



Home Visit Policy

Date of Approval:	5 th August 2022
Approved by:	Chair of Board
Review Date:	September 2024

Policy Information:

Date of last review	August 2022	Review period	Annually
Date approved	5/8/22	Approved by	Chair of Board
Policy Owner	Chief Executive	Date of next review	September 2024

Updates made since the last review:

Review Date	Changes made	By whom

Statement of Intent

Forward Education Trust recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of trust employees when making home visits. It is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard staff and pupils and their families, who can be more vulnerable in these situations. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage them accordingly.

The Trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. The roles of some staff, including family support workers, learning mentors and teaching staff, are crucial to the overall performance of the Trust. With this in mind, we have established this policy for any Trust employee who is required to make home visits.

All work with pupils and parents/families should usually be undertaken in the school. There are however occasions, in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where it may be necessary to make a one-off or regular home visit. For this reason, the Trust believes that clear procedures must be in place and followed to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies and documents including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Introduction

- A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to enter the home of family in the case of an emergency or procedural visit.
- Home visiting that includes lone working is an essential part of support work. Forward Education Trust is committed to ensuring that this does not place any of its staff in a situation of unreasonable risk.
- We aim to develop and strengthen the relationship with our parents/families via home visits in the best interests of our pupils by offering targeted support to them and their families.

Personal Safety

- It is the responsibility of individual Trust employees to keep themselves safe at all times. They must avoid any situations that may risk their safety.
- The Headteacher must ensure a member of staff is not exposed to unacceptable risk by making a home visit.
- Employees should usually have an appointment before making a home visit. Confirmation of the appointment must be recorded and held in the school office.
- Unannounced visits should be avoided wherever possible. However, they should be considered where there is a concern over the safety of a child such as unexplained absence of a vulnerable child. In this event, the employee must take all reasonable steps to keep school informed of their whereabouts.
- Where there is a significant and immediate concern about the safety of a child the police should be contacted, and a police welfare call/visit requested.
- Employees working off site must always carry a mobile phone, which is provided to them by the Trust. The number will be recorded and held by the Headteacher
- If an employee does not make contact every hour they will be contacted by a member of the school staff to check on their safety.
- The Forward Education Trust home visit risk assessment will be conducted by the Headteacher and designated safeguarding lead prior to a home visit. If a particular home visit poses new risks, the risk assessment will be amended before the visit.
- Risk assessments should include evaluation of any known risk factors regarding the pupil, parents/carers and any others living in the household, including animals.
- Risk assessments should consider any circumstances that may render the member of staff becoming more vulnerable to an allegation being made e.g. hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances.
- Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to employees who make visits outside of 'school hours' or during school holidays if staff work full year.
- Specific consideration must be given in risk assessments to visits in remote or secluded locations.
- Following a risk assessment, identified control measures must be put in place before a visit is undertaken.
- Employees making a home visit must adhere to the agreed risk management strategies identified on the visit's risk assessment.
- Details of the vehicles used by trust staff, including make, model, registration number and colour, must be held by the school office. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date business use insurance.
- If another agency makes a request for a member of school staff to make a home visit on their behalf this policy must be followed. The other agency should be asked to contribute to the risk assessment if they are already working with the family as they may have relevant information to share, particularly the reason for their agency not making the visit
- If following completion of a risk assessment there are any remaining concerns about staff safety relating to a home visit further advice should be sought from the trust and/or the LA safeguarding team.

Training

- Forward Education Trust will ensure that the induction programme for staff includes this policy and discussion about lone working and home visit guidance, where their role may necessitate the undertaking of home visits.
- Before undertaking home visits, Trust employees should have undertaken appropriate or necessary training. This may include training related to cultural awareness, diversity and racial equality, specific equipment training, manual handling training, first aid, handling difficult conversations, de-escalation techniques and training in disengagement techniques.
- Trust employees undertaking home visits should be coached in safe practices to adhere to such as keeping visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations and positioning themselves strategically in a room to give them a direct exit route, keeping professional boundaries in place.
- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that any and all staff who have a role in this policy have read and understood its contents.

Before the visit

- All staff will be familiar with the Trust's policy and procedures for home visits.
- Staff will ensure, where possible, that the family have been made aware of the visit and are expecting you to arrive.
- Contact the family to ensure that no family members have tested positive or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or other infectious disease.
- Speak to the relevant staff members at School to ensure you are aware of any necessary background information about the family or any potential risks within the family home.
- Complete a staff home visit form (see appendix 2)
- Complete a risk assessment (see appendix 3)
- All staff members should ensure that their mobile phones are charged so they are able to safely contact their colleagues throughout the visit
- Do not take valuables or large sums of money on home visits

During the visit

- Park in a well-lit area using a space that you can easily drive out of and do not need to reverse
- Ensure that there are no items of value visible within the car, any such items should be locked in the boot.
- Do not park directly outside of the family home.
- Keep your keys easily accessible throughout.
- Before entering the property, staff members will ensure that their mobile phones are switched on.

