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Back down from confrontation.</li> <li>Call for help</li> <li>Use attack alarm</li> <li>Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised</li> <li>Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk</li> <li>Use staff bus or public transport if available</li> <li>Post incident support</li> </ul>
Illness or injury/accident	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury Take mobile communications	Remote	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alert Emergency services if appropriate</li> <li>Alert team members if able to</li> <li>Ensure access to phone</li> <li>Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed</li> <li>Complete injury at work protocol on return</li> </ul>
Attack by dog or other animal	Member of staff may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid contact with animals</li> <li>Seek local advice before entering premises with animals</li> <li>Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements</li> </ul>
Data Breach	School	GDPR Breach	Remote possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alert the Headteacher and Associate Headteacher immediately</li> </ul>



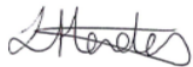


Reviewed by: Claire Milbourne/Kerry Routley December 2024

Next Review Date: December 2025

Approved by Directors: January 2025

Signed:



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Lisa Henden  
Headteacher



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Charlotte Marten  
Chair of Governors