- Staff members should also check that the parent/family are happy for the visit to proceed
- Ensure that your identification badge is visible throughout
- Once safely in the property staff will contact School to let them know that they are safely in the family home
- Only speak to adults who have parental responsibility for the children unless you have been given permission to do so by the parents.
- Be respectful of people's homes and family cultures and practices, for example removing shoes when entering or avoiding days or times which clash with religious or cultural events
- Do not go upstairs in a property unless you are accompanied by an adult and then only go upstairs if you feel it is completely necessary to do so.
- Explain that you may need to take notes during the visit and ensure that the family are comfortable with this.
- Ensure that the family are aware that the home visit will be confidential but will be securely logged and if there are any safeguarding concerns identified then these will need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- It is advisable to not accept food or drinks, which should be politely declined.
- Do not give out personal details or personal mobile numbers.
- Staff should not be left alone with a child, if you are, this should be you are in a communal place where you can leave the door open and be seen and heard.
- If, at any point, you feel yourself or anyone within the household is in immediate danger contact 999
- If you are not in immediate danger but feel that you need to leave the property swiftly then you should terminate the visit politely and apologetically. If this is not possible and you need advice and support to do so, then make telephone contact with your School who will ask you a series of questions (appendix 4).

After the visit

- Once staff have safely exited the property, they should contact the school office to let them know that they are safe and to advise of their onward location.
- Staff will log the home visit in the child's file within 24 hours.
- If there were any safeguarding concerns identified throughout the visit these will be logged on CPOM's and discussed verbally with a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If aggressive or abusive behaviour took place during the home visit do not arrange any further appointments until discussed with SLT. Ensure to update the risk assessment following the visit in preparation for your discussion with SLT or before your next visit if the visit is agreed.
- Remember confidentiality and do not discuss the home visit with staff back at School who are not involved with the family.
- Update any areas of the current risk assessment based on knowledge gathered during a visit to inform the risk assessment for future visits

Child Protection and Safeguarding

- Any safeguarding concerns identified then will need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Review and Monitoring

- The Trust Safeguarding Lead, or, in their absence, the Deputy CEO and Education Director, is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and amending it accordingly following any incidents or concerns.
- This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Trust Safeguarding Lead, or, in their absence, the Deputy CEO and Education Director.

Holiday periods

In the absence of school staff during holiday periods, the liaison point of contact for home visits will be the Trust Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence the Deputy CEO & Education Director.

Final note

Above all else the safety of a member of staff is of the utmost importance, if there are any undue concerns that cannot be mitigated, then a solo home visit should not be undertaken.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Lone Working and Home Visits 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">• Refer to home visit policy• Risk reduced by informing safeguarding team prior to visit• 2 person visit if aware of home circumstances• Inform reception and sign out so others aware• Take mobile phone for communication

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
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"> • Maintain vehicle properly • Belong to a breakdown organisation • Carry torch, phone etc for emergency • Advise team or partner where you are going • Phone in if plan changes • Do not leave valuables in the car (e.g. laptop) • Avoid risky areas where possible

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
<p>Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks</p>	<p>Member of staff may be harmed</p>	<p>Attack Theft of property</p>	<p>Remote Possibility</p>	<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back down from confrontation/call for help • Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised • Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk • Use public transport if available • Post incident support

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Illness or injury/ accident	Member of staff may be harmed	Illness or injury Take mobile for communications	Remote Possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Possibility	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid contact with animals • Seek local advice before entering premises with animals • Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g., sudden movements

Appendix 2

Date:

Name of staff member completing visits:

Time of departure of School	Time of Visit	Mobile Number	Car Registration	Full address of the family home including contact number	Name & contact of the parent being visited	Expected return time to School	Time returned
	Start: Expected end time:						
	Start: Expected end time:						
	Start: Expected end time:						

Appendix 3:

Risk Assessment- *always complete prior to the initial visit and update accordingly throughout intervention, if required.*

Family Name:	Address:
Date Completed:	By whom:

	Yes	No
Have any risks been identified by any other agency?		
Is there anyone in the household known for violent offences?		
Is there anyone in the household known to misuse drugs or alcohol?		
Are there any pets in the household?		
Are you aware of any intimidating/threatening clients, relatives or friends living at or are likely to visit the property?		
Are there any dangers/ hazards associated with the property?		
Do any of the household member's smoke?		
Are you confident all safety measures are in place?		
Do you think contact should be made outside of the home?		
Areas of concern- <i>please provide further context to any questions you answered yes too:</i>		

Overall level of risk: **LOW** **MEDIUM** **HIGH**

Actions agreed to eliminate/reduce risk?		
Date	Signature of staff member	SLT signature

Appendix 4:

As detailed above in point 3.16, if you feel that you are in immediate danger whilst on a home visit, please contact the School office stating, ***“please can you look in the red folder for me?”***. The staff member receiving the call should look in the red folder and ask them the following series of questions:

